

# THE ACCUMULATION OF WASTE

*A Political Economy of Systemic Destruction*

Ali Kadri



## The Accumulation of Waste

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*By*

Ali Kadri



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# Preface

In 2011, the US army estimated that at any one-time Navy SEALS, Army Green Berets, and other special operations forces undertook 116 missions across the globe (US Army 2011).<sup>1</sup> In 2016, US army special operations were conducting 96 activities in twenty countries of Africa (SOSAFRICA 2016).<sup>2</sup> This is but one face of capital's social activity. Under capitalism, people and nature prematurely perish. This book analyses the resulting structural genocide of humans and surrounding nature.

Despite this radical reality, Western Marxist theory is anything but radical. It tinkers with liberal politics whose undertone is Eurocentric, or justifies aggression against the developing world in terms of Northern class-based moral standards. Western Marxism has compromised the premise of abolishing private property central to theoretical Marxism and the necessity of eliminating the value relation. It has overlooked the truth that capital's profits derive far less from nine-to-five jobs in the Western hemisphere than from the *wasted lives in the developing world*. This book examines the phenomenon of waste since the onset of capitalism. It posits that waste is essential to surplus value.

In material form, waste is manifest in the excessive death of people and nature. By means of war or cost-cutting measures, capital shortens lives and undermines nature. Waste expresses capital: greater profits require more waste, and capital reaps more as it sells the waste. This study, however, is not about reified nature. It is not about the residues of metabolic reproduction, or the substantive waste or trash and the green bonds poured into engineering techniques to recycle trash. There are production and consumption residues, the material form of waste, in any society across history. Capital however defines the meaning of what is useful and what is waste and forces society to accept its definition. After all, waste as residue is a thing and not a dialectical concept of object inseparable from its social subject. Waste as theorised here is created by the social subject capital, the fundamental social relation.

Capital abuses nature in the process of undermining the working class. The resultant waste demolishes the potential of labour as historical agent. In the self-reinforcing domain of waste accumulation, a nature exponentially sickened becomes a machine for which capital has not paid, but which uproots, socialises labour, and reduces longevity. To be sure, polluted nature, just like a

<sup>1</sup> US Army (2011), Army special ops continues to grow, increase optempo, <https://www.army.mil/article/52042/army-special-ops-continues-to-grow-increase-optempo>

<sup>2</sup> US Special Operations in Africa (2016), Sub-unified command of USSOCOM – Unclassified, <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/3723613/2016-SOCAFRICA.pdf>

machine, does not produce surplus value. As an intermediary created by living labour, however, it catalyses the waste of people before their due time. It thus reduces the cost of social reproduction leaving more of the social product to capital over the lifecycle of society. And to boot, when one considers that pollutants, sickness and death are items traded on the market, capital buoys by the amount of waste it unleashes upon society. At such ontological level, shorter lives and degraded nature leave more of society's surplus labour to turn into capital.

With everything being commodified under capitalism, the prematurely wasted lives are reconstructed as use-value destined to be exchanged. They are implicitly or explicitly priced at a capital-determined gestation period and, of late, financialised. Higher future prices attendant upon a bleak future, reconstruct scarcity, raise current prices, and secure capital's monopolistic profits. Organic foods may cost more at present, but all commodities comprise a risk premium arising from the difficulty associated with future production conditions. Accordingly, capital's concern for the environment is a scare tactic to mark-up prices.

With profits rising, not only by backgrounding the social costs of waste but also by the production and sale of waste, the de-reproduction of society becomes the principal industry of capital. In the idiom 'capital drips with blood from head to toe,' blood has literally gone on sale. Wasted lives array against a time-asymmetric price matrix to be traded and, conversely, these death-commodities *become* fetishes that command the reproduction of social life. That death determines life is no longer a rhetorical statement. For surplus value to rise, the industries of ethno-genocides that laid the foundation of early industrial capitalism, the scalping of the Native Indian for a dollar, immanently mature into the evident wider structural genocide and the daily unnoticed casualties of capital. The process of thinning down what capital concocts as 'excess population' in the permanent crisis of overproduction auctions shortened lives relative to historically achievable longevity for a price. The rate of waste mirrors the rate of surplus value.

Theoretically, the historical subject in charge of wasting social nature is capital. Social nature as substance is labour as subject in nature. Structurally, the Western formation that cannibalises the masses of the South sits atop the international class order. In social production, capital condenses the labour time of production in a factory to get more out of labour. It deploys technology to lower the cost of essentials such that it pays lower wages and, all in all, strips labour of its autonomy. Yet, the idea that technology is Western and socially funded by the Western working classes and then grabbed by capital is a misconception of historical subject. Western social funds flowing into Research and Development (R&D) are constituents of the circuit of capital

reconstituted by imperialist rents. Northern taxes that contribute to R&D are investments that generate imperial rents proportionate to how they boost the technological *rappart de force* against the South. Technology is an element of the productive forces, a sub-division of capital and integral to the imperialist relation that excludes the South from development. Hence, the historical relation of excluding the South is the historical subject, while knowledge-derived scientific and industrial development gathers in the North.

Seen from the vantage point of social reproduction, however, the world has been a single factory that economises peoples' livelihoods, and for which the waste of life is a primal commodity. The rate of the expiry of life before its historically determined time, or social de-reproduction, defines the rate of exploitation. Situating waste in social reproduction, dying social nature as dead labour obtained gratis by capital, in addition to the labour robbed from the prematurely extinguished people, which also transmutes into dead labour, these push capital more and more to retain surplus-value producing living labour in order to produce itself as dead labour. When in social reproduction all of living labour or society is responsible for the social product and, therefore, productive, and with dead labour unable to create surplus value, the activity of social auto-destruction becomes the cornerstone of capitalist expansion. More living labour short-changed in wages over shorter lifespans, creates more surplus value and leaves more of surplus labour to transmute into capital. Capital not only crams the lives of people into short chronological intervals of time to capture more of the social product, it makes a lucrative industry from the sale of social natural death. As Northern working classes secure imperialist dividends, and as the relation of exploitation structurally centres in the South, lower pension age in the North, for instance, implies a lower life expectancy in the South, altogether to maintain rising rates accumulation. With the rent-laden social product of the North rising by imperial rents, its redivision between Northern capital and Northern classes becomes a redivision between two circles of capital living off the avails of imperialism. The cycle of engaging the living in their own saleable death is a surplus value making activity that attenuates the inherent contradictions of capital.

In a world structured as a two-tier class system of consuming and consumed classes, the increasing cannibalisation of the lower tier offsets the declining rates of growth associated with the run of the mill declining effective demand of the upper tier. The demand of militarism, which generates imperialist rents, counters the declining rates of demand associated with civilian-end use commodities. The debts that prop up Northern consumption are underwritten by current and future imperialist rents. With production holding primacy over consumption, that is with capital submitting labour to its desired patterns of consumption, or with its drive to depress wages rather than increase wages

to raise demand, wasted social nature, of which militarism is a principal constituent, will more and more constitute the substance of wealth.

*A fortiori*, the ominous rates of social-natural decline or, premature deaths, reveal that forms of waste-exploitation exceed commercial or slave-like conditions of exploitation. In commercial exploitation the chattel slave was kept alive to produce, while in waste exploitation, the premature death of the wage-slave becomes the business end of capital. A capitalist mode of production becomes a waste mode of production. And, with the preponderance of destruction, one can no longer partition the creation of value by analysing a production process emerging from fractional exploitation conditions; rather, the world forms a single domain of exploitation and unit of analysis. Although the rise of China and other forms of class resistance in the South militate against the waste system, capital '*to gain in profits what global society loses in years of life*'.

Mainstream economics does not examine capital as the historical subject of waste and restricts analysis of social production within sectarian or national boundaries. It abstracts from separate constructed facts omitting the interconnectedness of class relations, and then presumes its one-sided abstraction defines the changes in inherently processual facts – all facts are processes governed by laws of development. Marx (1867) derided such method of crude empiricism by noting that when '**an abstraction is made from a fact; then it is declared that the fact is based upon the abstraction.**' This dominant approach to reasoning is characteristic of positivist methodology applied to social science. It splits an undividable reality in the mind, selects observations that support its thesis that the capitalist system is non-explosive, and isolates any activity from its determining social class context, only to highlight the rosy achievements of Western-led capitalism. **Apart from struggle against US imperialism, in the pile of waste masquerading as wealth, nothing is rosy.** What develops in thought about the partitioned social condition would sound logical by use of supply and demand equations, but it would also be divorced from the holistic waste 'fact' in ways that cater to the inclinations of the dominant class. To say that individuals enjoy consuming a commodity and pay a price for that commodity valued against the relative utility it imparts, as mainstream economics argues, follows an intricate math-maximisation procedure whose formulaic eloquence neglects the broader class-system of waste. It ignores the fact that **commodities effectively consume individuals depending on their position in the social class system.** The top tier consumes organic foods, while others consume namely deleterious substances contained in staple items. The bomb, for instance, is the perfect waste commodity *cum* machine whose productivity is determined by the rate at which it consumes human lives. Meanwhile, every other pollution-laced commodity is in lesser part a bomb.

At the present stage of global integration, an adequate abstraction of fact must be referenced against the totality of social reproduction, or rather de-reproduction. At this juncture in time, the data with which one works reflect whether the planet is one minute or thirty seconds to midnight. Although science is concerned with questions of degree and scale, the scale of the present social-natural disaster represents a structural phenomenon to which such gradation is superfluous. The imposing structure of waste necessitates a confrontation with the pervasive methods of reasoning, especially the corruption injected into revolutionary thought by Western Marxism, which dislodge social being from social consciousness. Asking will the planet sustain life for the next 50 or 100 years is secondary once one recognises that capital's reason governs social reproduction. Superficially, such a question may be scientifically evinced, however, science kowtows power. For the cannibalistic class whose consciousness evolves with the death of the South, mainstream science will recommend the building of walls and the shooting of refugee boats. Although questioning the obvious is science, questioning whether the colour white is white, or whether phenomenal waste materialises in the death of social nature, is absurd. To query whether the planet warms in 50 or 100 years ends up being a vacuous question since those who adopt the reason of the commodity, capital and labour as a form of capital, self-destruct for profits. However, as the Southern masses sink into misery and find it difficult to manage their survival from day to day, such question turns out to reek of chauvinism. Despite overcapacity, which is a characteristic of the capitalist system, life expectancy in the South has been gun-shortened to way below that of the North since the onset of capitalism. Still, evidence from Cuba and similar social models show that when man and nature become socially organised, as opposed to production anarchy serving private ends, there is enough to go around, and life expectancy rises. Yet, for much of the planet under capital, social being remains autophagic, with the prevailing forms of social consciousness addressing only techniques of trash removal. Thence, the auto-consumption of social nature, once an abstraction reductive of the complexity of capital, has become a concrete representation of social auto-destruction destined for sale at some point in socially determined time. To deliver meaning without sounding ludicrous or absurd, that is adding too much detail or overly generalised statements respectively, it is no longer sufficient to report that some capitalists overconsume some workers and nature in some garment factory of the South. The degree of the social disaster is so complete that the organising principle of the system becomes the policy of waste integral to dominant ideology.

As the world turns into a single social reproduction unit, the auto-consuming social totality, a higher abstraction of complex and multi-layered

social relations represented in observations constituted as facts, becomes a concrete social totality of production. Consequently, an abstraction about the garment factory without reference to imperialism as a state of continual aggression aimed at the waste of social nature is partial truth, and therefore, an inadequate tool to deliver meaning. To say that some people are repressed somewhere, without mentioning that these people must have been beaten time and again into submission by US imperialism, is meaningless. The consciousness that people form to accept being wasted, or to consume waste, is imposed by the guns of the US and NATO synergising with the dominant ideology. The transference between military and ideological powers lays the foundation for capital to further transform social reproduction into social de-reproduction. The fact *become* abstraction, is the overly self-consuming social nature. That the planet is a global factory eroding at higher than sane entropic rates implies that the absurd is real. People are forced, persuaded, or paid to excessively self-consume. And although waste is a necessary result of any metabolic social-natural reproduction order across time, under capital, a rising rate of waste is a rising rate of surplus value. Cheaper more dispensable social nature is requisite to boost profits. What would under a planned economy be a sane rate of social natural erosion emerges under capital as the waste relation that crushes socially appropriate levels of obsolescence.

With the absence of labour as historical agent, the fact collapses into the abstraction. The abstraction, 'overly auto-consuming nature,' is no longer the meaningless and too-general philosophical sophistry of the past times, it is the concrete fact imbued with meaning. The hypotheses proposed herein are first, the fact *become* waste phenomenon is driven by capital's omnipresent relation of waste, and secondly, social nature wasted, as against replenished, creates surplus value, and thirdly, waste as a form of value is value. The phenomenal waste is *ex-post facto* proof that the logical end of capital has collapsed into its historical end. The rational is in complete unity with the historical. Capital incarnate in the commodity self-expands by the reason attendant upon the dynamic of the commodity as self-expanding value. The value contradiction between value proper, the socially necessary labour time, and use value mediated in exchange, turns into value proper contra dis-use value mediated in exchange.

This book provides a theorisation of capitalism's path of auto-destruction. It is based on my previous writings and lectures. It is also structured in terms of propositions that are defined and redefined for the purpose of elucidation and to flush out new meaning situated in different tackled contexts. It includes seven chapters. Chapter one is a cursory review of the concepts to be developed, while the concluding chapter arrives at the point made by Frederick Engels (1877) in Anti-Dühring, which is under unfettered capitalism, the irrational

becomes rational. The defeat of labour has heralded the most barbaric period in history. Thence, capitalism should not have been posited as a progressive stage in history. Value is waste as of day one of the capitalist era, and to arrest waste, value must be arrested.

The book accords analytical centrality to imperialism, the historical stage in which militarism as perfect waste leads the mediatory measures that momentarily resolve capital's crises. Chapter six re-reads the rationale of capitalist history as a history of waste from the start of capital. Naturally, to have written this I am indebted to many people. I am, however, most thankful to Matteo Capasso, Roland Boer, Martha Mundy, Ray Bush and Vincent Cama for their comments. All errors and omissions remain my sole responsibility.

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# The Accumulation of Waste

## 1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the principal concepts to be used throughout this book. It addresses the metamorphosis of value into waste. It focuses on waste as a domain of accumulation that redresses the crisis of capital because it employs living labour to waste living labourers. It specifically regards imperialist war, the purest form of waste, as a value forming activity whose saleable product is the premature death of labour. The social class formation that transpires under waste is one in which the cannibalistic classes consume the cannibalised masses of the South. It is a necrotrophic process in which the parasitic classes feed off the host until it perishes. The exchange of waste, the costs to society imputed in the price system over historically defined gestation periods, is the principal vehicle that transforms surplus labour into capital. Against the broader empirics of *ex-post facto* social and natural degradation, this chapter also examines the measurement of waste and why the concept of class is ignored in mainstream analysis.

Waste production has surfaced as the leading domain of accumulation. The pile of defunct people and nature, otherwise the social nature or substance to which labour appertains as subject and nature as object, is phenomenal. The empirics are such that no reparation or recycling under capital could reverse the degenerative process. The problem is radical, but one-sided empirical studies and the proposed policies are not radical. Anything said about partial progress in greening the planet, recycling or striking imperialist-reared peace deals will remain grossly un-substantiated in relation to the deteriorating holistic condition. The phenomenal waste must presuppose the logic of waste accumulation.

Waste is both part of every commodity and the principal commodity of capital. It sells and as a form of value it reproduces capital. Under capital's hierarchical, socially metabolic, and complex order, the production and allocation of waste follows the *diktat* of the imperialist class, or the cross-national bourgeoisie integrated by finance. As a product, waste is chiefly realised in developing formations and, accordingly, the imperialist social formation

consumes the imperialised formation.<sup>1</sup> Such unequal and necrotrophic de-reproduction cycle is foundational to the rule of capital, and its law of value that governs the rate of value usurpation from the social product of the South. This work argues that waste is *immanent* to capital. That the contradiction between use and exchange value, public and private concerns, resolves in the interest of capital, and is borne out in the fact that the waste commodity consumes the labourer by the gradation of his class. It further argues that waste assumes more intensified forms under the monopoly-finance stage of imperialism. Either by the protracted demise of nature or capital, imperialism may yet prove to be the last stage of capitalism.

The discussion of this thesis departs from the following four premises:

1. Production is anarchic, auto propelled and, since it is concerned with immediate and tangible results (Engels 1876), it causes a metabolic rift with the social-natural order (Marx 1867). It depletes nature such that it undermines the basic support mechanisms meant for the reproduction of human life. Marx (1894) further declares that capital in its pursuit of profits economises the living conditions of labour (Marx 1894). ‘Capital loses for society what it gains for the individual capitalist’ (Marx 1894). It is wasteful of society’s material and human resources and shifts its costs of production upon society to raise profits. It does so in capital’s commandeered time, otherwise social or abstract time, whose turnover cycle is the time of social reproduction compressed to adhere to capital’s bookkeeping tables (time accountancy). Mészáros (2008) proposes that to reduce the material and living labour costs of production, on the basis of the ruthless application of capital’s *time accountancy*, may show some achievements on one plane; however, ‘on another plane, these achievements are nullified through the creation of the most absurd artificial

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the text, the terms Northern, Western, whiteness are cross-national and cross-ethnic ideological descriptors whose structures are the Western national formations and their allied cross-national formations and institutions. The white working classes are the strata of phenotypically whites and non-whites who personify capital not only because they adopt its subjectivity, but because they self-reproduce through imperialist aggression. These concepts, as well as the use of the concept Third World, do not solely imply demarcation in incomes between a rich and a poor grouping of nations. They are first manifestations of the practices of the laws of capital exemplified in imperialism and its systemic drive to concentrate wealth in the centre by means of expropriation and liquidation of developing world assets. Western civilisation, the stock of material and spiritual attainment of society, is a social structure centred in the US, the heir and partner of Euro-imperialism. These express the capital relationship in its imperialist practice. There is indeed a clash of civilisation, but it is between the civilisations of capital whose structure is the North, and labour whose structure is the Global South.

appetites, which serve the most wasteful reproduction.' I contend that they are not only nullified nor do the phony appetites hold primacy: waste is a production activity producing the waste commodity, which like any other commodity assumes the position of a fetish and creates the waste-consuming man alongside itself. Waste requires socially necessary labour time and realises/sells in capital's designated time. Whatever cost a consumer defrays for a commodity at the time of purchase, the production of that commodity would have involved social and natural wastage whose costs will be borne by society instead of capital across the spectrum of time.

2. Luxemburg (1913) emphasised demand deficiency and stagnation as reasons that compel central capital to imperialistically engage 'non-capitalist' markets. To her, demand was final-consumption determined rather than the stream of inputs into production ensuring social-metabolic reproduction. This angle underrates the historical inter-relatedness of global production and allows for the centre-integrated underdeveloped part of the world to be categorised as less or non-capitalist. However, the colonies and ex-colonies are included with capital in an indivisible social relationship. They are deprived of industrialisation by an act of colonial-imperialist aggression, which is itself, as I will argue in this work, a sphere of production. Luxemburg's consumption *cum* capacity-based or substantive approach to gradating capital (that some are more capitalist than others thesis), via the position that the imperialists are more productive and have to integrate new markets, theorises that capitalism is constrained by an 'economic limit' (Luxemburg 1913).<sup>2</sup> Theoretically, as peripheral markets fully join the centre, capital's

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<sup>2</sup> Marx's definition of substance brings him closest to metaphysics, but never really to become the metaphysician. Substance is defined as the inner unity of all its diverse elements, including consciousness (how it is thought out of or perceived), which is an active cause of all its forms. Ilyenkov (1974) explains Marxian substance 'as nature that has achieved the stage of man socially producing his own life, nature changing and knowing itself in the person of man or of some other creature like him in this respect, universally altering nature, both that outside him and his own. A body of smaller scale and less 'structural complexity' will not think. Labour is the process of changing nature by the action of social man and the 'subject' to which thought belongs as 'predicate.' But nature, the universal matter of nature, is also its substance. Substance, having become the subject of all its changes in man, is the cause of itself (*causa sui*). Nature being its own subject is the equivalent of the 'absolute' of historical materialism, which is constant change, or anything but the absolutely unchanging; in reference to the constant of Hegel (the absolute spirit) or Spinoza's nature as the substance of god. As used in Kadri (2020), substance here is the state of nature or things in which the subject, labour, reified and becoming one with the reason of the commodity, leaves nature, its predicate, unchanging or changing by capital's edicts. In other words, labour has been turned

reproduction reaches a boundary beyond which it cannot go. Another implication of such gradation occurs as countries of low development in the productive forces and lower socialisation, become less ready for a proletarian revolution – although rarely mentioned, this point effectively remains the position of Western Marxism.<sup>3</sup> Cohen (1978) was one among many to promote technical change, which alters production relations, culture, and ideology, and induces social change. He departs from Marx's *German Ideology*, where it says that 'it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world ... by employing real means ... in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. Liberation is a historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse' (Marx 1845). Such is out of context, because for Marx the class with the better machine and war machine reproduces by devastating to *socialise* the class with the lesser machines. These 'lesser

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a thing by adopting the reason of the commodity. Substance then becomes another moment in actuality occurring without a revolutionary subject.

- 3 Encyclopaedia Britannica ascribes the term Western Marxism to those '[d]isillusioned by the bureaucracy of the communist-party system,' and other similar points. Insofar as this work is concerned, it defines Western Marxism as a non-Marxist heresy, which was the Comintern's and the dominant view among Chinese scholars until the 1980s. Recently, Chinese scholars consider Western Marxism as a tributary of the mainstream, one-sided, and a little too full of beautiful utopian blueprints (Chen 2018). Additionally, this work classifies Western Marxism as an imperialist class position reproduced by bourgeois apparatuses of power. Its class enemies are the masses of the developing world. Theoretically, Western Marxism fails to recognise totality, or it sees a thousand relations, yet never grasps a genuine connection between them for thought to be structured (Ilyenkov 1974). Without totality envisaged as global social production, socialism is not a possibility. Western Marxism fails to recognise the weight of history or the balance of forces within the class struggle, such that, by critiquing socialist construction in the developing world, it sides with the enemies of communism. Unlike Mao (1926) who advocated a broad front government composed of anti-imperialist elements, Western Marxism was the voluntarism that sought an immediate leap into socialist revolutions and thus fell 'in league with imperialism, the warlords, the bureaucrats, the comprador class, the big landlord class and the reactionary section of the intelligentsia attached to them.' Equally important, Western Marxism capitalises on its critique of capitalism not to fight capitalism but to perniciously muster resources in the fight against revolutionary movements in the Third World. Its agenda is to abort revolutionary potential and co-opt ascendant forms of anti-systemic organisations. Western Marxists are those who critique capitalism from the standpoint of providing it with positive feedback. In terms of structural examples, the Frankfurt schoolers aligned with Zionism, academics who claim support for Palestine to justify US-bombardment of Syria or Libya, or sign petitions condemning Cuba for human rights abuse are typical Western Marxists.

'capitalist' formations whose production circumstances appear to rely more upon private, less socialised forms of petty ownership and production, are said to exhibit a consciousness polluted with strands of thought that thwart the leap into a more communitarian mode of life. Deutscher's (1964) remark that 'the mind of China cannot be fructified with liberating ideas' is a case in point. However, such logic neglects the less developed formation socialised by colonial and imperialist aggression, which leaves its human and natural resources up for grab *en masse*. There might be more small private producers in the South, but their nation states and the whole of their national property are controlled by imperialism. They are more socialised and readied for socialist transformation than Northern workers serving as gunners for imperialism.

Luxemburg's 1909 and later in 1918 labelling national self-determination as 'utopian', or her characterisation of Lenin's stance that foreign peoples should determine their own fate as 'entirely wrong' are one-sided positions that stem from the substantiveness of demand-side analysis. Capitalism may hypothetically drive the planet to a natural limit, however, because an imperialist war as perfect waste production is permanent, there will be no substantive economic limit to capital. Militarism, the production of premature death, employs living labour to produce itself as *literally* dead labour. Dead labour as a sub-category of capital is the social effort robbed and embedded in the private means of production; the robbed labour of dead labourers becomes dead labour whose inability to produce surplus value impels the re-engagement of more surplus value producing living labour in the production of its own death. Wasted human life adds to the means of production as thieved effort. It can be both objectified (dead) labour and living labour creating new value at the same time by its self-consumption in production. The negative dialectic, or as things before us go from bad to worse, will be about the production of waste, foremost wasted lives, and the sale of waste for profits; the demolition of labour is the objective of capital and that is why nature will be butchered to butcher man. With living labour consumed in production as dead labour, surplus labour will increasingly arise upon the activity of the liquidation/de-subjectification of the subject labour in social nature, with no shortage of people to waste and no material limit in sight.<sup>4</sup> To

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<sup>4</sup> De-subjectification is the stripping of the social class of its autonomy, memory, symbols and forms of social organisation by which it self-actualises. As such, labour loses its potential and ceases to be a subject of history. The act of disarming labour reproduced in synergy with the social relation and its attendant ideology is the vector of the class struggle that necessarily

put things in an Althusserian jargon, the Congolese and Iraqis could continuously perish into a future that lasts a long time, while militarism and Western economies buoy.<sup>5</sup>

Lenin (1916) swung the accent in the first contradiction of capital from the capital-labour contradiction onto the plane of colonial nations versus colonised nations. Furthermore, he differentiated between two interdependent paths of capitalist accumulation: one by civil-end use commodity realisation and another by encroachment wars. Regarding the latter point, he, like Marx, commented that militarism and its waste are forms of value but added that it is a source of super-profits for 'the so-called civilised states' (Lenin 1913).

3. Although wasted people in colonial wars have long been traded for a price, wasted nature has only recently matured as a commodity and entered the world of exchange. The unlimited timescale of capital is the longer horizon into which the concrete time of each social activity reworked in short-term production consummates. Mészáros (2008) illustrates his concept the 'carcase of time' with an example of nuclear power proliferation, when as each capitalist pursues profits through reliance on nuclear energy, the abominable implications surface in the more distant future. He goes on to say that capital's timescale is mind-boggling, while 'the relevant productive processes and their unavoidable residues – their potentially lethal radiation time counted in many thousands of years, i.e., covering the lifetime of countless generations – appear absolutely prohibitive. There are, of course, people, who for the sake of short-term profit, would not hesitate for a moment to tamper with the perilously long-term scale of nuclear radiation time. Others, instead, might simply run away from the problem itself by rejecting on some a priori ground the possibility of nuclear power production even if the need for it becomes overwhelming' (Mészáros (2008). Before Mészáros, Perlman (1979), referring to a nuclear leak in the US, theorises that capital consumes its servants. However, wasted humans, as distinct from the natural waste, which has of late surfaced as a commodity (like carbon emissions), have since the inception of capitalism been *commodities*. Although the mainstream considers victims of genocides as casualties of human blunders ascribed to human fallibility, capital in command of history has purposely employed

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but not exclusively materialises as history. In other words, it is the spiritual disarmament of the working class that hinders its progress into revolutionary proletariat.

<sup>5</sup> 'The future lasts a long time' is the title of Louis Althusser's autobiography, which in part describes the painfulness of time under mental depression.

waged-soldiers and traded and sold human deaths.<sup>6</sup> Rarely if ever does Western Marxism consider colonial and imperialist massacres as market processes, *ergo*, as value relations. It only acknowledges what capital records in its books as a transaction against which a certain money form of value lodges. Value, however, the successive applications of socially necessary labour time in production, is a historical journey that consummates every time it metamorphoses the abstract labour into its associated money form. Every time Europe wars for resources, it employs labour and wars to waste the human resource. Such is an industrial activity whose product is wasted humans. Moreover, since the moneyed form of value of such activities accrues as a share of the social product to both capital and labour and remains indifferentiable by its constituent classes until the state carries out its distributional function, the total effort of society, wasteful and unwasteful, gathers in the moneyed form as an indifferentiable whole. Although the price that capital jots down appears to be related to a specific item exchanged, the reality is that any price gels in relation to all the powers behind the prices that it interacted with or were omitted and will make their appearances at some point in time. Price as a symbol, like any other symbol, is diachronic and synchronic. It relates to all the past structures of the price system, as well as its current structure and future evolution. Beneath the apparent price system, there are the non-visible or negative prices associated with production efforts waiting to surface when the resultant of the class struggle works out the grounds for the length of their gestation period.

Western literature attributes the rising natural waste to rising consumption. It treats waste one-sidedly as a consumption issue, as opposed to production. Bauman (2003) stressed the pursuit of consumption as a never-ending process, which emits redundant people, in a fast changing or liquid world. Jappe (2017) instead saw it as an amalgam of narcissism, commodity adoration and insatiable consumption constituted by the subjectivity of capital. In both cases, insatiable consumption leads to exponential waste. Their notion of fetishism was more about the fantastical attributes of the commodity than its role as pro-creator of

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<sup>6</sup> Capital and history may be used synecdochally. Capital may not be fully in command of history, but until this moment it has been the leading force of history. That is so because capital is the principal social relation or contradiction governing the development of events in the historical stage eponymically called capitalism – capital is history so long as the resultant of the class struggle plays in its favour.

production, its function as a fetish that commodifies society to increase the scope of capital.

Moore (2015) focuses on capital's reliance on cheap natural inputs as the crucible of waste. However, without mentioning how imperialism mines the lives of men to be realised as commodities, the argument boils down to concern for the trashed environment as a thing. Trash as subject, rather than the law of value acted out by imperialism to allocate resources especially by winnowing the reserve army of labour, is an engineering problem that could be solved by appropriate trash disposal strategies. The issue however remains to bring into focus the social relations that trash people by the practice of imperialism as opposed to trash itself telling society how to dispose of it.

Others confined the subject of waste to the spatial dimension (Gidwani and Reddy 2011; Hudson 2011; Yates 2011). They hypostatised Marxian concepts into dependency on spatial attributes and compiled them in ways that mask over capital as the subject social relation and/or imperialism as history proper. Moreover, they considered waste as an epiphenomenon of capital but not as the form of value or its surrogate value relation. Waste was treated as a necessary outcome of production but never a self-contained sphere of production. Whereas the regulation of the growth of the reserve army of labour, a function of the labour process, is a *predicate* of production (without the reserve army there can be no capitalist production), man is said to be 'excreted' into unemployment (Yates 2011). As with the metaphysical man of Potstone and Galambos (1995) or Postone (2010), what is wasted for Yates is the idea of man as opposed to actual man, or as opposed to the masses of the South who perish under imperialist assault – Postone is briefly discussed in chapter five. Moreover, in this approach, the surplus population is incorrectly cordoned off from capitalist exchange or value relations. Yates precludes the notion that capital is waste and only focuses on the fact that it excretes waste. The *immanence* of waste however means that capital is *a priori* a waste relation, or *by the impulse of its inherent laws*, especially the repulsion between use and exchange value, which expropriates the direct producer not only of his commodity but also of his life. Expropriated life is the premature death of man destined for sale. By that logic, the wasting of the reserve army of labour is what employs and excretes the employed. The activities of capital must be referred back to the intrinsic predisposition of the capital. That anything positive comes out of capital is purely a matter related to the opposition provided by labour, which so far has proven moribund.

Furthermore, what capital records on its accounts as exchange of commodity/labour power for a price/wage obscures the real creation/transfer of value in social time. For example, the seemingly unwaged mother-care that reproduces children and labour is not an explicit entry in business records for whom a wage is assigned. Firms do not state that they will pay the mothers of workers, but mothers are actually paid – although very little. The mother reproduces a social labourer whose wage is social and from which she receives a certain share. As can be discerned, a leap from concrete to the abstract, a mother reproducing a child/labourer (concrete labour) who earns a social wage (the money equivalent of abstract labour) for her care work, can also be put in reverse: the share of the mother from working class-power determined social wage (the abstract form of her labour) pays for her concrete activity. A mother's concrete labour has been market-mediated into abstract/social labour and does not fall outside the exploitation sphere or the sphere of value relations. Her input into social reproduction, may be lowly or negatively remunerated such that her life may be wasted before the historically determined life expectancy, but it is not unproductive labour that she does. As distinct from production and the concrete economic category of productive labour, in social reproduction all social labour is productive. Marx (1859) praises Mandeville for showing that 'every possible kind of occupation is productive.' At a further remove, capital is also universal. It reaches wherever its guns and dominant ideas reach. Power is the non-illusory side of capital. Capitalist market exchange and its incumbent value relations occur only wherever capital as a social relationship rules. Since European ships in search of resources and slaughter ruled the seas, capital became universal, or the process of global social reproduction became a universal process. As such, a mother under-fed in the Arab World, is someone over-fed in the centre. To understand *immanence* and what is being wasted, it is compulsory to understand value in terms of ascent from the abstract to the concrete (Ilyenkov 1961). It is not enough to state that there is waste at the level of the general or the abstract level, one must refer back the broader observation to the particular or prematurely wasted concrete lives. Each time of life *necessarily* cut short by capital surfaces in the emaciation/de-subjectification of labour and the general state of waste on display. To remain metaphysically abstract is to address the self-reasoned ideas, the forms or ideals for which phenomena are some unnecessary addenda. At the level of logical ideas un-associated with reality, the casuistry of logic holds sway, and one may prove that bombarded Congolese people may have potentially become freer by the belligerence of Belgians and,

subsequently, merit their fate. Indeed, for Hegel (1956) slavery in Africa has freed the African by exposing him to the superior spiritual development of the West (Kuykendall 1993).

The subject absorbed by capital is a reified person, a human who adopts the dynamic of self-expanding value as his mode of reasoning, as opposed to being the abstract/social relation but also real, historical, and a sub-division of the inter-competing class power relationships. In Marxism, man as species-being does not realise in a Hegelian state epitomising the ethical idea. Man realises as he self-concretises in the social activity of labour. What is wasted is not man the idea, but the concrete or real time of life of real human beings. Such is the regimentation attendant upon the labour process under capitalism, which under imperialism becomes dictated by a financial cycle whose higher frequency of surplus usurpation makes real inputs turn over to the tune at which financial capital turns over.

Concepts, such as value, reserve army of labour, productive labour, etc., drawn from Marxist terminology, cannot be referred to without adherence to the law of unity between the rational and the historical. What is theorised in the concept must be borne out by history or phenomenon. Value is the social form of concrete/materialised labour; it is the relation of expropriation that corresponds to experience. Everywhere one sees wage labour dispossessed: it is phenomenal. With this in mind, the Western Marxist, deploys Marxian terminology reified to fit observations selected from phenomena but which are in no way universal or phenomenal. What is outside the mind is delivered by sensory experience to the mind without qualification by the category of social being, or the fact that labour like social production is an integrated organic and universal totality. The idea of the thing outside the mind is exactly the thing without consideration of social being or class biases. Moreover, for Western Marxism, social being is just European being and, as such, value is only European value. Commodities and waste are just a logical or mental states reflecting the wealth or trash that piles outside their person without specifying the social subject, the class, which carries out the production of things. Their concepts are un-referred to the social production totality or the history of imperialism. These concepts mediate either in a fictional whole and a world of pure ideas, or in a post-modern realm where the philosophy of language and its indeterminacy of meaning hold the key to understanding the daily structural genocides – the deaths below the historically determined longevity. The following long quote from Engels (1845) best demonstrates structural genocide.

When one individual inflicts bodily injury upon another such that death results, we call the deed manslaughter; when the assailant knew in advance that the injury would be fatal, we call his deed murder. But when society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessities of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live – forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence – knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder, murder against which none can defend himself, which does not seem what it is, because no man sees the murderer, because the death of the victim seems a natural one, since the offence is more one of omission than of commission. But murder it remains.

While capital is altogether *systemic* genocide with direct and structural manifestations, the big issue for Western Marxism remains whether imperialism has imparted progress or whether there is such a thing as imperialism. Still, the mainstream's discussions of semiotics, metaphysics or the empiricism addressing partial physical activity have not arrested the Western daily practice of class cannibalism. 'Rich people,' as declared Fanon (1967) 'are no longer respectable people; they are nothing more than flesh eating animals, jackals and vultures which wallow in the people's blood.' In a recent review of the role of war in economic theories by Allio (2021), none of The Western Marxists theorists address imperialist genocide as a value forming process. The upshot of this class biased discourse is the developing world treated as a charity case. The South is irrelevant because it counts for little money. Money, all of money, however, as a form of value capturing the social product in social reproduction, belongs to global society because social labour and the social wage are one integral whole. Moreover, by Marxian value standards, the standards that posit human worth measured by the socially necessary labour time invested in the reproduction of man, the worth of lives is the same across the world. Under realistic conditions, the upshot of such theorising is for the deaths in the South to be prioritised in terms Marxist-Leninist strategy, and specifically, and that is so because they count for little money.

In scenarios where man the idea is wasted, as opposed to real man, Vietnam and the US sharing some aspects of capital's repressive practices – since they

both submit to a *capitalist wage system*, and as such, both can be regarded as equally unethical (both bad) or equally imperialists (Postone 2010). Such is a bourgeois ethic hiding behind the Kantian moral equivalence. The imperialism of metaphysics is one thing, while the practice of US imperialism is another. To stick a decontextualised Marxian concept such as the wage system into a theory without consideration to the historical moment, a benchmark of the Marxist method, is to discard a materialist reading of history, the repository of the Marxian approach. While the ethic of the proletariat is what advances the position of labour in the class struggle, the Western Marxist frame of reference and its ethic are not based on a contradiction between international labour and capital, but rather on how US imperialism subjugates other social formations to impart progress. At this historical juncture, the moment of imperialism in the finance-monopoly stage of history, the US's rationale for being is expansion via imperialist wars. Wars of encroachment are a magnification of the war inside the commodity/value as it self-expands by the expropriation of labour. The proletarian ethical point will be to arrest this momentum and overturn it.

In a fictional-idea world or in a world devoid of imperialism of one-sided forms, the white man who R2Ps the 'Afghans' 'civilises' them. In such a hypothetical world, the class struggle or history actualised in imperialist aggression disappears (R2P is aggression slotted under the rubric responsibility to protect). The ubiquitous commodity of militarism, premature death, which is a principal ruling-fetish, also disappears. For Boron (2012) in an archetypical position of Western Marxism, '[h]istory does nothing, it wages no battles. It is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; history is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.' Although this parody of historical materialism aims to write off the momentum for imperialist aggression and highlight the errors of aggressed countries, it is also true once one posits that the man of which he speaks is the reified European or white man, labour as subject reduced to its predicate or the products he makes. Such man is the social man flattened and possessed by the reason of the commodity that has become the rationale of history.

In actuality, the identity of commodity with money is the crucial force that regulates social processes. Marxism without money being absorbed and realised in the practice of imperialist wars to produce the wasted social nature is just as inane as money-neutral neoclassical economics. At an ontological level, production holds primacy because it is what reproduces social being (Marx 1867). At a more concrete level, it is the bigger consuming nations that control and organise social production in

line with their consumption patterns (Emmanuel 1972). Their residuum of production or the social state of overproduction subtends the rate of accumulation and disciplines the labour process, producing man the labourer as well as producing the obsequiousness of consumerist-man (Lenin 1916; Ilyenkov 1974).

4. This work expands upon Mészáros's point (1995) that the military industrial complex - the cruellest form of resource allocation - generates surplus value on the basis of an auto-consuming and destructive production process divorced from human needs. However, the concept of waste as developed throughout will not be limited to wasted plastics and nature, waste accumulation will have as its primary objective the wasting of man. The work further proceeds from Marx's notion that under capital and its commodity fetishism, social relations are established indirectly via commodity exchange or as commodities assume the money form of value. When waste becomes the useful product from which labour gains a share, the momentum of more waste gains grounds. By the inter-competing pressures of wage systems, countries of the South drop their social and environmental guards to receive foreign direct investment (FDI), which reinforces the exchange of wasted lives for US dollars. Social production becomes determined by the forms of value that the commodity assumes. Waste is thus materialised or reified labour.

As early as 1960, A.K. Davis posited that waste has become the leading activity and product of the system.

So great is the expanding productivity of this glittering economic machine that its distributive channels are periodically inadequate to accommodate the flow of its goods and services. Without waste it would collapse. And the amount of waste, even on today's colossal scale, is not always sufficient.

Under Marx's (1867) *absolute general law of capitalist accumulation* (AGLCA) transposed onto the age of imperialism, profits must emerge from the sphere of waste production and engender more human and natural waste.

Capitalist production, when considered in isolation from the process of circulation and the excesses of competition, is very economical with the materialised labour incorporated in commodities. Yet, more than any other mode of production, it squanders human lives, or living-labour, and not only blood and flesh, but also nerve and brain. Indeed, it is only by dint of the most extravagant waste of individual

development that the development of the human race is at all safeguarded and maintained in the epoch of history immediately preceding the conscious reorganisation of society. *Since all of the economising here discussed arises from the social nature of labour, it is indeed just this directly social nature of labour which causes the waste of life and health (my emphasis.)* (Marx 1894)

Although to compress socially necessary labour time is to reduce longevity, the act of life-reduction as a commodity is foundational to capital. Accordingly, this work further hypothesises that the word creative in the maxim ‘creative destruction’ is visibly about creativity in the production of destruction and, therefore, waste. The smart bomb may serve as an example. Moreover, as the run of the mill products gestate in social time – the event-lived time decided by capital – to be consummated in a market and arrayed against a matrix of prices, they must consummate more and more as dead social nature. The social activity of labour objectified in the commodity will, as per the edicts of capital, morph into a corresponding money form of value that in part gels in profits. These profits attendant upon the waste commodity will circularly signal for higher waste-related production to kick in.

The work further postulates that imperialist necrotropy, the imperialist act of parasitically usurping the imperialised nation, accelerates alongside higher rates of resource decimation/dislocation or the production of waste for profits. This process exceeds the monstrosity of primitive accumulation because higher rates of surplus value emerge from the enslavement of whole nations subjected to waste exploitation – the prematurely wasted wage slave. Thence, under imperialism and finance, capital intensifies and comes out for what it truly is as a waste relation. The principal contradiction between capital and labour could be put as that between the wasting and the wasted classes. Unhindered, value or the activity of depriving labour of its labour power and products by means of force realises more of its logical end, which is waste.

However, this hypothesis is not the bio or necropolitics that write off the class struggle and the prospect of change on the basis of a psychoanalytical bent inherent to man (Mbembe 2001). At an ontological level, labour is wasted because it is concretely cut down and because its potential is wasted. Wasted potential means to eliminate labour as subject of history. It is what labour could have contributed to society but was lost because of perverted usefulness, reduced quality of life, or alienated creativity. To waste the potential of labour is to waste its particularisation, which mediates emancipation, or theoretically, to put an end to

class struggle and, especially, the dictatorship of the proletariat. It may be worthwhile to note that bourgeois historians may also describe historical development in terms of class struggle. However, for Marx, the existence of classes is bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, while the capitalist class struggle necessarily but not exclusively leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which in turn constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes (Marx 1852). Lenin asserts that '[c]onfining Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat' (Lenin 1917).

Capital captures value by destroying the actual and potential of emancipatory efforts of labour through the class struggle. Although the crushing of labour is the value making activity, decimating concrete labour is far easier for capital than crushing labour's potential. That so because in social reproduction, which was Marx's point of interest rather than production, class struggle centred on changing the historical *mediation* between labour and nature, substance proper, in contradistinction from changing the *immediate* (things as they appear without their necessary mediations). Moreover, the chance occurrences associated with immediacy, the accidents, the violence, the sudden deaths, these could be anti-systemic altering the mediatory frame of history, namely the institution of the state. Chance violence may be anti-systemic if systemised, organised and armed with revolutionary alternatives, to confront capital's dominated mediations. Fanon (1967) for instance developed the role of violence in anti-imperialism, and like Marx, emphasised the necessity of winning over the superstructure (the institutions of capital) so that the nascent mediations alter the social base to the benefit of labour. Institutions must be targeted because they outlive individuals or immediate beings.

Marx focused on the dialectic of the mediated with the immediate – not immediate alone – and used the expression, man's inorganic body, which 'is not simply that which is given by nature, but the concrete expression and embodiment of a historically given stage and structure of productive activity in the form of its products, from material goods to works of art. As a result of the alienation of labour, 'man's inorganic body' appears to be merely external to him and therefore it can be turned into a commodity. Everything is reified, and the fundamental ontological relations are turned upside down. The individual is confronted with mere objects (things, commodities), once his 'inorganic body' – 'worked-up nature'

and externalised productive power – has been alienated from him. He has no consciousness of being a species-being' (Mészáros 1970). Species-being is social man capable of restructuring the world, as opposed to abstract man. Capital alienates the labourer in a way that she becomes an inorganic body and ceases to self-recognise as species-being. It thus renders the labourer only immediate and just a body, which cannot self-emancipate, nor could her being influence a future generation – it is as if she is a discrete point in time. Social man ceases to be because of capital. However, this alienation is ontological and is similar to conditions in previous modes of production (Mészáros 1970). Under capitalism and the rule of capital or the social abstract, man's consciousness of his species is supplanted by a cult of privacy and an idealisation of the abstract individual. Thus, capital's crime is when the labourer is alienated from himself, his society, and his social rights, such that he cannot contribute to future social development. Man treated like an immediate thing by capital is the alienation that foregrounds capital's attempt to demolish social potential, labour as subject of history, or the prospect of emancipation. Yet, capital cannot fully suppress social potential no matter how hard it tries. In the dialectic between the immediate and the mediated, or between the contingency of history and the structure of history, lies the terrain of labour's potential. Capital reifies all into an inorganic body. Its mediations transform man into an immediate. The *homo economicus* hypostasised in the modern consumerist unaware of his cannibalism is a case in point. However, with the labour process being the real foundation of an otherwise fictitious capital, it is surplus labour that permits capital to invert reality. Capital or the totality of relationships is not external to labour (to draw on Mészáros with a slight alteration). Some may not realise their potential or are said to lack revolutionary consciousness, but that cannot be said of all of labour. Capital destroys the concrete labourer, and the labourer can no longer contribute to labour's social consciousness and to changing the dominant mediations. The decimated labourer cannot contribute to changing the structure of society, and she is doomed to the immediate. Then again, that cannot be true of all of society. Capital cannot reify and homogenise the totality of labour. The particularisation of labour, its self-assertion through the union of its traditions with its working-class symbols in the face of capital's universalising assault, such as the national struggles against imperialism, persist. The failure of capital to subjugate all of the working classes or to quell labour's potential is why the class struggle endures. The argument may *a fortiori* be supplemented by the inevitability of change inherent to modes of production, which is what differentiates Marx from liberals. Unlike the liberalism locked in

immediacy and pouring second hand emotions over war, for Marx, to grasp the mediation of history and make historical sense of the immediate is to understand how chance or spontaneity co-align with necessity. More important, it is to understand that weakening the position of the imperialist centre and anti-imperialist armed struggles, which tilt the balance of forces in favour of national liberation movements, are the primary tools of labour.

Having clarified the primacy of the class struggle and the rule of labour, the substance of capital's commodity becomes waste because labour is wasted. The reproduction of capital can be gauged by following the development of the new waste form of the commodity, or that which is attendant upon its waste content and waste relations. Although Mészáros (2008) invokes the term *counter-value* to capture the new form of capital, he does so from the standpoint of alienation and blockage to the realisation of human potential.

Thus, within the framework of the existing socioeconomic system a multiplicity of potentially dialectical interconnections are reproduced in the form of perverse practical dualisms, dichotomies, and antinomies, reducing human beings to a reified condition (whereby they are brought to a common denominator with, and become replaceable by, locomotives and other machines) and to the ignominious status of time's carcase. And since the possibility of practically manifesting and realizing the inherent worth and human specificity of the individuals through their essential productive activity is blocked off as a result of this process of alienating reduction (which makes "one man during an hour worth just as much as another man"), value as such becomes an extremely problematical concept. For, in the interest of capitalist profitability, not only can there be no room left for the actualization of the individuals' specific worth but, worse still, *counter-value* must unceremoniously prevail over value and assert its absolute domination as the one and only admissible practical value-relation.

However, counter-value is the leading form of value, or it is the logical constituent and the historical end of value *qua* waste. Once more, waste is not trash reified. It is the essence of the value relationship, its law of movement, making its presence known more and more in the imperialist stage. Waste is not the negative impact of the commodity upon society that could be turned into something positive under capitalism. The wording 'value' itself has become misleading because it resonates with something of benefit to society. The dictionary lists

usefulness as an equivalent of the term value. *Ex-post facto* capital has snuffed the planet. More important, before alienation matures into the act of depriving the life of man from man and overturns value into waste, the value relationship itself, at every moment of its development is logically an act of dispossession and waste. Historically, the advance of capital in the colonies, its decimation of hundreds of millions, has been all about wasting social nature by the pressure of permanent overproduction crises. Thus, as one includes the non-European world into the analysis, waste was a form of capital and its principal relation from its very start. Another related conceptual property to waste arises as capital requires increased socialisation for higher rates of surplus value. Socialising labour or increasing the reserve army of labour compels the imperialist expropriation of nations, their decimation or their loss of sovereignty prior to their dispossession. Accordingly, the social process of waste, the necessity to waste man, is as interdependent or organic as the natural process; for instance, pollution or waste necessarily spread to all parts of nature. Social metabolic reproduction governed social entropy reasserts the totalising nature of capital or the inter-predication of global production.

## 2 Situating Waste in Imperialism

That native Indians should be thankful for the electric showers of white man typifies the French settlers' comments to the media during the aggression of the Canadian state upon Mohawk sacred land in Oka Quebec (July 11 – September 26, 1990). Although Bedford and Cheney (2010) rightly observed that state broadcasts instigated fascist practices to quell the rebellion, they however underestimated the class content of settler-colonial racism. They conjectured the immanently unachievable or that solidarity between the working class and the Mohawks 'may have resulted in a more positive outcome of the conflict.' In this, they mis-defined the proletariat. Some rich-folks also receive wages but not all wage-workers are potential proletarians. At first-principles level, the social class is the reproduction of being. How one man as social being relates to another man as social being to mediate and resurrect the social forms that remake the conditions for reproduction is the class as social activity. Along these lines, the social reproduction of the white working class has occurred by the consumption of the Mohawk and his nature: ditto for the relationship of the imperialist centre to the developing world. These white classes are not to be only defined solely by their income profiles (Yates M 2018), nor by their privileges (Sakai 1983) – Yates critiques Sakai by underscoring the fact that

there are poor white people. These are historical processes that reproduce capital because they are vested in imperialism and waste – a white working class is not bought off to side with capital through the labour aristocracy, it is rather an embodiment of capital. Class as the historical condition bears its adjuncts whose ideological colour is white, and whose Northern structure is namely phenotypically white. After all, ‘the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time ... the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of constituting concrete individuals as subjects. In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning (Althusser 1970). It is because of that re-allocative function of ideology, reconstituted and reconstituting the subject, that capital’s fictitious constructs assume the status of natural forces. However, white wealth or poverty are derivatives of their primary spheres of reproduction, which are imperialist war and genocide. The role of ideology in the white world may be limited to assuaging the conscience of the butchering class, which reproduces as capital does. *More important, unlike inter-competing labour, which becomes a form of capital, the strategy of economic unionism in the North that feeds imperialism is not merely a form of capital, it is the structure of capital that reproduces capital as subject; thence, the impertinence of revolutionary potential to Northern working classes.* The ups and downs of white working-class incomes over time are predicate-wise shares of rent they enjoy in relation to other spheres of capital. Their deconstruction, as will be argued in chapter 4, will depend on the abolition of their imperialist nations.

In Marx’s (1867), the law of value allocates labour power and the means of production, spurs on the development of the productive forces, and restructures production relations to boost exploitation. The productive forces, the organic unity of the accumulated labour or the totality of material elements of production necessary to meet the needs of society, are primal and condition the development of society. Under capitalism, social production abides by the law of value or the historically grounded reason and practice that allocates, commodifies, and monetises labour power to either below the social cost of labour reproduction or to outright de-reproduction. In social reproduction natural value becomes socially necessary labour time or value, and subsequently, both outcomes designate what commodities are required to maintain human lives. The latter case of de-reproduction occurs as labour power is expended upon the consumption of the commodified life of man. In addition to eviscerating nature, which supports the life of man, social man, a subcategory of class, consumes another social man, or another sub-category of class.

While capital tightens its grip over the social sphere, it de-reproduces labour not only because of the surplus value associated with the commodity labour produces, but also because the earlier than historically determined demise of the labourer is itself a commodity with an associated surplus value. As the organic composition of capital rises in combination with *an imperialism that de-modernises a developing nation experiencing high fertility rates*, so intensifies the contradiction between capital's productive or carrying capacity vis-à-vis the 'excessive' population – there is cheaper labour to turn into capital. The industry of cutting short lives attenuates the brunt of the capital-population contradiction. It is an industry that exhibits significant *rates of surplus value* because capital allocates socially necessary labour time in a subject-to-subject relationship. Living labour, a subject, engages with another living labour, another subject, to produce the dead labourer *qua* the objectified commodity. The products of such wasteful accumulation are workers dying before their time at the hands of other workers.

The work applied to prematurely extinguish a life and the act (work) of self-defence to remain alive are processes objectifying concrete labour in the wasted life of man *qua* the commodity. And just as in any commodity, the alienated product of social labour assumes a money form of value as per the mediation of the contradiction between use and exchange value (Marx 1867). Subsequent to exchange deliberations and autonomous improvements in the productive forces, markets inform the industry of living man producing dead man that the socially necessary labour time required for the production of wasted man as *subject reduced to substance* must be compressed and delivered in the shortest chronological intervals.

Under capital, nature trades as property or commodity. By definition a commodity's purpose is to sell rather than satisfy human needs located in a sane or non-degenerative environment. To commodify nature is to re-package nature for the purpose of trade. Furthermore, in relation to *substance*, man is highly developed nature, and the unity of man and nature (social nature) is organic/substantive. Since it is nature that supports the life of man and it is social man or class as subject that reworks nature and sets the price of nature, nature as thingified substance must be metabolised/destroyed at rates that offset a slowing pace of capital's assault on human life. Where armed brutality or austerity fail to deliver the historically desired numbers of shortened lives, poisoned nature symbiotically steps in to fill the gap. Cut-throat competition literally lives up to its name. The rate of exploitation associated with extracting surplus labour by means of wasting the labourer as well as the nature that supports her reproduction in shorter time soars, and so follows the profit rate.

Impersonal capital in command of impersonal history pursuing cross-personal profits dissipated social nature at rates *in excess of* reasonable entropic levels. Aside from the ongoing significant war and austerity related human losses, the incontrovertible loss of nature has corroded the basis of human reproduction. Salient scholarship adduces that for four months of every year, the global population sustains itself by consuming ‘non-renewable’ resources (WFP 2019).<sup>7</sup> Of course, what is renewable or non-renewable transfigures by a class-optic. The hundreds of millions of lives colonially or imperialistically wasted over five centuries were ‘renewables.’ These losses were allegedly ‘worth-it’ or the price of progress. However, with the onset of the twentieth century, poisoned-nature contaminated white-man who, in turn, signalled to his science to authenticate the phenomenal waste. Class-wise, the loss of non-whites was not disorderly-entropic, while the loss of nature afflicting whites amounted to higher than tolerable entropy.

Not that anything is monadic or un-emergent: as an *emergent* property, entropy, the inherent disorder associated with any multitude, cannot be argued away (Eddington [1935] speaking of the second law of thermodynamics). It so happens that capital’s entropy, which squanders or poisons the wealth required for social reproduction, exceeds that of the natural world. At least by the impact of man upon nature or by the latent industrial stages of the Anthropocene, for a lesser fraction of sane commodities produced that slightly deplete the social-natural cycle, there has been at the same time a significant fraction of waste being produced that overly depletes social nature. The relation ‘dying nature pitted against the working class’ reinverts into an ontological condition of the capital-labour contradiction.

Waste is a consumption and a production item at once. It is inherent to any salient consumption item. Time and again, the cycle of the use value of waste repeats as consumers gulp whatever capital dangles before them. Any coke-can is part soda and part insecticide, part slave-like labour, and part war. As to the dual nature of waste, it unfolds as both input and output across its many stages of consumption and production. Waste’s productivity/contribution is also twofold. First, it deracинates, socialises, and calibrates the growth of the reserve army of labour to the rate of accumulation and, secondly, it ensures the stability of capital’s rule as it disempowers labour. Just as the use value of labour power is the efficacy of its productivity, so too is the use value of waste when it reduces life expectancy and further uproots or expropriates private labour in a process

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<sup>7</sup> Global Footprint Network and the Worldwide Fund (2019) estimate that people use the annual supply of renewable resources by August every year. EU Overshoot Day, <https://www.footprintnetwork.org/content/uploads/2019/05/WWF-GFN-EU-Overshoot-Day-report.pdf>

whose interface steadies the ideological hold of capital. The wars, the austerity, and the global warming - all historically borne conditions - dispossess workers and evict peasants to further transform the working class into wage-slavery. The fundamental logic of capital, which has dissipated social nature, could be restrained as labour waters down the synergy between private property and profits. However, the expanding planetary waste emanates from a structure of class power instituted in the ideological and military forms of the Western formation. The combined material and spiritual accomplishments of the Western formation, its Western civilisation, are manifest more so as combined human and natural waste than otherwise. Such civilisational triumph, realised by the accumulated stock of historical surplus value, hypothesises as scientific facts only that which does not stall capitalist progress or the law of capital.

By way of further explanation, the historical surplus value is the weight of history. For Abdel-Malek (1961), the concept designates the looting of all major continents since the fifteenth century and the centralisation of wealth in the then rising bourgeois centres of the West. The roots of modern violence and the roots of global war lie in the restructuring of the international order, that is, the construction of western hegemony, steeped in rising historical surplus value from the fifteenth century onwards. Western academia considers surplus value as if it was a product of the last stage of the history of mankind and or a product of the of the last phase of the class struggle, during which the bourgeoisies exploit the working classes. However, the historical surplus value is not limited to the last economic stage of production, or the final consumption of raw material, energy, resources, land and space etc., it has above all provided a reflexive backstop to Europe or the automatic means to secure world hegemony. Historical surplus value eroded the powers of the East and foregrounded the rise of the scientific and technological revolution. Its in-sync geopolitics furnished Europe with the means of control of the world via sea routes while the dissemination of ideas from the centre via communication technologies dictated the made-to-measure theories for the Third World to grow into. In contradistinction, the ethical-normative position by which the Western liberal left judges violence as a pathology of the system, or as an exogenous syndrome, conceals the cumulative effect of colonial policies which were laid down by the permanent violence of European imperialism. Accordingly, Asia, Africa and Latin America could only develop along the lines suggested by Western schools of thought, which are otherwise the collective unconscious of lesser self-assertive formations. All in all, imperialism as a central factor in the power structure of modern times was viewed in its immediacy and not as a contemporary expression of a historical process (Abdel-Malek 1961).

By natural interconnectedness, and as the capital of the Western formation overconsumes social nature, it also consumes its pliant working classes. Despite

that, commodified capitalists, people incarnating the reason of the commodity, embrace capital and veneer the soical dimension of the *necrotrophic* process. In a commodified world, natural damage earns capital present and future returns; however, things are not repairable with capital in the lead. Arithmetically, in the cascading and imperialistically-imposed autophagic process, there are lesser profits with lesser rates of waste. Things further sour for capital as its over-commodification of man, the transposition of the commodity's dynamic upon social reproduction, which de-subjectifies labour and diminishes its autonomy, necessarily lowers the rate of surplus value. By the dialectic of 'too much of a good thing, which breeds a bad thing' or as people become things, the opposite result is achieved (in a hypothetical world of things surplus value vanishes); why so? The clout of labour in the class struggle determines the share of labour from the social product. As living labour, the source of surplus value, becomes more like a thing or as variable capital resembles constant capital, requiring only the recovery of its depreciation, it may just pass the value within it and no more. As the organic composition of capital rises by the reduction of labour to labour power or as labour becomes thing, a composition treated throughout as only an initial positive shock that tapers down by the fallacy of composition, surplus value falls. There is a balance that the organised dimension of capital needs to strike between overly thingifying labour, erasing the subject in living labour, and empowering labour. Such is a delicate balancing act because capital's complete ideological victory necessarily implies a crisis of profitability. In standard parlance, with mechanisation the total surplus may fall while the relative surplus value rises – unless waste stands for value, which raises the total surplus. Nonetheless, surplus value is not only the stock of additional commodities created, but also the relation and the state of revolutionary consciousness exercised in the making and distribution of the money form of value associated with the commodity-stock over time. As revolutionary consciousness retreats and with it the share of labour compressing demand, the de-reproduction of labour begins to set the pace of capital accumulation.

To contain labour's autonomous development, the organised dimension of capital, or its state and ideological apparatuses, subvert the ideological alternatives, especially, Marxism-Leninism. Apart from the obviously capital backed Western Marxism that supports NATO aggressions, there are also the not so obvious career opportunities, the funding of anti-communist art and magazine platforms, etc. (Saunders 1999). Capital's objective is the intellectual corruption of Marxist heritage symbolic of working-class struggles. In that sense, the ideas of class struggle, revolution, value, productive and unproductive, etc., become Eurocentric abstracts, or formal *a priori* notions, into which reality must fit. Such theory-applied (the application of formal ideas) as opposed to theory practiced (developing thought from experience) turns Marx into an

idealist and, in an odd twist, the real Marx must be extracted from the Western *corpus* or stood on his feet to shed the metaphysics of 'substance without subject' or 'form bereft of content' from this body of thought. In other words, Western Marxism reifies nature, while nature cannot be fathomed apart from social being. The content or the elements and processes that constitute an object cannot exist apart from their forms of organisation or structures (Marx 1859).

Not that any state could be anything else but state capitalist since it is tied to a wage system; however, whatever progress is made in a struggling developing nation under imperialist assault is discredited as a form of state capitalism by Western Marxism. The conflation of revolutionary struggle in worker-states necessarily engaged in capitalist practice supports further imperialist assault. This 'puritan' argument endures not because of any intrinsic theoretical rigour but because it is a class position. Under capitalism, all is capitalist: even air is a commodity. That the leading structure and institutions of capital precipitate disasters is a forgotten point. A fortiori, such argument persists because the Western working-class turned into a form of capital predicates imperialism. Northern working classes are not weaned off their proletarian origins by the payoffs of capital overtime, the higher wages, which would transform labour or the revolutionary subject into the labour that reproduces capital; on the contrary, these classes were capital from the very start – as will be argued in chapter 6. They were interlaced with capital as an adjacent relation to attenuate the contradiction with global labour. Structurally, they were the settler colonial mass that engaged in the industry of premature death not because it is paid a productivity indexed wage by capital, but because its wage bill is a share of capital's genocidal rents. Although such partaking in war booty pre-dates capitalism, once capitalist production relations dawn, these strata begin to earn their keep as organic partners of capital.

### 3 De-reproduction as Accumulation

Alongside substantive efficiency, as in the increasing number of dead people produced as commodities together with other commodities per unit of input, the higher frequency of the slaughter industry also de-subjectifies the subjects – it strips labour of autonomy. Working people are either forced to die by superior technology or are deceived to willingly die for capital. Living people without revolutionary consciousness lose the power to negotiate or become subject-devoid just as dead people are. With revolutionary ideology suppressed, the simultaneous input of living labour and its elimination, along with its labour power, in waste production, mitigates capitalist crises arising upon the thingification of labour – when living labour in waste production eradicates itself.

Although the organic composition of capital rises, the value outlays on variable capital also rise as more living labour consumes living labour, both as input and output in shorter lifecycles. More people are paid less for the value of their labour power and more of the surplus turns into profits. The more the lives of people compressed and realised in chronological time to the exigencies of capital increase the scope for higher variable capital outlays which temper the negative impact of a growing organic composition of capital upon surplus value.

De-reproduction rises by the *efficacy* of capital or as the rate of metabolic consumption shortens the lives of people relative to the historically determined life expectancy. It does so protractedly by austerity or pollution, or instantaneously by wars. Such is a projection of the law demonstrated by Marx in 1894, as mentioned in premise 1 above: profits depend on economising the living conditions of workers, or in relation to the rising demand for waste in modern times, upon economising workers outright, albeit at higher turnover rates as per the requisites of financialisation.

The rate of exploitation is not to be inferred from the recorded sale price at an alleged ‘final’ realisation stage of a commodity on the market. These assessments are based on the hypothetical timeframe and the utilitarian accounts of capital. The price category, including the productivity inferred therefrom, veil value, the social category. If anything, prices distort any comparative analysis meant to flush out value (numbers convey meaning when compared to other numbers). More pertinently, in an overdetermined history or time-incoherent dynamic-process, every moment in the lifecycle of commodity production is also a realisation stage. To be sure, actuality is not analytical and the stages of the realisation of the commodity, including the realisation of the labour power commodity, are historically overdetermined. In actuality, the elements/relations/contradictions of a totality are reconstituted on their own relations and by their relations to each other in social time or the time of social reproduction. To fall back on Althusser’s (1967) overdetermination, ‘the contradiction is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, and even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates; it might be called over-determined in its principle.’ Althusser’s overdetermination argues against Hegelian logical immanence, the internalised contradictions which systemically propel consciousness from one stage to the next in a teleological order; these stages are not overdetermined despite the complexity of their emergence – immanently, we arrived at this end-stage by necessarily living earlier specific stages. Hegel reasserts the point that no matter how dynamic, a processual philosophy is, if it rests on the tenet of the self-reasoned form (*the a priori*) or that the world remains in a state of

untruth as it evolves towards some higher truth, its logic must be internally coherent, deductive, and absolutist. Such is not the historical materialism of the theoretical Marx where the theoretical interface with reality may build into the contingency of barbarism. For Marx, historical necessity is a rupture that arises upon a praxis of counter-systemic tendencies. Its time is social time or the time in which capital's reason ensconced in its ideological monolith compresses the life of labour to drain it of its labour and its life. Because social time is ideologically pre-configured, there is no sequence in which one thing leads to another in chronological time. Historical necessity is not exclusive of chance occurrences, chance and necessity are the inter-penetrative abstract and concrete of each other's, while necessity is qualified by the masses-obtained levels of revolutionary consciousness and organisation.

Consumption is what has been consumed at every stage of production, and what consumes a consumer after every moment of consumption. Each of these moments acquires a social time defined moneyed value form, which contributes/discloses variations in living conditions. For instance, as people consume toxins whose damage to health trades on the market for some price, then the price equivalent of these health costs undermines labour's living conditions. Just as the contradiction between value - the socially necessary labour time objectified in the commodity - and its alienated use-value, resolves in exchange value and its money form, so too the money form, in the scramble for it to be conjured as profits, acquires a life of its own and signals the reduction of socially necessary labour time expended upon labour, or necessary-labour. That lesser labour power should be expended upon the reproduction of labour entails the elimination of some labourers, always to lighten the capital-population contradiction and adjust the stock of labour power to capital's historical imperatives. Although technology creates abundant commodities and supposed wealth, it is rather imperialist conquests which strip nations of sovereignty or de-subjectify the South, reduce global necessary labour, raise surplus labour, and down the road, raise profits. Whatever is constituted as wealth, the waste content notwithstanding, will be distributed by the sway of the class struggle. Imperialist aggression is the primary source of necessary-labour reduction, or on the flip side, the source of higher imperialist rents for Northern capital and its adjoint classes (Kadri 2019).

In relation to the point above, to only account for a realisation stage in the high-end/high-priced market is not arbitrary. It establishes by specious accounting methods that the sum of prices, a proxy of productivity, approximates the sum of values or the social product. Accordingly, the tech-related Northern rate of surplus value appears to prop up Northern wealth as opposed to colonial pillage, commercial exploitation and/or super-exploitation. Such is

falsification meant to show that the higher sum of prices in the North, which sublates - negates and preserves - the material constituent of value or socially necessary labour time, accords with higher value in the Northern market; thence wealth justly, and by reasons of effort and creativity, appertains to US-European workers alone. In short, here is the price obfuscation of value inborn with capital as its fetishism.

Private property, cultural suppression or expropriation, environmental abuse in addition to encroachment wars that deny development are social as well as economic categories. As a matter of definition, the social and the economic spheres are an intermediated process in which the social realm is the concrete side of a more general or abstract realm, the economic facet - relying upon the approach of Ilyenkov (1961). These institutions-industries of capital carry out many intermediate stages of realisation of their respective commodities. Pollution effects may be created and sold over many inter-dependent production and consumption processes. What is final is class-perspective defined. The finalised life of the sugar plantation worker or the consumption of the coke-can are final stages to working and corporate classes, respectively. These continuous time consumption processes are means and ends within social time or, class struggle derived time, to which chronological time acts as a front. Unless one adheres to tautology, the sort that explains phenomenon with phenomenon without a history, there are no economic lags, sums of prices or quantities consumed/produced, in some path dependence over discrete algebraic time that compel events to occur in one way or another. Historical uncertainty ensures that high prices last time do not necessarily mean high prices this time. Behind the price façade, there are social forces, which command space and time, and which force commodities to appear to be realised for a certain number of times and for a corresponding price each time. Prices as well as the groundwork for price-setting are fetishes consistently fashioned by capital to show that trade occurs by mutual consent between free agents, whereas the exploitation constituting the value of what they trade, the socially necessary labour time, remains hidden. Labour is coerced to trade its labour power. It foots the bill for the real-time costs of production, the waste unpaid by capital, which are also market mediated value relations. As the logic of capital and its units of measure rule, profiteering from the sale of commodities in capital constructed time and accounts cuts its costs by shifting and spreading the social and environmental costs of production upon society. In doing so, it shortens the life of society relative to the historically achievable life expectancy, and accelerates the velocity of value/social product turnover time. The social conditions, the death and de-subjectification of labour, must worsen at higher rates to accommodate the demands for cheaper resources and higher profits.

#### 4 The Bomb as Pure Waste

Apart from the standard wear and tear, the commodities of daily use come through as weapons, which commensurably with capital's power, de-reproduce society. The bomb is capital's ideal commodity, and every other commodity is sort of a bomb with a lower detonation impact than an actual bomb.

Commodity realisation is both the substance being sold and consumed and the social relation governing the creation, sale, and disposal of the substance over its lifecycle. For social science, it is the social relation that matters in reading the historical development of the commodity or the commodity-commandeered society. That relation is the historical value relation whose dynamic of real and ideological powers strips use value from society and generates wealth and income for capital. The purest waste industry (militarism) emits a waste commodity, a product of materialised/reified labour, the objectified labour whose subject is capital, and whose social form reproduces capital. The pure waste of militarism and its commodities, including its affiliated social expropriation industries, are an augmentation of the chattel slavery of yesteryears, which persist as pedestals of central capital. Without value in the form of waste unfolding as a bomb, pollution, or an asphyxiating social activity, the capital-led social order comes to rest.

So long as labour weakens vis-à-vis capital, the social activity of man intermediated by the law of value increasingly unfolds as waste and waste relations. Even in the case of the civilian-end use commodity, as competitive capital shifts its input costs of production upon society, the waste component exceeds what is sane use-value in the commodity. That is so because competition is also about competing to conceal the unpaid costs of production, which are generally waste. Against a dollar's worth of use value associated with the instantaneous gratification resulting from the consumption of a coke-can like commodity produced to meet private ends, there are many dollars' worth of wasteful inputs/products and other life-threatening toxins consumed over the social reproduction cycle. Correlatedly with the level of development of capital's productive forces, what is produced progressively de-reproduces society. Reinterpreting Marxist orthodoxy in waste, the capital contradiction, or as the private opposes the social by emaciating labour in terms of numbers and ideological standing, the de-reproduction of society gains momentum. Given steady realisation, the rising organic composition of capital materialised in a given level of technical composition reduces the rate of surplus value and the profit rate (Marx 1867). Larger outlays on constant capital, which are meant to redress a falling rate of profit, but never do so in the dynamic whole, are not without increasing social repression. The issue of building constant capital is not about heading to the hardware outlet next door to fetch

raw material or better tools and machines. It is tied to value transfer from the South and practice of forceful expropriation, foremost imperialist expropriation.

Machines with higher productivity will shed labour and only pass the value within them less depreciation, whereas surplus value emerges by short-changing the lives of living labour. For surplus value to form and for the rate of profit to grow, it would not be only the counteracting tendency of cheaper raw material among others which would have to kick in, it is also the shrinking weight of the dislocated-labour in terms of historical subject or revolutionary consciousness. While value outlays on society must relatively fall, the erosion of labour as substance and subject has to become a sphere of value creation for surplus value to rise. There are no raw materials or machines as things lying about to be grabbed, there are raw materials as social things or matter animated by a social subject/relation.

The issue of reducing value outlays upon society has a precondition, which is the defeat of labour (Marx 1894). working classes must be stripped of all their institutions, forms of organisation, memories and culture of resistance. Bring in waste accumulation into this equation, or the making and selling of waste, and living man begins to simultaneously serve as the labourer, the raw material and also as an output whose substance is the premature death of the labourer himself. This process of waste production is the precondition of every other stage of production. As the wasted man whose very wasting requires expending socially necessary labour time becomes the source of surplus value, *waste, which is a form and substance of value, becomes the dominant activity of capital.*

Alongside the waste-laced commodity, capital produces the class-gradated autophagic social person. No matter the toxicity of the consumption bundle, alienated man, the social man *cum* class beaten to relinquish command of history, engages in consumerist pursuits or satisfies hunger without concern for sane social reproduction. While capital decimates labour as subject in association with its production of waste as substance, the value form of labour, the defeated labourer subsumed in the money form of the commodity, encapsulates the potential for more waste production. Capital re-imposes a mode of thought amassed as the ideological counterimage of the greater stock of waste. Moreover, since waste parades as wealth, the mystification required to draw a veil over the waste process doubles as science. *Necessarily but not exclusively*, the science that investigates the social impact of the waste emerges from the class power exercised by waste producing capital. Bourgeois science worms its way through the stock of humanity's knowledge to obviate historical causation and horizon. Against capital's processual nature, which would under ideal conditions call for real time associated laws of development to be understood, ahistorical formalisms capture the imagination as the auto-accomplished concepts with which social problems are to be solved. In such a world, all alternatives are

born in the still of the moment, bereft of the historical continuum, and adopted as either/or binaries. Figuratively speaking, to the question why Germany turns to green energy and appears civilised, while Africa burns by excessive fossil fuel dependence, the answer would be the present African governments ill-govern. The issue of the role of Germany and the Western formation in ransacking the continent and their continued aggression to impose their rules and, above all their cultural hegemony, is not entertained. The Western structure in command of history, a process that optimises itself by breeding the global waste culture, emerges as pro-nature against a developing world weighed down by its environmental irresponsibility and social race to the bottom.

## 5      Absurd and Sane Alternatives

The pile of waste is the product of capital's phantasmagorical hypotheses institutionalised and put to practice by the dominant class. With labour beaten to a pulp, capital instantiated its theoretical notion of an asocial/abstract man, who is in reality forcefully estranged from the natural order as well as society. The calculus of felicity or utility of such hypothetical man, *homo economicus*, is biasedly referenced in space and time. He, the individual not the class, chose the wasted world as the best of all possible worlds.

However, real consumption is an act of production over a given natural space in time. The class order tying production with consumption determines whether social reproduction will impart betterment of living conditions or the opposite thereof. Yet the algebraic function of neoclassical economics representing utility omits the act of auto-consumption spilling over into social de-reproduction. It neglects history or the real time in which one may envision an otherwise anarchic social production where unuseful things are desired. A social welfare framework arising upon the joy corresponding to consuming a commodity in the spur of the moment is not only impossible because of the absence of some 'dictator' who homogenises people and their tastes (Arrow 1950), it is impossible because once social welfare incorporates social responsibility and its associated costs in production, value and profits cease to exist. As a rule of thumb, when use-value corresponds to human perfectibility, value relations wither.

At a further remove, one may hypothesise that there could be negative prices, or costs in a social accounting framework debiting social reproduction. Over time, society's earnings fall way below society's needs. Rightly so as it may seem, such would still be a measurement issue related to defining one of the four quadrants in a Cartesian graph. In the negative quadrant, a society whose work is paid for in lost years of life has debts to capital that exceed its revenues

over its lifetime. Society would have earned a negative income. Beneath the semblance of positive prices, there were negative wages at play and waste potentially priced/costed to bring to a premature end the life of man.

While the exact measurement of waste is not the purpose here, the logic is as follows: while the planet degenerates into an uninhabitable lump, the stock of waste is not only significant, but waste will trend-wise be all that exists. At any rate, value as a social relation *quintessentially* realises its anti-welfare predisposition.

It is not so difficult to imagine that to level down a social being to the state of an automaton-like consumer, the high prices/profits and utilities associated with bombs and heroin imply that war and opiate-dependence are logical as well as historical ends – not far from the reality of the US. To halt the anarchy of production or to reorganise man and nature to sane levels of development, labour must wrest social control of time and space; it must not only gain hegemony over the cultural channels, but it should also own the space and time upon which culture grows. Reflexively, the Global South must circumvent the armed, technological and ideological means of the West.

Aside from the self-evident point of socialising space (labour owning space), the time of the market, which assigns *ex-post* through exchange the allocation of labour resources, must be socially commanded. Society should *ex-ante* be informed to decide on socially accountable production, including the deployment of resources that modify social-metabolic reproduction – break with wasteful traditions. The case is not too dissimilar from a colonial force abusing the resources of a developing nation and the requisite response to the abused state of affairs. Maurice Dobb's (1969) position on how colonially-crippled African economies should subdue the market forces and let communities handle their development by matching income growth with welfare could be generalised. The community's 'decision will then be *a priori* (and not *a posteriori*) to any costing or pricing process in terms of which methods of production are chosen' (Dobb 1969). Labour ought to set the conditions for macro-price formation and the spaces upon which it invests over time. In the colonial age, it was not some impalpable capital that represented the enemy of the developing world; rather, it was the easily identifiable 'boots on the ground.' Of late, forms of post-colonial control became European ideology enshrined in neo-colonial institutions.

A similar sane alternative to the status quo is delinking (Frank's and Fuentes 1987; Amin 1990). Overall, these alternatives are based on the sovereignty-obtained policies of self-reliance pioneered by the Soviet Union and replicated in the Third World. The idea to reign in international market forces and their price systems may also be extended to *delink from capital's rule over its dominant modes of reasoning*. *A priori*, the exponential degradation of social nature should ideally spark an *epistemological rupture with the intellectual edifice of capital*. Epistemological rupture as used here is Gaston Bachelard's (1938) term

refashioned by Louis Althusser. As theory reduced to ideology confronts traditional epistemological obstacles, it ought to build itself up by revolutionary practice toward an ideological break with the past; however, with the Althusserian twist that the break emerges from the primacy of the global balance of powers, which subsequently realigns various struggles with its commanding lead. Balibar (1978) labels *dubious* to position Althusser's dialectical reversal (the rupture) into a structuralist current constituted by synchrony/diachrony and variation/invariance, because it would be meaningless for Althusser to speak of an epistemological break in a system of invariance. At any rate, invariance cannot pertain to the tumult of a class struggle imbued with an anti-systemic mode of thought – it cannot be overlaid onto a system of variance. At least since Aristotle's categories, the practice of theory does not develop by formal variants in thought, it develops by the interface between theory and practice. Principally, each variant of the Marxian method relates to a changing social relation in a dynamic and interdependent holistic process (Niebyl 1940a). Althusser to be sure elaborates '*a theory of discontinuity without invariance*, a theory of discontinuity conceived not as the counterpart of an invariance but as the counterpart of a tendential transformation, or as a *relation between terms which are processes of a different nature*, instead of being *different invariants but of the same nature*' (Balibar 1978). Beyond the circularity, what is being said here is the *heterogenous* world is commanded by a dominant ideology whose growth influences the inner drive of every object/element as well as its relation to every other sub-category of the totality.

It may be as well to mention that an Althusserian structure is morphologically the complex whole structured in dominance. The subject of such multipartite system is the class struggle, as opposed to a humanist man. Althusser disdained the notion that humanist man is subject since such reduction vitiates the antecedance of the class struggle. Atop the whole or history sits the suffocating weight of Western ideological power. History for Althusser resolves in an overdetermined and impersonal manner. History's subject is not missing. In a state of inter and intra-class flux, or in the flux of the class struggle, it is futile to analytically pinpoint any class as subject because no class as variant could be isolated or be un-influenced by other classes (the over-determination). Thus, for Althusser, the subject is the class struggle altogether, which is the motor of history.

That said, rupture is a process that begins by unseating the dominant ideology. Incidentally, the notion that there is nothing to falsify in Marxism because whatever happens maybe attributed to consciousness *mirrored* in ideology (Popper's position) omits the fact that consciousness is the intermediated subject of history and its object at the same time. Dialectics as means of understanding reflects a reality, which is observably a movement between

the simultaneously true and false and the not so false or true relative to future findings. To assess whether a historical event will be borne out is to envisage a consciousness remade by all the events surrounding the event to be predicted. Prediction *per se* is an impossibility. More concretely, to envision whether socialism will occur or not is to assess the synergy between organised anti-systemic struggle and revolutionary consciousness. Conversely, to predict all of history separate from its mediating constituents is impossible because history as a totality is not self-contained. That is to say, to hypothesise the whole of history apart from history being the product of both contingent and necessary social activities is a question for theology and not for science. What has been borne out so far is that the rule of labour brings forth public schooling and public health, or rather development, while the free market enslaves labour. Such is an observation from fact brought about by the laws of capital rather than attempting the ludicrous exercise of prediction under the aegis of capital of whether a classless society has or will come about hither and yon.

Put differently, it is an unscientific hypothesis to presume that history altogether without reference to its constituent social activities is an object of analysis. If one says history, one must say the history of what and of which class and in which period etc. It is also an unscientific hypothesis to presume that the consciousness that shapes current and future events could be assumed a variant of a trans-historical trait. Typically, what such analytic frame disregards is the overwhelming weaponry of imperialism that disembowels the Third World, and the imperialist booty of war that refashions the white working class into strands of nationalist fascism. Such stance analyses away the totality of capital as the pile of waste subtended by waste relations, or only analyses particular situations that support its position.

Yet, for the science of capital to posit a hypothetical man whose tastes set prices and allocate resources, a man bereft of a real past or future as subject of history and object of social science, is not haphazard eclecticism. In the state of socialist defeat, capital constructs the man of its choice. It chooses a still image from a qualitatively shifting social process that becomes the concept around which its favoured state of the world becomes the only possible state. Its abstraction of man reduced to some hedonistic desire without the weight of history, which moulds the social man to its own profit-desires, is an ideal unrelated to the real. This is not to say one cannot formalise a dynamic process with still cross-sections to elucidate the laws governing a process. It is to say that when capital employs the form of value, the product of labour reified, to erase the potentiality of labour as subject, it does so to expand upon itself. It erects its own perspective of man in the stillness of things, but with its inherent biases: never a word about its own overly-entropic system whose very growth spells disaster – or the debasement of the planet. It only abstracts

that which is palpable and deprived of social context and, hence, deprived of subject. The absence of the social in the subject, or the reification, is itself a degradation of real time or history (Lukacs 1919).

Since questions of degree matter, and because past developmental progress has tallied with socialisation (investments in public assets), social-historical alternatives abound; development anywhere is about re-investment in labour. Under capitalism, social as opposed to private assets designate progress. One does not say a country has many billionaires, and therefore it is developed, one says a country has good public schooling, health, and transport. To not recognise what is common sense, a workable guide to practical affairs in contradistinction to optimal formalism (Dobb 1969), the overwhelming heap of waste and/or the outstanding damage to man and nature will grow; how so?

Consider four overlooked instances that go against common sense:

1. Much of the globe exchanges in the US dollar, stores its wealth in the dollar or some proxy of the dollar, and concedes to the dollar as the conveyor belt of value transfer to Empire. Leading financial strata share a vested interest in pauperising the international working class. They promote hollow nationalism and identity politics that forestall working-class unity. Here we have private capitals socialised with international financial institutions doing their bidding, while social labour develops into a form of capital intercompeting with itself and developing as a heterogenous multitude.
2. Capital as subject of the irreparably damaged social nature is another obvious but omitted condition. Even though capitalist production had battered social nature for systemic cost-cutting reasons re-enabling surplus value making from waste, mainstreamers such as E.O. Wilson (2016) recommend setting aside half the earth to preserve whatever remains for safekeeping some biodiversity. Such is an invocation of G. Hardin's (1968) idea of preserving Western civilisation by keeping the developing world at bay. Recognising that the planet fails to replenish its losses, the decorated Wilson speaking at the 'Albright Lecture in Conservation' parochially recommends that each can contribute to make this possible (Wilson 2019). Aside from the fact that such views are relayed from a platform named after the woman who deemed worthwhile the slaughter of half a million children to Americanise Iraq, the cant of bourgeois democracy, 'the each doing something', under uneven power platforms results in Iraqi-like Americanisation. Under the capital relation, the progenitor of waste production, the setting aside of half the earth is the enclosure of primitive accumulation writ large. By primitive accumulation Marx meant that the capitalist mode of production and its private property have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of that commoner property which rests on the labour of the individual himself; in other words, the deracination

of private labour (Marx 1867). By the pressure of the laws of capital, cor-doning off half the planet socialises labour, and as always, *by fire and steel* (Marx's wording). It is absurd not to question how the subject of history, capital amassed in Western civilisation, can be tasked with saving a planet whose very destruction is an act of accumulation.

3. Imperialism consumes its partner class. By class-defined priorities, capital first came to the man of the colonies and now comes to its adjunct class, which is a sphere of capital. At first, Baran (1952) noted that the benefits of capital to the working class in the centre were tardy and skimpy, but altogether negligible in the Third World. Later Rodney (1972) stressed that Africa did not progress despite the brutalities of capitalism. With the certitude of hindsight, wealth turned out to be waste made to appear useful. Gilgamesh's wisdom that 'mankind can number his days, but he has only achieved wind' has turned out to be more fact than fiction. Yet, the world according to dominant discourse is being run by a multitude without subject-national formations. The thrust of such unreasonable thought is far-reaching to the point that even astute Marxists must engage with capital's recalcitrant intelligentsia on its own terms. They do, as they must, to refute farcical theories claiming the non-existence of imperialism. For instance, Patnaik and Patnaik (2021) devote pages of their book to argue the historical phenomenon that a closed and self-contained capitalism in the metropolis is a logical impossibility, or that 'capitalism without imperialism' cannot be. They do so although India and much of the developing world continue to cave in under neo-colonial assault and imperialist legacy. Peasants in the developing world do not receive less than adequate caloric intake by a choice they made, instead, they do so because the structure of imperialism reproducing disparity ensures that they should receive less than adequate caloric intake.
4. To address a Western intelligentsia whose class cognitive dissonance stacks up against the facts by imperialist rents is pointless. The treatment of the counterfactual, the statement 'if people had adjusted their behaviour to capital's theories of social science' is inadmissible as a benchmark for progress. To pursue an *a priori* argument radically at variance with an *a posteriori* condition is beyond reasonable. For instance, had polluters paid for their negative externality, as in 'this world would not be polluted argument', miss the point that waste is permissible and without waste, especially the wasting of humans, profits disappear. Anyhow, a class that reproduces by imperialist rents would not admit that its science put to practice necessarily over-pollutes the world.

Through transference between military and ideological power, the capital class profits by undermining the social-natural basis of social reproduction.

With the retreat of labour as a political force, social production exponentially manifests as substantive waste. Yet by the reign of the absurd, which exemplifies the conceptual structure of capital, and which governs the remaking of reality, truth is what the reigning hallucinatory mode of thought makes of it. It is for the post-modernists many truths but never a truth of the whole because there is no whole. Oddly, it is as if there are no holistic neoliberal policies homogenising capital through finance and lubricating world dollar flows to the US financial market.

That capital is universal or totalises is a reflection upon phenomenon from the days of warring seafaring companies to the time the US rattles the globe with any of its market policies. For the Western Marxist, however, it so happens that dividable truth translates into each developing country in isolation from the imperialist centre inflicts self-harm upon itself in the process of production. By drawing on Althusser's (1969) point that 'the workers who read Capital can understand it far more easily than all the bourgeois specialists ... because Capital deals quite simply with capitalist exploitation of which they are the victims,' it so appears that Western Marxists also misunderstood Marx universalising value relation for class reasons, or by belonging to exploiting nations they failed to digest capital as exploited workers potentially do. Such partitioned truth, however, is logical and exhibits a desultory relation to an activity of capital acting upon an indivisible reality. Moreover, this dividable truth is not the perception of the lived experience awaiting adjustment by the truth of a future lived experience. It is the belief that an intransient, self-entitled capital with its allegedly endogenous price system are *deus ex machina*. To illustrate with a recent example. The London Economic says that three decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, a 'snowy food bank queue in London' still compares to 'some Eastern European Country that's been decimated by years of communist rule.<sup>8</sup> To date, the Western Marxist alignment with anti-Sovietism buoys with every act that diminishes the prospect of the socialist alternative. Here is a planet ruined by the London bourgeoisie and its dominant ideas, nearly a billion people eliminated by Europeans in their conquests since 1500 AD, and an Eastern bloc ravaged by capital recoiling into its elemental state of fascism adopted in the Second Great War, while re-interpellation by some implanted fear of communism or outstanding working-class criminalisation unburdens white man on account of his mission civilisatrice. History rewritten as Europeans who come in peace, but sadly it is the virus that massacred the natives, is an example of a decisive constituent in the stock of capital's wealth. Examples

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<sup>8</sup> The London Economic (2021). Not a photo of the Soviet Union in the 1930s but the UK today. How did we allow this to happen on our watch? <https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/heartbreaking-picture-of-snowy-food-bank-queue-goes-viral/10/02/>

like these are manifestations of the defeat of labour or, its counter image, capital's hegemony over the labour process. It is furthermore what capital and its Western Marxists adjutants have sown as science for a continuously battered working class coerced into auto-destruction.

The class-ordered autophagic state self-demonstrates as white nations over-devour the underling classes of non-white nations along with their nature. Such issue is tangential to the Western intellectual corpus. With a bit of casuistry, a mix of neo-Malthusianism with idealised nationalism establishing progress bred by imaginary identity, the malleable ethic of utilitarianism trumps the strict ethic of the categorical imperative. Bound by capital's constructed bottleneck of supposed limited resources vis-à-vis an 'immense' global population, the case of feasting upon the lives of non-whites brings 'utility' to most in US-Europe but not all the planet – as per the utilitarian ethic. Either by desire or need, utility as such includes the needless overconsumption of man. The imaginary binaries of Malthusianism, the half-world emptied for trees to grow or the lifebuoy's ethic, the notion that man must save what could be saved, is a European constructed falsity to befit capital's profit motives. Neither demographic growth nor use of resources are independent of capital's imperatives or the global accumulation process. Supposing that it is ethical to make most peoples of the world happy in an overproducing system (utilitarian ethics), which thrives by waste, while a minority remains in misery, makes it also ethical by extension to sacrifice minorities. In reality, the minority turns out to be the majoritarian other of the South whose elimination is *sine qua non* for accumulation.

## 6 Apportioning Waste

Rephrasing our hypothesis in light of the foregoing: history has actualised as phenomenal waste. This history submits itself to reason. In their pursuit of higher profit rates, the owners of the means of production usurp more from the social product by reducing value outlays on labour. By the latter one means fewer or lower quality schools and hospitals, lower all-round development and numbers of mouths to feed. Broadly, there are two ways by which the pawns of capital carry out this measure. First, capital subdues direct producers by a combination of repression and ideological means. Secondly, it reduces the life expectancy of social producers relative to the historically determined level, such that over society's lifecycle, it keeps more of the social product for itself while lessening its outlays on the reproduction of labour. Both instances require some variant of violent coercion. Theoretically, these processes deflect from the commodity and its attendant value relation. By some degree of violence or encroachment war, the concrete labour objectified in the commodity

is alienated from a direct producer who does not own the right to its use value. The commodity would then be destined to exchange for money, the universal commodity, such that market imperatives of cost reduction and competition inform producers on whether they allocated competitive levels of socially necessary labour time in production or not. Producers receive market-dispensed information on how to adjust production conditions and survive only after the fact or after their products left to be traded-realised. Thence, the inefficient investments that some undertook to produce must be disengaged or written off. Obviously, central powers in control of the market are privileged.

As labour becomes a form of capital, through its labour power, the commodity that predicates the production of all commodities, which trades on markets and involves an investment from society to be produced, it also becomes subject to a process of creation and destruction. And while capital becomes more efficient as it modernises by new technology and sheds labour, the destruction of the labourer along with the labour power she houses in her becomes itself an industry of destruction.

The issue gains in complexity because of commodity fetishism. The commodity is *ontologically*, in its being proper, the activity determined by the contradiction inherent to its objective state, is the tug of war between use and exchange value. Under capital's rule, exchange value becomes the determining moment and as such the commodity becomes an act of disguise to conceal real production conditions or value relations beneath its glitter. In putting on a show to equate different value contents for the same amount of money in exchange, the commodity seizes what is best in people to support its dissimulation (Marx 1867). Just as early man alienated what is ideal in himself onto the animated nature that he worshipped for providing him with sustenance, the dependence on the commodity to organise the reproduction of social life bestows supernatural powers upon it – or ‘the creators, have bowed down before their creations’ (Marx 1845). The spectacle of the commodity in the act of exchange becomes a proxy for real social relations between people (Debord 1967). More important, by spectacularising wealth on earth, it creates a worldly heaven into which few of the adherents of the market mantra may be admitted, while the many inter-competing zealots sink the planet further into misery. All in all, the reason of the commodity, its dynamic to self-expand by ripping use value from society for the purpose of private gains, becomes the reason of society. The market and its symbolism become engrained in the received theory that furthers the reign of capital.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The market here is a world market whose dynamic is the global law of value as opposed to the national market. As will be explained in chapter 6, that reign of capital is a reign over the

The commodity's power has recently peaked with the textbooks of economics speaking of a rational man whose utility rises by consumption, while in reality social man is literally self-consuming. The mystification is such that social man, a subcategory of the social class, adopts ahistorical or formal reasoning; and hence, enters into a state of amnesia in which the labour of society, which reproduces him to produce, completely vanishes. Conventionally-conceived man exists only when on the job and/or increasingly consumes to be satisfied. Whereas the real person exists only because of other people, this capital fabricated man consumes more of himself than the commodities he paid for. That so because value proper, the socially necessary labour time, a portion of which covers the cost of social reproduction, gets slotted against a price/wage whose foundations are the power foundations erected by capital. While capital's power determines the wage share as a residual, the real consumption of man is laden with waste that shortens her life.

For Western Marxism, however, value is gauged by the hours of 'productive' labour in some factory, and not in the labour of death experienced in the trenches of the wars visited upon the Third World: both activities are waged, and their products sell, sell as constituents of other products, or await to be sold. Unbeaten by capital, the subject in value is revolutionary labour, otherwise it is only object. Labour devoid of revolutionary subject is repressed, and/or depopulated, and always, by the *ex-post* derived decision to expend minimum socially necessary labour time in all the stages of production. Competing products signal to the market the minimal labour necessary that keeps various capitalists above average profits. Minimising reliance on living labour, in addition to a smaller wage share attendant upon the weakened labour, reduce necessary labour and consumption. In the case of wasted lives in the trenches or other wasteful activities, people are productive by producing their own deaths. Back to square one, the high profits associated with waste demand that life on the jobs in social reproduction be cut shorter.

The value forms are ideals and for Marx (1867) these are 'the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought' (Ilyenkov 1977). In reference to metaphysics, these are not that which exists only in consciousness. The ideal is a transmutation of the real captured in thought, or put less abstractly, the money form of value is the content of value or the law of value as it self-expands. These laws are manifest in a history of labour suppression. It is not because some English businessperson sells the blood and toil of the Third world for a higher price in London and then imagines that his

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many world economies of the world, which have since the long-sixteenth century become an economy of the world, or a world system (Braudel 1982; Wallerstein 1974).

instance of sale and/or realisation is the only value-form from which to deduce value. Value is not what he concocts of the relationship of value to price in his head. The price of that commodity, its money value form, in that moment of sale encapsulates the value relations, the history of the totality of social production, which began the second capital subjected labour to its repression.

Illustratively, is it not the case that bombing the Third World engages living labour and expends socially necessary labour time to produce literally dead labour and cheaper labour power? In other words, is it not the case that the pilot of an F-35 jet fighter realises profits as he engages the Iraqi person on the ground, altogether as forced labour in self-defence, as raw material to the war machine, and as the desired output when he dies? Is it not the case that the depletion of life under bombardment, this swift expenditure of brain and muscle as concrete labour in the factory of war, is a source of surplus value? Questions of this nature rarely emerge in the Western Marxist corpus.

Forgetting for a second the false thesis that it is the bourgeoisie that owns technology, and that productivity is not surplus value, the argument that surplus value interfaces without mediation with some form of technology may contingently, and under extreme autarky, hold as the nation which 'owns' the technology employs the technology in higher productivity areas. Such is logical but unreal. Ownership or the exclusion of others from right of use are products of imperialist aggression and formative of surplus value. The advanced imperialist nation must not only prevent the subjugated nation from the ownership of advanced technology, but it must also unceasingly clobber the aggressed nation to arrest any of its prospects for advancement, while the very act of clobbering resulting in waste is, at the same time, a surplus value making activity. It does not take much in the way of imagination to foresee that bombing resource-rich nations reduces value outlays upon the reproduction of the masses in these nations, cuts down to size the power of these nations to set prices for their products, and founds the conditions for capital-convenient prices of inputs to be used at every stage of production later.

The reason why these obvious questions are not discussed is because Western Marxism theorises a misplaced value relation, one that exists only in its mode of thought that safeguards its imperialist class rents. It specifically neglects capital, the subject encoded within the commodity as self-expanding value. By that conception writ large, it disregards imperialist aggression as the pivot of accumulation. What is theorised then is the moral 'value' of an aristocratic nation, as opposed to value proper, socially necessary labour time, and value as the social relation, which governs the process of accumulation.

Theorising with the circumspect national boundary in mind is the self-reinforcing theoretical activity that heeds capital's edifices of price and time. With dollar fetishes and capital's calendar in mind, Western Marxists weigh

the value contribution of the developing world to the global product as minimal because its moneyed form is minimal. The implications of such calculations are such that the developing world has been negligible and replaceable, and all along, while the central wealth has been the product of the central working class – strata organically interwoven with capital. However, a commodity and its money fetish are also objective and impersonal. Fetishism is inborn with to the commodity's drive to self-expand. As humanity auto-commodifies, fetishism becomes not man's act but an act of hypostatisation: the constructed idea of the thing transmutes into a subject that defines social relations. Being so, it is the commodity that re-bestows divine power onto itself, or it is the commodity, which scaffolds dominant ideology. The purpose as such remains the falsification of value by the veneer of its money form. To elucidate, fetishism permits capital to say that there was no contribution from native tribes who were eliminated along with their forests, whereas the act of elimination itself is the leading industry and the premise upon which any other related industry may emerge. It is not money that designates surplus value. Money is the magnitude of value and its unit of measure. That said, it is not the nation with more money that actualised value. *The act of labour elimination is value acted out.* Figuratively, the socially necessary labour time compressed in the waste industries of the developing world, which reduces necessary labour and shortens the lives of natives, should formulaically by the pressure of competition also convert any BMW plant in Germany into a more wasteful industry with shorter Germanic life spans. However, it is not only by the primacy of politics or the payoff that imperialism dishes out in wages to bid the North against the South that such does not happen, but also by the longstanding organic tie of capital to labour in the North. Historically, in the quest for imperialist booty, Northern workers were the personification of capital.

Under capitalism and subject to the profit motive, a fifteenth century world that was underproducing, relatively overpopulated and underfed for natural reasons, is today a world overproducing, relatively overpopulated, and underfed for social reasons. Although in social reproduction all of labour is productive, at this juncture, there are billions of people who do not engage in supposedly worthwhile market activities. Capital confronts a significant reserve army of labour and resolves the contradiction by winnowing the excess labour and its labour power relative to spare capacity. Its policies of inadequate food supplies, easily treated diseases running amok, and wars, become industries of depopulation. In a nutshell, waste accumulation, the wasting of social nature, which presupposes the reproduction of man, emerges as the principal domain of accumulation. Capital shifts more of the costs of production upon society, or it disinvests in labour, and always as it peddles the earlier than historically

determined elimination of people as a product to be sold. In the grand factory of waste, living labour produces dead labourers using dead labour. And just as with any commodity, the more socially necessary labour time transmutes into surplus labour, the more profits. Since the productive forces of waste face off against waste production relations, the contradiction resolves in the autophagia of society.

Twentieth-century capitalism assumes the concentrated form of imperialism, an evolved stage whose contradictions necessarily but not exclusively resolve by encroachment wars. Furthermore, financialisation and its higher velocity of exchange impresses upon society its own turnover time. People organise their lives according to the quarterly profit reporting intervals. As finance capital dominates, a higher pace of exchange ‘annihilates space with time,’ turning over social material as inputs and outputs realised in shorter intervals (Marx 1863). Although the rate of obsolescence of nature and commodities rises, its ascent must be predetermined by a rising obsolescence of man. Capital’s aggression submits anything with use value, or of benefit to society, to the edicts of exchange value. In parallel, its higher capital concentration and centralisation exercised as market power steady its rate of return in relation to its capital stock over longer periods. The uninterrupted and auto-reinforcing process also preserves the separateness of use from exchange value. Since market power is propped up by imperialist violence, the means of producing violence and the violence itself become systemic, objective and/or alienated from society’s control because they are commandeered by a fetishised thing: the objective and alienated commodity.

The activities eroding social nature, in particular militarism, are subdomains of waste accumulation. Waste sells or its products take on a price and a money form of value in a capital-erected social-time made to deliver most surplus labour in quarterly profit intervals. The costs of waste to society stretched over its reproduction cycle are the cost cutting measures that capitalists impose such that the profits they report in short intervals rise. Concealed by the semblance of free trade in instantaneous exchange is the lower share of socially necessary labour time allotted to the reproduction of society over its lifecycle. At the end of the day, it is not only the superexploited garment worker who earns a measly wage; it is all of society, which earns far less than it requires for a decent living. The garment also leaves in its trail many harmful pollutants and social ills that literally shorten life and, inversely, expand surplus labour vis-à-vis necessary labour.

Such erosion of life by waste industry is another reason why commercial exploitation, the form of exploitation associated with slavery, which has morphed into enslavement *en masse* by encroachment wars (waste exploitation), is a higher plateau of exploitation – not only a higher rate but a different

structural shift altogether. In this death on sale output reworked by labour such that necessary labour falls into the negative quadrant over the lifecycle of society exceeds chattel slavery. The modern wasted man is valuable dead as opposed to being needed alive for cotton planting and picking.

Moreover, capital decides which portion of the socially necessary labour time reified in waste it realises in sale at the time of production and which it spreads over time to realise at later dates. Society consumes and pays for the waste now and covers the cost of waste in the future. Instead of bettering itself, it labours to clear the damage excreted by capital, and could only afford to grow by creating more damage. People, for instance, incur taxes and lost years for all the deaths and diseases that reckless production entails. *As capital breaks down all resistance creating the man to whom capital is the natural order (Marx 1867), it owns time, and sections time to its own benefit (Lukacs 1919). Capital may only appear to sell a commodity when in reality it is selling the time of one's life.*

Time sectioning is worked out by the dominant class through its personal and impersonal institutional structures. To illustrate with an example of the roundabout way in which capital bears upon the time of life, consider the hiking of the US interest rate to contain inflation in 2022. That measure raised the dollar and the costs of servicing debts in the Third World, worsening its social condition. In the 2007–2008 crisis, the lowering of the US interest rate pushed the prices of basic foods upward by speculative pressure and caused hunger far-afield (Kaufman 2010). The textbook theory of monetary policy that prioritises fighting inflation, also redistributes income to the rich, and fits cosily in an ideology that ordains capital as a natural force to which there are no alternatives. In a less convoluted manner, the victory of the US against a starving nation or a small island like Granada, will boost its global standing and with that the cross-national power ties of the imperialist class. When the unconscionable torture of one political prisoner in a Libyan jail gets more coverage in international human rights bodies than the daily structural genocide instigated by the US's regnant ideology, then liberalism presents itself to be reasoned as a surrogate fascism.

Selling shorter lifetimes, the prematurely wasted lives, by squeezing socially necessary labour time into conventional time, leaving little leisure and lifetime for labour, means that the depopulation industry consummates the capitalist order. The more capital commands time, the more the time in socially necessary labour time becomes the shorter time of life destined to the market. Logically, as capital reigns, the system's entropy rises, waste production dominates, more waste products of waste industries assume the form of decaying social nature on display in the shopping windows. These costs will be borne by society across time because as the production of waste centres on the sale of

shorter lifetimes, capital deploys more of the 'time' in socially necessary labour time, value proper, to waste activity and to further decimate the concrete time of labour. Insofar as strategy is concerned, it is no longer a case of fighting for an 8 hour-day, it is a case of making sure that shorter workdays in Europe do not cause shorter lives in Zimbabwe or similar places. As these waste-costs reduce life and the quality of life, the reduction in life expectancy relative to the level attained in an imperialist society signifies the variations in the rate of surplus value.

Hidden from view by ideological blinders, waste accumulation is the production sphere of the biggest industries. War, the conduit of commercial exploitation, is a top of the range arrangement for waste because it condenses socially necessary labour time in an alienated production process whose purpose is to sell death. However, not only the war dead, but also each of the waste products is market-mediated and arrayed against a price system over the turnover cycle of society - as opposed to capital's bookkeeping time and price. Each of their products is value and a production relation diminishing the social cost of the reproduction of the working class as it reduces the population relative to the time of the reproduction cycle; residually, it reduces necessary labour and lays the ground for higher surplus value.

Waste industries extract the most value per socially necessary labour time in the shortest conventional time and dispose of the inputs, the labourers, as outputs, *ergo*, the dead people. As death of social nature becomes a product, the rate of accumulation through rising dependence on waste or the metabolic rate of social reproduction becomes determined by the liquidation of social nature. Clearly, the degree of social entropy, or waste that de-reproduces society, is counteracted by the power of labour. As labour slumbers, socially responsible production retrogresses, and economic growth undermines society. An infighting or identity-absorbed working class bereft of revolutionary consciousness hands its cheapened life and resources to capital. Since the system is highly entropic (the entropy of social system speeds up an otherwise lowly entropic natural order), and as waste accumulation encodes its values in the dominant traditions of capital's pawns, the system's logical as well as its historical trajectories become explosive.

Neoliberalism as the contemporary version of capital's ideology heightens the scale of social dispossession and accelerates the waste. For instance, there is utility in a bomb and, co-laterally, some will be made better off by the bomb while most of the immiserated mass will worsen. As an expansion of the reason and the function of the capital relationship, neoliberalism represents a higher degree of commodity adornment. By virtue of its accentuated income-differentiation, waste becomes a super fetish; colloquially, the rich class enriches

from the bomb and its associated utility. Either pure waste, the wars, or more products laced with waste, dominate the market. Meanwhile, the costs of waste borne by society are the credit that capital earns. These once more reduce the social costs of reproduction by reducing wages and the lifespan of society, over its turnover cycle. Here in terms of open scissors analysis, as the outlays on labour fall and as surplus labour rises, the rate of surplus value soars. The counter image in history of such equation is the momentum for waste that contributes to the historical surplus value, which sets the rules of the game for the practice by which surplus value reflexively builds. *More so under neoliberalism, the rate of exploitation mirrors the rate at which society auto-liquidates.*

## 7 Whither Subject

Judging by the depth of the social-natural crisis, the politics of reform have so far adhered to the dynamic of capital, or the sway of profits in the 'last moment' over the politics of current and intermediate moment. Figuratively, the last moment may be thought of as the Marxist way of saying in the long term we are all dead, but in content it is not the same. It is not about future demand rising by rising wages or one where future price meets long term average costs. With economics being determinant in the last moment, the structure of society becomes a structure in dominance where the relations of production are determinant in the last instance. The Marxist last moment designates the primacy of politics or the necessity for capital to cement its rule before it makes its profit.

To requalify our hypothesis once again: Profit-making requires cost-cutting, underutilisation of resources and an overly entropic rate of metabolic reproduction. Capital *overconsumes* man and nature and pays little in return for the damage. Social nature is 'overconsumed' and not 'consumed' because the decline of socialist or revolutionary ideology heralds the emasculation of labour as the historical subject and frees the hands of capital. In relation to the prevailing wealth level, the rate of surplus value and its money form in profit are anchored in economising the living conditions of the working class (Marx 1894). This rule translates into a reduction of life's time and quality. The substantive destruction, the amount of waste products accumulated so far in the social and environmental calamities, designates the substance-side of the cumulative surplus value – the pile of commodities or waste.

Despite the ongoing crisis, the veneration of commodities and their money forms, the things labour produces upon which the reproduction or de-reproduction of life depends, shrouds the immiserating impact of capital's laws. Needless to say, capital is no divine entity. Its ways should not be mysterious. That

a worker in the developing world deprived of the means of subsistence works for poverty wages is not a choice one makes by legal contract; it is as per the foregoing a slow death sentence. However, fetishism has become more than a jargon of positivism in which things produce things. It has metastasised to occupy popular culture and imagination. If it is not the hypostatised market that dictates social movement, it is the abstract person, this or that non-social individual, in power. The state of the social mind is such that things make history but never the social class transpired in dominant ideology. The triumph of capital manifests in the inversion of social subject, capital stands for labour, and the allure of the commodity/money. The deadliness of a bomb, the thing, appears to shape the power balance behind price formation when in fact it is the capital relation bent on aggression that erases labour as a subject in the formation of value.

As revolutionary practice ebbs, capital reconciles its logic with reality. Man, who consumes to self-consume, becomes actual man. The equations the neoclassical economists scribble on the blackboards of classrooms create their isomorphs in the value forms by which labour auto-liquidates. For instance, as the planet hari-kari's at capital's behest, the hassle-free supply and demand curves parade as replicas of the real historical processes of production and consumption, respectively. Daunting capital transmutes the real social being into an automaton-like man whose life is charted by the capital erected two-dimensional diagram of mainstream economics (an automaton is unlike Marcuse's one dimensional man [1964] whose determination is the drudgery of monotonous work).

When human de-reproduction relative to society's available capacity becomes a principal production sphere and an end in itself, surplus value could only be negligibly derived from the production of partially useful/sane commodities. It principally arises from the production of waste, especially the purest form of waste, militarism. This waste is not to be gauged in the difference between the energy consumed to produce a single saleable item and the energy stored in that item. It no longer becomes a case of a 500-calories beef-steak in the US, which has taken 20,000 calories, or 20 Kgs of cereals, to be produced. The building block of surplus value becomes the wasted man whose very life is a saleable item. Hence, capital's augmented determination to decimate the labour subject.

## 8 Issues of Waste Measurement

To restate still another variant of our proposition with the problematic of measurement in mind: the pile of commodities presumed as wealth turned out to be endless wars, deaths from famines and curable diseases, and irreparable harm to nature or, more generally, waste. The accumulation of waste

overwhelms social production. This process has a subject: it is the capital relation whose structure is the US-European constellation and whose preeminent activity is to produce and market waste.

Measurements arise upon a system of thought and its method of conceptualisation. A datum imparts adequate knowledge of the fact only in the way the concept of the fact was abstracted to represent that fact in contrast to other facts. An object, any object as substance, is a subject and predicate of itself. By way of definition, a concept representing an object is best read as intermediation of subject with substance. Where the subject is capital, it constructs an image in the mind of the substance, here social nature, it desires to portray in one shade or another. The irreplaceable loss of species and peoples in the war on nature and colonies, new and old, are assessed with capital's own accounting system and units of measure. Since capital clubs labour into submission, it imposes upon society an atomistic and thingified mode of social life. It erects its theory as a counter image of the reified social/cultural phenomenon it had created. It then tautologically measures what it has fabricated, with the conceptual framework it had adopted, and the units of measure it had concocted.

In its utilitarian national accounting system, of which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the measure of value added or alternatively income, or what people consume and pay at the point of purchase counts as a product produced and consumed within the time of reference (Fullbrook 2019). The critique of national income or its variant GDP rests on the omission of the social costs to society and the past consumption in production. Regarding inputs consumed in production, Gross Output (GO) captures part of their moneyed worth and, accordingly, the added item of capital's consumption lets final consumption appear as it should, much greater than purchases of final consumables added together – in the US, GO is nearly double the GDP (Shaikh and Tonak 1996). What these putative measures do not capture is the contribution to income generated by depleting or wasting the human resource.

Social costs are traded and respond to market signals; however, their corresponding prices may neither be recognised nor entered separately on finance-accounting ledgers. Social costs impute as lost income or lost living conditions to labour, albeit correlatedly with labour's falling political clout. Their real values are included but hidden from view in the price or moneyed form of each traded input or product – these as well as their forms in waste products 'remain bearers of exchange value' (Marx 1894). Put differently, social and environmental costs are sublated in the presumed final price of the presumed final product as reduction to production costs and, conversely, profits.

To illustrate with an example, the treatment of cancer and its reduction of life encumbers society. However, the treatment as a product is a value process with an attendant surplus value and profit – cancer as a modern phenomenon

of advanced industrialisation wastes man whose costly treatment contributes to the profits of the bourgeoisie. In militarism, an accumulation sphere whose product is death, defence and war budgets are capital's credit, whereas the social convulsions of war and austerity reorder productive capacity, including the social turnover time of production – the average lifetime of society falls leaving more for capital. Waste processes are economic activities with an attendant surplus value. The wasting of labour may accelerate to generate income from the depletion of the human resource.

Since price is not an injective (one-to-one) relation to value, the assessment of value or value transfers cannot be inferred from capital's price system because prices embed the history of labour as eliminated subject. Powerless labour cannot negotiate the price adequate to its contribution in the product. Adjacent, the money form/price designated by capital conceals or un-reports labour's effort in the prices on its register. Many of the production steps *qua* value processes (the capital to labour clout balance in particular) undertaken to produce a commodity, and not only those of the last effort that went into making of the commodity, may be unaccounted for. Price is a conventional time composite that negates the value relations or production activities, which occurred in real or social time – the time designate of the events that occur.

Capital marks down the life of labour and the damage incurred by society as a result of its butchery of social nature. The price form is a trickster not so much because the buyer does not know the moneyed costs defrayed by the seller, but because the social costs, especially those above sane levels are deemed necessary by capital. Moreover, the price of any commodity or its money form of value holds within it a valuation of labour's standing in the class struggle reflected in the price of its corresponding labour power in the time of reference. The wages earned by society are high or low depending on the power of labour, and these would be passed onto the prices that capital issues. Illustratively, since the terms of power influence the terms of exchange, the price of a coke-can holds within it the meagre power standing of sugar plantation workers. As labour's agency falters, the grounds upon which price determination forms, tilt in favour of capital.

Value and price are disparate categories because the former is a history of social relations mediated by labour and actualised in production, while the latter is a symbol of these relations in conventional time. Through the superstructural institutions of capital, the class power of social subjects/classes in the value relation transforms value into price. Within the price, the moneyed form of value as the market generated magnitude of abstract labour, the already resolved contradiction of value also reveals the worth of each historical subject of the value relation. Obviously, wasted labour as powerless subject

accounts for the downward pressure on the price in terms of reduced costs, as well as upward pressure in terms of future mark-ups as capital's power platforms bulk up.

Aside from the fact that the unit of measure in any currency is a fetish enshrined by hegemonic powers, attempting to infer value or imperialist value transfer from the apparent sum of prices (GDP), which allegedly approximates the social product, encounters the difficulty of juxtaposing essence, the social labour abiding by the laws of capital, with capital's money form of value, its appearance. Under capitalism, assigning a quantitative magnitude to the contesting powers in the class struggle, to the strength of labour or capital, must adhere to the bias of capital's conservatism inherent in its accounting system. Correspondingly with the weight one ascribes to labour solidarity or the strength of an international front against imperialism, the assessments of value transfer couched in the money form may assume high or low amounts. A low labour clout permits capital to underrate the moneyed contribution of the South and in turn infer that the value transfer from the South is insignificant. The weakness or strength of labour is snapped as a still shot in the money form of value. To decipher the value in the price one must reverse study the imperialist assault applied to subdue labour at every stage of production. The rate of value transfer to the centre can then be discerned more from the cumulative impact of wasting the South upon the incomes in the North rather than from the picayune amount of money flows from the South to the North.<sup>10</sup>

To foreground the issue with a historical reference: without apportioning a weight to the role of France and its ideology in ransacking Africa and abolishing it as a competitive formation, the net capital flows from Togo to France, for instance, within a year of reference cannot represent the real value transfers no matter how one adjusts the macro prices, including the exchange rates. The power behind the wealth of France is a result of the continued class-articulated destruction of Togo and similar states. The gap in longevity between a country like Togo whose life expectancy remains around 60 years relative to about 90 in France proxies the compounded losses of Togo, which are the wealth of France. Togo denied as subject in development is the source of value formation in France and the reason why Togo under-prices its resources.

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<sup>10</sup> Williams (1985) and Ricci (2019) among many others are old and new attempts to measure value capture by the North. These measures rely on the correspondence of the level of development in the productive conditions given in the money form with value, and do not factor in the compounded effect of the historical surplus value. Exceptionally, Emmanuel (1972) found that value transfers to empire when calculating the lost potentialities of the South were some four times higher than the dollar amount of value transfers proposed by Bettelheim.

Value transfer is not only judged in the siphoning of money from the developing world but also by the impetus of outstanding de-development in the South and the theft of resources in relation to wealth accumulation in the North. The latter case, whose growth emerges from the lopsided balance of forces, also creates value for the North by the very act of destruction in the South. Moreover, weaker and security-vulnerable nations invite by their feebleness imperialist aggression, which retranslates into high surplus-value generating militaristic-accumulation. Imperialism copies the path of the objective course of the commodity as self-expanding value. It hits at the weakest links in the chain to establish a higher rate of exploitation. It prioritises the bombing of a starving Iraq not only to demonstrate its strength, but also to draw the most waste *qua* value from the feeblest.

In relation to a crisis-ridden business cycle in the centre, the amassing of surplus value in US-Europe *necessitates* the relentless wasting of Togo and similar developing nations. Without accounting for the contribution of waste to accumulation, the salient moneyed value form in units of currency falsely relays the usefulness of use value (productivity). Real productivity occurs in subsumed and under-priced waste rather than products of daily use that fetch high prices. In the substance of a commodity whose subject is a decimated labourer whose death is marketed as waste, value is waste. The case for waste may be readily observed from phenomenon given the explosiveness of the capital system and the meagre stock of unuseful things. Attributing usefulness to the value relation is logically impossible because the rate of exploitation equilibrates the rate of surplus value. Usefulness cannot become the leading link in value relations because the stream of value stocking up as dis-usefulness or waste further backstops the rate of profit.

Logically and historically, value is waste. Of the waste process, wasting a developing nation, like Iraq, as a sphere of production reinforces capital and repositions it as a stronger global subject in production *becomes* value relations. Capital's triumph re-sets the grounds upon which the labour process unfolds to the demands of waste accumulation. The real, the actual destruction and the control of oil as a prolific input, along with the ideological weight of imperialist victory biases the global mechanisms of price formation. Determinatively, it reorders social production at the behest of the law of value by ridding the population of its excess labour. Holistically, surplus value emerges by imperialist devastation reducing global necessary labour as well as by quashing the international proletariat, the revolutionary labour as subject.

Value in its substantive form is the capital stock including the stock of devastated humans and nature. In a very literal sense, the stock of wasted humans and nature in metric and moneyed measures, including the negative credit outstanding upon society, is preponderant. Similarly to any capital stock, waste

production exhibits a capital output ratio in which the product is the premature death of social nature – in social nature, man the subject is the ultimate object of destruction, as opposed to physical nature. Waste as flow building into stock is the instantiation of capital's ideology of death. To assign a money measure to value or value transfers without conceptualising value as a subject-object relationship, as an ideology of death effecting the death of social nature, is inadequate because the very concept to which measurement would be applied is either misconstrued or formal, and in both cases one-sided.

Moreover, proportionately with its power, the subject in value or capital, disguises objective value or the socially necessary labour time materialised and reified in the commodity. Through the mystery engulfing its money form—the ideal equivalent of value, the commodity-money rapport revs up its phantasmagorical abilities that outline the course of events. In his discussion of the ideal, Ilyenkov (1977) notes that historically the form or the ideal of a palpable thing acquires fantastical properties and a commanding position in social relations. Ilyenkov traces the origins of the mystification of forms to Plato's ideals, the forms of thought, organised as a 'state' of stable and internally organised world of laws, rules and patterns, which magically control the individual's mental activity. After passing through the definitive Kantian contribution by which the transcendental ideal relays knowledge of the objective-empirical, or how knowledge depends on our frame of reference of the objective-empirical, Ilyenkov finds in Hegel's determinate negation, or the process of knowledge that grows by contradictions immanent to concepts, a breakthrough. Although still in inverted form, that is with nature as an ideal being-in-itself, Ilyenkov thinks that Hegel's approach to the ideal dialectically mutated into the material and vice versa, which is sounder theoretically than the silly materialism of 'things outside the consciousness' to 'things inside the consciousness'—the material world unrelated to the ideal (in reference to positivism). Until Marx arrives at the scene and exposes the ideal, the ideal remained mystical whether it is that of a being-in-itself – Hegel, or of the concept of the thing in the mind separate from its palpable substance – the case of logical positivism.

The commodity as a value relation arrives with capitalism. Capital's commodity is money, and the money is commodity (Marx 1867). The money form – the ideal, acquires yet more potent and convoluted animistic powers. Regarding the commodity's ideal or money form, Ilyenkov (1977) argues that the commodity 'remained a mystery with regard to its form for the classical theory of value. The classical approach could not explain why this substance expressed itself as it did ... and at all events, deduction of the form of value from its substance remained an insuperable task for bourgeois science' – here Ilyenkov reasserts the chasm between the money form and labour as objectified substance in the commodity. Marx (1867) overcame the obstacle because

although the commodity's money form as an ideal separate from the body in which it is represented, ideality remains the phenomena within which the ideal is understood as the *activity of social man*, or social activity reified.

Fetishism as such expressly arises upon the process in which the subject, labour, whose activity created the commodity, ceases to exist, and is supplanted by the commodity-money *qua* fetish. However just as the real commodity is the product of labour, the ideal or the value-form is also the product of defeated labour. And just as money represents the value of commodities, it is this act of representation, which is performed not in the consciousness of the seller but outside his head which is the barometer of fetishism (Ilyenkov 1977; Marx 1867). It is performed in the space of the market, of which the seller is not aware and without his having even the slightest suspicion of the mysterious nature of the money form and the essence of the price (Marx 1867). The essence is the process of emaciating labour; value relations reveal themselves via a sort of reverse engineering that records all the battering labour took to release value meant for social reproduction. Capital and labour are therefore power-ensconced in the various stages of price formation.

In a context of reproduction by waste, the epigram 'everyone can spend money without knowing what money is' (Ilyenkov 1977) implies that for society to mimic capital in its pursuit of money-making, it will prove unwise because of the excessive social damage capital creates. Through reification of the money form of value, capital alienates labour from the commodity and erases labour as subject (Marx 1867; Lukacs 1919). To de-alienate labour is to read the history of things as things made by labour. Such is a dynamic process whose formalisation, its rendering into quantifiable symbols, is adequate only if it assesses to what degree was labour clubbed into submission to release its work for the low prices desired by capital. Every snapshot of the history of commodity-making accords with a price whose essence is the social activity of repression. Subjects whose impetus changes the balance of social forces behind the exchange of commodities, also revamp the groundwork upon which a price system emerges. Prices are the immediacy manifest in the uncertain state of becoming resolving the ascent of necessity into coincidence. Such is a dynamic or a qualitative process in which prices symbolise not only the last act of production, but also varied value relations across time. Prices reference more than just the activity capital had designated as relevant to price making. For instance, buying something off the shelf for a price is not only about redeeming the costs plus profits of the store owner, it is also a refraction/signal of the past activities that went into the making of the product. It is symbolic of the labour shortchanged in the past as well as the future repercussions arising upon the consumption of labour's product.

The differing imprint of shifting social forces, constituents of value, cannot lend themselves to arithmetic operations such as summation, unless standardised with sacrifice to content by some quantity such as price. That is not to say that adequate quantification is unfeasible. The assessment of value forming social forces is possible *post* market mediation or as exchange consummates and assigns shares of the social product to capital and labour. The variation of the share of labour over time, a result of labour's stand against the aggression of capital, or the degree to which capital wastes labour in relation to the demands of its crisis-plagued capital accumulation, signify the strength of labour in the value relation. Falling inequality indicates that there is a lesser rate of sane use-value alienated from labour, while more inequality indicates that more years of life are being wasted. Labour as subject countervailing capital must be assessed *ex-post* as an inference from a history of unequal and wasteful development.

The departure of appearance, the ideal or money form of value, from essence, the real or socially necessary labour time, is equally the impossibility of establishing an identity between value and price. However, systems of accounts remain subjective and could be imposed upon any situation with a degree of approximation. The commodity as self-expanding value is the outcome of a value relation abiding by the law of value. What should be measured is then the extent to which the delegation of capital's power to its reified objects, in particular its money form fetishes, which suppresses labour as subject. Letting any sum of value equal any sum of prices, without accounting how the price system serves as a veneer of value, is to neglect the subject's class power in value, or worse yet, to measure the social product with the fictional symbols that capital has prefabricated. To understand a dynamic process, one must overcome the conservatism of data produced to support the dogma of conventional theory (Niebyl 1940b). Moreover, as a consequence of pure abstractions, untethered from historical reality, the subject in value is nowhere to be seen in 'conservative' data. It is rendered amorphous and unintelligible; such that the imperialist states of the North also fade from view as subjects of imperialist practice.

The extent of labour's alienation from its product and the point to which the commodity's dynamic as self-expanding value dictates social life are commensurate with the degree of the crushed subject in the value relation. Conversely, un-alienated labour in charge of socially responsible production assigns a symbol to products equivalent to its benefit to society. In this case, value and its relations would have then ceased to be. Accordingly, the difficulty in assigning a measure to value arises because labour's incognisance of its historical role, the non-revolutionary working class, or labour introjecting capital's obscurantism,

appears to echo the rate of exploitation. Lenin (1913) commented on the difficulty of changing rote thinking in the population by opining 'but how to change its forms in a new situation, how to learn and think anew for this purpose (the revolution), this we do not understand.' Labour is exploited because it consents to self-consume. It does so by turning fictional capital into a reality, a reality which then redefines its consciousness. At the extreme end, for labour to totally self-waste at the behest of capital implies that it had become inanimate matter. In this theoretical condition, labour as natural substance may be stable long enough for its automaton-like subject to become indistinguishable from the constitutive material or other natural entities – it is just matter. As a physical object labour is easily quantified because it remains unchanged and it no longer plans its activity ahead of time (Lange 1953). Atoms do not plan their future as humans do. However, completely self-incognisant labour as subject is an impossibility, especially, in a social dynamic in which surplus value is a negotiated settlement with capital. In this dynamic state, it is inadmissible to set natural substance aside for measurement in price units without considering the changes in self-cognisant labour *qua* subject. To evaluate value in the money form without conceptualising prices as instantiations of historical power plays is to measure something that does not remotely resemble real value. The value that ought to be measured is by definition the natural value or the outlays on products governed by capital that reproduce or de-reproduce society. Resorting to Maurice Dobb's common-sense welfare, the workable guide to practical affairs in contradistinction to optimal formalism, may be better put as a workable guide that services what is in the best interest of the working class.

## 9 Class-Unmeasured

Although consumption in the System of National Accounts (SNA) appears significant, what is actually being consumed and re-consumed by consumers and producers is much greater than what is being officially recorded. What the working class earns and consumes relative to what it produces and needs to socially reproduce, that is the residual, serves as a signification of surplus value in moneyed form. All products serving as inputs or outputs engorged in production gestate and interrelatedly assume a money form of value and are realised in consumption. People consume the plastic waste and the wasted humans, but these do not figure in the SNA. The form of value reinvented as a fetish subsumes labour as subject and separates the working class from its output to reproduce capital (Marx 1867). Relatedly, the share of labour and capital vary by the machination of the class struggle. Conventional National

Income or its subset GDP are partial sums of the prices of some consumables consumed by abstract individuals maximising the mainstream definition of utility, but not all consumables within the time of reference. However, in neoclassical positivism, the ‘things inside consciousness’ to be consumed match the ‘things outside consciousness’ to be consumed. Consumables are unrealized by social activity: products are supplied on the shelves of stores without a history. They just fell from the heavens and people count as consumables only what capital defines as consumables. Thus, mainstream utility theory overlooks not only what is necessary for social reproduction, it overlooks the totality of production *become* consumption. Mainstream consumption is a partial sum or a subcategory of the totality of social consumption-production, reduced to units assessed in prices or are weighted by capital’s symbols/prices. Although the waste effected by labour inputs is conserved in social reproduction to be consumed, consumption is concocted as a no-harm-done issue. It is said to be not exponential over a trend or it increases at decreasing rates.

The consumption and production of waste, which boomerang to consume man, do not agree with ‘rational’ consumer theory. Attempts are made by the mainstream to reconstruct the obviously lacking utilitarian individual in less abstract fashion. Experimental-behavioural economics, the novelty of the mainstream, relies on psychological or biological investigations to evaluate social interrelatedness, risk or generosity, and other behavioural traits to focus on individual inclinations missed by the neoclassical suppositions (Thaler 2015). The approach does not address social class as a form and functional arm of capital. Surveys of taste or genetic-predisposition query individual behaviour under controlled experimental settings in order to investigate consumption behaviour influenced by the network of social or genomic relations. Networks, however, are momentary instantiations of classes but are not classes. They might inform how one sort of behaviour is influenced and influences another, but they do not inform of the historical relations that pre-situate people in a certain income-consumption bracket and a certain culture of consumption. It is the class whose ideology and institutions presuppose social activity. Behaviouralists question incentives in a lab-setting but not the encompassing social environment or class with its directives, historical motives and connected ideology, which foreground social and individual proclivities. Apart from stating the obvious that peoples’ behaviour is interrelated, the social class context, history proper, in which individual behaviour occurs is nowhere to be seen. These intellectual efforts end up either as a diversion from class, the meta-interrelatedness and history innate to social being, or as a mass surveillance project to service capital’s police force. At any rate, these disciplinary inroads also prove that the mainstream cannot sidestep the prevalence of class.

Another attempt by Wendt (2015) posited that a quantum social theory, emulating quantum physics, would consider people as particles, ‘complementary and entangled’ through various social institutions. Indeed, the causality of society resembles nonlocal causality or the asymmetric influence of events upon other events, which cannot be explained in terms of observed locality, neither in time nor in space. Also, the uncertainty of the social world resembles Heisenberg’s uncertainty. The superposition of particles, which are particles and waves at the same time may resemble humans in the digital age, who may be here or there in different states at the same time. Particles may correspond to the dual nature of man as physiological being and the set of social relations at the same time. There is a difficulty in measuring related to the dual nature of particles (wave and particle), which are in constant flux, unless pinned down by observation. Most interesting in the parallels between the social and the quantum world is Marx’s definition of the reality of man as a social relation reflecting other relations and in connection with the totality of social relations, which echoes the particles *per se* and their interconnectedness as waves. At any rate, particles and humans only exist because of their interconnections and relations to each other in a totality of the quantum or social world respectively. A cursory reading of social affairs speaks of a reality structured in terms of social relations, uncertainty and indeterminate causality across history; or, figuratively the uncertain is certain.

The topic of causal indeterminacy is at the heart of philosophical debates. Hegel (1830) addressed causality as ‘the effect, looked at in its identity with the cause, is itself defined as a cause, and at the same time as another cause, which again has other effects, and so on forever.’ Not dwell on the *logic*, causality is inferred from its essence or law of movement, while observation is not sufficient proof of causality. Indeterminate *cum* determinate causality is the state of becoming under uncertainty in Marxist dialectics. Althusser (1985) develops the concept overdetermination to account for the complex structure in dominance as cause/subject or the dynamic of history. In order of precedence, to say that people, just like particles, relate with each other in an indeterminate or nonlocal causal environment, could be turned around and put as particles behave somewhat like people.

However, the particle *cum* individual tied by entanglement cannot be a surrogate of social man. For Marx, social man reflects the totality of social relations. He or she is a subset of a social class or the more universal set. Entangled man alone without history, the objective whole into which people are born, is not an environment unbeknown to man as it is so for the incognisant particle. Particles do not read history, plan history, or make history consciously. Social beings do.

The relation of man to history comes under man's full command as he ceases to relegate his fate to the fetish commodity. Such relation of man to history is different however from the relation of particle to universe, or Paul Dirac's unsolved enigma: how to reconcile quantum mechanics with general relativity. As particles do not consciously make or interpret the universe, it is left to Dirac and others to interpret it one day. People however, through social classes, have always made and interpreted history, the general condition into which they are born. For Marx, inanimate matter, the particle, is immediately one with its activity, 'It does not distinguish itself from it. It is *its life activity*.' Whereas 'Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness' (Marx 1844). To re-emphasise, man lives history as a knowledgeable subject unlike a particle. His knowledge of history depends on the demystification of history in a process of knowability in contrast to knowing. In the latter Kantian approach (knowing), the noumena or things beyond experience cannot be known unless they appear before us, while in the former (knowability), Hegel argued that it is the *process of adding to knowledge by iterations* that matters. Thinking in terms of process, the changing state of the world, as opposed to immutable conditions, the knowability process as opposed to knowing, is the defining epistemological contribution of Hegel (Stace 1984). Since things change, knowing as an *activity* also changes; hence, to know is to know relative to what is going to be *knowable* as opposed to knowing from a vastness that could not possibly be known. Nevertheless, the subject of social science is as impenetrable as the subject of natural science. While the natural world lends itself to be to be readily understood by the math of physics should not make it more rigorous than social science. Rigour begins with the mode of conceptualisation or by the building blocks of what constitutes an abstract. To leave out history and class by the transposition of particle physics onto society is not rigorous because it leaves out the interrelatedness of a man conscious of himself and of history, *ergo*, the social class knowing itself.

Marxism's *social activity* is the interface between social class consciousness and social class being in relation to dominant ideology or the weight of history. With capital's organising principle effected through the law of value, the process of articulation and re-articulation between particular and universal repaves the grounds for social activity anew. Social contradictions are not formally solved, they resolve into an auto-negating process and are understood as the part refracts back to the whole – here the whole is history or the class struggle. Unlike Dirac's lacuna, the class-to-class context or the class struggle is the context which prefigures the relation of man to history. Man *become* class is either coerced to make or consciously makes history. As capital's hegemony wanes, history reveals itself as the realisation of man, the species-being,

in the building of socialism. Under capitalism, however, what transpires is the production relation regulating labour at the behest of capital. Subsuming man, the social being or the particular, into the general or the complex whole structured in dominance writes off the humanist man of Western Marxism who is indifferentiable from the social class – in an identity with class (Althusser 1965). For Marcuse (1965), speaking of Paul Baran's dialectics, such cross-referral of the part to the whole is taboo for the mainstream. More important, capital will not question which of the historical forces and how the prevailing forces remake history into the baleful immediacy before us.

By the slanted optic of capital, the substances of which waste is composed include the damage to nature but not the historically spilt blood of the developing world. Although socially entangled man consumes himself through his rapport with others, just as the particles in quantum physics do when they alter their positional state, the two processes are considerably different. While measurement techniques may overlap, one cannot posit that capital's bias is the equivalent of quantum interference; in the latter, the results in the double slit experiment depend on whether a human observes the experiment or not because particles are waves in a state of motion. Capital's interference, however, through its crushing ideological weight is a continuous conditioning machine always observing man because it implants itself in the mind of man.

Furthermore, with capital's omission of the concept of class, even if social science could rewind time, redo its experiments and remeasure the results as does natural science, only capital's desired results will be borne out. Neither its logical positivism nor any other of its analytical approaches to experiment or history, will commit an error of measurement. Not only because what it measures is what it had designed, more so because capital sets out to measure the appearances it sows as a code of conduct and ones that people uphold as a system of belief. Appearances are distinct from essence, or the laws of development shaping the society or object in time. Capital does not recognise the exploitations emerging in new forms of value and value relations as existing to be measured. Capital's fictions drilled into the consciousness of a crushed labour that surrendered its critical stance become real and measurable. Value, or what has actually happened to produce commodities, would be left unmeasured.

In a capital-world of appearances devoid of history, interpersonal comparisons freeing science from ideology become inter-commodity comparisons defined by capital's self-styled standards. Not only are commodities produced by commodities, the labour power without labourer, but commodities are also discussed by commodified people. Folk internalising the commodity's self-expanding dynamic as their own reason debate the reign of the world of commodities as fait accompli. Truth is only what the commodity *qua* fetish dreams of, otherwise all is fake or falls outside the spectrum of permissible debate.

Furthermore, as the higher rate of liquidating life relative to the class-demonstrated sane level of development fulfils the demands of the AGLCA (Marx 1867), capital counterpoises the higher social entropy with the progress of its tech-machinery, or its meliorism. While the machine itself is an estranged social product arising upon the autonomous development in the productive forces, the rate of alienation of society from its scientific development determines the rate at which the machine decimates social nature. Machines or technologies on their own are not panacea and do not redress the harm of a waste-metabolising social order. Formulaically, the rate of sane reproduction relative to existing capacity will exceed the rate of human depopulation and species extinction only as the de-estrangement of scientific development exceeds capital's grip upon the labour process. Pinpointedly, conventional systems of accounts and units of measure are lacking exactly because they discard the AGLCA.

In indeterminate space and time and/or nonlocally, to entertain the quantum term, capital embellishes and sells waste and wasted humans for a price. In this it is aided by its conventional theory and corresponding tools of measurements. Altogether, these say the world is doing well with some repairable hitches. However, these systems of thought are convenient to capital since they bear partial or distorted relations to the objective facts. Consider for the sake of argument waste established as fact by virtue of its phenomenal state. The same fact, the waste seen holistically, should incorporate the related fact of the deaths that the imperialist-class visits upon the developing world in relation to the power that the aggrieved masses exercise in self-defence. Holistic waste therefore is poisoned nature and prematurely dead people. Through their power exercised over the price in market operations, masses in control of social reproduction would lessen the emission of waste and/or allocate more useful value to their own reproduction. Yet, the waste itself as fact or substance and the assessment of the intermediation of subject to substance, or the efficacy of the wasting class in producing waste, otherwise the state of *becoming* of the object under consideration, or the waste in its state of becoming, are rejected by the mainstream. To resort to Ilyenkov (1974) to study the object 'waste,' is to look into its history and examine the forces that produce waste. Ilyenkov might also recommend the employment of laws of dialectical thought, such as the unity of the rational and the historical, for a more rigorous elucidation of such issues. However, imperialism/capital regards working peoples, especially of the developing world, as disposable. In waste as in any other social process, it is not the facts that relate to or oppose each other, it is the concepts fashioned upon the facts, the different philosophical views, which are at rock bottom class positions. Once things stop procreating things as per the dominant paradigmatic, and once abstraction is isolated as a social

relation drawn from a historical process (the state of becoming of the object), then the critique of social conditions classifies the partial observation in relation to the whole; thence, the emergence of categorical knowledge.

## 10 Eurocentrism

This section tangentially addresses Eurocentrism or the thought framework that braces the ascent of capital into waste. Lindner (2010) proposes that Eurocentrism is a combination of ethnocentrism, orientalism, and false universalism. Unless equated with some essentialist attribute, Eurocentrism cannot be considered racism (Lindner 2010). However, racism occurs as the powerful nation or social group, which distinguishes itself by the concocted edifice of a superior race, subjugates the less powerful by means of violence, instils inequality and exploitation into the system, and usurps their social product. That is not so different from any super structure of imperialism. As theories of race became widely discredited, newer essentialist notions associated with modernism supplanted race as the theoretical body to justify and promote accumulation via the imperialist channels. Racism is a requisite for exploitation. For instance, to the question are the Arabs inferior, Moshe Dayan replied, I would not like to say that, but we are more modern and can win any war against the Arabs.<sup>11</sup> Modern here, as in more civilised, is the replica of race, or the core of authoritarian universalism. Like structural racism, Eurocentrism may be spotted in the case where an articulate non-white person is considered an exceptional prodigy that draws the awe of white audiences, only because she acts like them. On a broader level, Eurocentrism is observable in the contrast between the few concerns voiced over millions of American Natives who perished under colonial assault, and the loud cries that 'we are in a race with time,' which were only voiced by Europe as sea levels began to rise. Eurocentrism is the stock of knowledge built upon imperialist wealth accumulation from which people draw without realising that thought is inseparable from practice. Following Samir Amin's train of thought, the practice of imperialism creates wealth and builds the thought that promotes the wealth.

To be modern and bomb for progress is racism by any other name because capital cannot expand without racist justifications. For the purpose of this work, Eurocentrism is a subdivision of the historical surplus value, or the state of social consciousness remoulded in direct rapport to the material

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<sup>11</sup> General Moshe Dayan speaking on 'This Week,' 1972 - <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=FzVrRStVogk>

circumstance in which the North consumes the peoples and the resources of the global South. The centralisation of power in the imperialist centre proceeds in lockstep with the domination of the central cultural values that re-promote imperialism. In the same manner that the ideological footwork of capital adds to the historical surplus value, these values are reencoded in the cultural sphere and assume the Eurocentric vernacular, which recreates the South as the inferior other.

In a system accumulating by waste production, it may be self-evident that a beefsteak would cost much more in energy, in the caloric sum of its inputs, than it delivers in output, however, what that meal really costs is the systemic de-reproduction of the Global South.<sup>12</sup> Capital and its waste derived profits gel in forms of social organisations, states, and formal and informal institutions whose function lubricates the channels for the commodity as self-expanding waste. At the current historical moment, the capital relation manifests in two conspicuous structures: A Northern structure spearheading capital and a Global South of namely wretched masses. Malcolm X's adage, 'on noon-Sunday, there is a church for black people and another for white people,' defines the white bastion as the target; whence structures ought to be identified for the purpose of putting theory to practice, otherwise labour's weapons cannot confront abstract ideas. Of late, capital targets weak nations under the abstract idea of the war on terror; however, labour under the tutelage of Western Marxism is guided to only target the abstract idea of capital but not the rich nations. This latter point resembles a catechism: capital is awful in the abstract, it is everywhere like some divine entity, but not to be physically found in the Western formation and its industry of slaughter. These North and South structures confront each other in a principal contradiction as a South representing labour and a North *cum* capital presided over by the US. Recently, Lauesen (2020) transposed the principal contradiction of capitalism onto the US versus China.

The workings of the law of value incarnate in imperialist practice, which impulsively allocate resources away from people, also abide by the system's principal signalling mechanism, its profit rate. As the rate of exploitation must grow for profits to grow, the rate of consumption of man by man, the concentrated form of surplus value-making arising upon the industry of waste, also must grow. In the North, not only capitalists became things, as in spirit/consciousness commanded by fetishes, workers who adhere to capital's ideology also became things; what was good for the commodity was good for

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<sup>12</sup> Perelman (1978) points that a kilo of steak delivers a small portion of the energy in calories that went into its production. It takes roughly some 20 pounds of cereals plus additional human and fuel energy to create one pound of steak.

society. It was not any deep state that orchestrated the work of capital, it was a commodity-besotted deep class with a deeply commodified culture. The Northern incremental piling-up of waste was driven by a doctrine of white supremacy couched in Eurocentrism. The malaise was so considerable such that capital incorporated the sophistry of hired Marxists in search of 'new readings of Marx' to beautify the culture of a Western civilisation whose daily *modus vivendi* is *genocide*.

By military superiority and ideological inertia, capital's foresight, despite being curtailed by the commodity's myopic vision, prevails. For lack of or because of distorted social alternatives, anesthetized masses hugged capital and its curves of quarterly profit rates. Yet, *ugly* capital could not present itself as a social alternative, and remain the sole option to humanity, it had to expropriate the heritage of Marxism. The latest of such attempts is to portray Ilyenkov as a Soviet dissident whose genius was repressed. Peppered with 'out of context' quotations from Marx, the Western Marxist *corpus* is laden with pro-imperialist cant, which in the end justifies imperialist aggression; the sort where 'Saddam is bad,' therefore it is justifiable to obliterate his whole nation.

Capital deployed its Marxist intelligentsia to demolish the social alternative. These contrasted the contradictions of nurturing the social in the developing world and the sacrifice of self-defence under constant attack from a nuclear armed imperialism against the bows and arrows of the South with messianic versions of socialisms. The stance of 'either utopia at once or nothing' dominated Western discourse. Communism 'in a jiffy' was an impossibility, and to boot, none of the third worldly socialisms enjoyed the privileges of a white voting working class, which reproduced capital because it identified with it. The Northern working-class votes with capital's imperatives in mind, as if it was a student facing a multiple-choice question – the questions and the material taught are coached by capital. None of the socialist states of the South could risk going to the polls with a population that preferred the sack of wheat to the right to vote (captioned from Bertrand Russell's Nobel speech). The Western left was the cultural exteriorisation of the imperialist right and its weapon. It fought capital's battles by inculpating the regimentation that the developing world deploys to fend off imperialism as 'state capitalist' practice – Tony Cliff trumpeted this vacuous of characterisations, which fits any state under the sun. To mark off the building of socialism in the South by the pernicious state capitalism, on account of its lingering wage system, implies that no state could ever achieve socialism because it is impossible to abolish the wage system overnight. At any rate, Western Marxists had dropped anti-imperialism from socialist construction, or neglected the premise that socialism develops by an anti-imperialism that re-socialises the national front for better resistance; conversely, *action directe* in the centre fairs as the foremost responsibility

of the central left. Needless to say, the demonisation of fledgling socialist states contributes to imperialism's ideological arsenal. To over-emphasise the partial errors in the practice of Southern socialism as truth, albeit partial truth, without accounting for its costs in self-defence is to discredit it.

The receptacle of partial truth is the partial state of things, whereas the world is holistic and interdependent. Truth corresponding to any observation from fact, un-referred to an interconnected world where the US Federal Reserve moves the global population in and out of hunger by moving its interest rate, is partial or untruth. Moreover, as aggression itself becomes an industrial enterprise, imperialist war, all on its own, ties the world together. War is either an undercurrent or a determinant of the value of all commodities. For *processual truth* to be meaningful, it must correspond to the dynamics of that interrelated world, which is indivisible, social, abstract, yet real or with real consequences. The aggression of the West as a mode of accumulation holds primacy in the way it ties into Southern class formations to sink them. Instead, Western Marxists shifted the accent onto tertiary contradictions rather than arresting the killing for profits *modus operandi* central to their mode of life. Instead of exposing a democracy in which the Northern working class has long voted to demolish peripheral populations, or instead of reversing the vortex of *historical surplus value* exemplified in supremacist ideology, the Western left turned Marxism into a chauvinist ideology; their democracy became a form of capital dictatorship reconstituted by the rents of imperialism.

In relation to historical surplus value, Silva (1971) argued for an ideological surplus to reflect the equivalent of the Marxist category of surplus value in the symbolic realm. That is not the same as the concept used above. Marx's dialectical method does not situate its definition of value or surplus value on an analytical dichotomy; as in symbolic and non-symbolic apart. Ideological production is concomitant to the reproduction of capital, commensurate with the strength of capital, and only serves a function for it (Althusser 1971); that is, the imagery of ideas is neutral unless marionetted by a subject and, therefore, ideology has no substance of its own that trails in essentialist fashion across history. In conjunction, value, motivated by its absolute law of surplus value, is the relation that governs social reproduction or de-reproduction. It may be illustrated by an analysis of the facts counterposed against their corresponding ideas. Yet in dynamic processes shaped by the resultant vector of a social order structured hierarchically what must be emphasised is the state of *becoming* of subject-object, the social activity rationalised, or ideology in relation to material circumstance. Value may be conceptually argued as the contradiction of subject/substance resolved by the force of history, or the momentum that shapes the conditions for the creation and allocation of socially necessary labour time.

White nations, which allegedly produce higher surplus value by virtue of their better technology, are said to experience a higher rate of exploitation and are more socialised; hence, readier for social democracy. Marx's AGLCA connects wealth making with the mass murder of the working class. Although Marx was noted for saying that, 'we have no compassion, and we ask no compassion from you. When our turn comes, we shall not make excuses for the terror', he has been transformed into a liberal obsessed with the Western rules of the game and voting systems. Long forgotten in the dominant discourse are the historical moments, the balance of forces and their associated weapons, the ideological apparatuses and the many NATO military bases strewn across the globe, which are the true factories of capital and the symbols of its power. Discernibly, the calculus of misery may be put this way: the ideas propagated by Western universities do more harm in a single day than all peoples of the developing world pulling rank to keep imperialism at bay do in a century.

It is this cultural *cum* civilisational force of the West that transpires as impersonal and objective history. It pre-imposes the grounds upon which instantaneous choices gel into a working class auto-destruct mode. Self-consumption, as will be discussed in this work, is a sphere of production. Without changing the power that antecedes the making of the grounds upon which social agents tread, the system elects itself no matter where and when. Proposed measures of participatory democracy, governance by public opinion or frequent plebiscites in the North, will only disclose the inherent chauvinism of a thingified-majority smug with its imperialist rents. Their democracy is a form of class-power exercise, which has become the power of the commodity thriving upon the further commodification of man. To be sure, it is the weight of history which imposes choices whose chance appearance is a realisation of the laws that make them necessary. Although the dominant culture of the dominant civilisation points to the achievements of humanity hither and yon, *post facto* the planet is a minute to midnight. In terms of systems dynamics, the systemic driver of history is the value relation and its law of value whose ideal culture for growth is waste. Because capital *qua* history, which materialises as Western civilisation, is wired systemically as such, it cannot *sui generis* impart civilisational progress. Capitalism's scientific innovation is a meatgrinder with band-aids. Apart from being an existential task, the required civilisational turnaround faces the intractable mission of convincing peoples of any colour to shed the deeply engrained white masks of which Frantz Fanon (1952) spoke. Recently, a glimmer arose as China's path of exercising cultural identity as a socialism pitted against imperialism deracinates the engrained values of Western civilisation and inverts its *particular* cultural aspects into a *universal* internationalism. To self-realise culturally, to exercise one's distinctive qualities

against the torrent of the homogenising commodity peels the white masks or de-commodifies history.

The crumbs of imperialist rents tainted with the hand me down inward-looking identity politics promoting parcelled civil liberties are the wage and perks premia of the Northern working classes. The process works time and again because the Northern classes are vested in imperialism and its rents and are not the negating 'other' that has to be controlled. The notion that somehow this Northern working class is repressively subjected to forms of implicit and explicit control leaves out the fact that its activity shaping its reproduction has been conditioned by the material circumstance that reproduces imperialism; hence, as classes, the Northern bourgeoisie and its working class share the same *sphere of production* as well as circulation. The white working class is not only partaking in the crumbs of imperialist rents via the circulation of value, it also owns means of production abroad, military bases to which it contributes, as well as a war industry in which it is vested. The supposed Northern control methods are never imposed by the systematic force that leads to ruptures. Northern capital hands its working classes cheaper Southern commodities and more civil liberties not so much for its consent to bomb abroad, but as the brokerage required between inter-competing circles of capital. It is this material foundation, the division of imperialist tribute wrought by all forms of war, which bolsters a global apartheid system.

The Northern working class and its affiliates downstream stand for the ideologically white minority, which literally consumes the lives of the wretched of the Global South. A social reproduction cycle, a process in which the life of Southern man is the consumption-commodity on offer to Northern man, has no final realisation stage. The imperialist pillage that beefs up the imperialist wage bill is the material circumstance whose associated liberal activity forges white consciousness. The Northern classes' dedication to imperialism through the Western democracy channel translates into 'let us vote to bomb others,' which is both an investment in militarism through the tax contribution that funds the T-bills of the war effort and waged work in the military campaigns of imperialism. Unless the global scales are rebalanced, no matter the social democratic activities, the welfare and the unionism, Western working classes cannot be transformed or re-educated into revolutionaries because they are ontologically rooted in the practice of imperialist war. Some Western substrata may be revolutionarily conscious but as a whole the balancing act with capital is ensured with the phenotypically white classes. For white classes to undergo a *volte face of spirit*, is unlikely no matter the depth of the crisis; ideally, a turnaround requires an improbable return to the oneness of humanity rather than the current Veblenian mindset in which some experience schadenfreude for incurring less damage than others. A sort of 'the world is sinking but the

browns are sinking faster than us' syndrome. The spirit in command of history is irrevocably bound by this materialist chasm. Relatedly, there is no need to invent a madman theory, a US president foolish enough to scare the world with a nuclear first strike, because the whole cultural phenomenon of the Western formation is commodified to the point of madness. It re-enacts the madness as it abides the terms of the commodity as self-expanding value.

## 11 Conclusion

Beneath the semblance of expanding wealth, the pile of wasted social nature was not to be outdone. Wanton militarism, pollution and severe austerity, all subcomponents of waste accumulation, cut life short. Unlike pre-capitalist phases of history, the process of reducing life expectancy either instantaneously or by attrition relative to what is realised under conditions of overproduction, tallies with the rate of surplus value. A life expectancy in the South 20 or 30 years less than the North is a counter image of surplus value because as waste it is an engine of surplus value in itself, and by reduction in the ranks of the reserve army of labour, or as it spins off into ideological defeatism. The rate at which brains and brawns are consumed in shorter-intervals of waste production are paralleled by a rate of exploitation.

Since waste production feeds off and acts upon the demographic process, it also regulates the labour process. The latter is the social foundation without which capital reveals itself as the fiction it really is. In an interconnected world, historically shaped demographic policies influence the formation of value relations at all levels and, hence, presuppose the concept totality in the composite concept 'totalising capital.' Nothing works without people, and waste accumulation produces wasted people for sale, cheapens people and, worst of all, its generated defeatism dulls the masses.

Waste commodities, including the wasted-life commodity, like saner commodities, require labour power be expended upon them, are objectified, and realised for a price in a market. Circularly, the society that produces the waste must dispense from its stock of labour a certain flow of socially necessary labour time to be expended upon its own reproduction. Working folk who produce and consume waste must also reproduce or de-reproduce themselves for a price. The *ex-post* decided allocation of socially necessary labour time abides by market deliberations and competitive pressures equalising profit rates, which through the law of value assign less labour power to be expended in (a distinction must be made between production and reproduction). Less people will be effectively wage-employed in producing commodities destined for sale or for the reproduction of society. The corresponding decline in unremunerated labour and the

rise in the reserve army of labour denote that less value outlays as a share of the social product upon society per unit of output are required. The money form of value reflecting lower value outlays upon social reproduction emerges in a lower share of the wage bill from the social product. Phrased differently, the share of the moneyed costs expended upon the reproduction of labour is the value form of necessary labour. The living wage drops while capital accumulates.

Theoretically, the natural end of the compression of labour power expended in shorter chronological time, or the diminution of socially necessary labour time, circuitously raises surplus value because the rate of exploitation is determined by the intensity of wasting the labourer in cheaply remunerated work and before her due time. For society, the shorter lives imply that less is spent by capital on labour in a shorter social turnover time. Alternatively, the premature snuffing of human life lowers necessary labour because it lowers the living conditions and length of workers lives over the social turnover cycle. Surplus value should absolutely rise by the reduction of necessary labour. Realistically, however, the variations in surplus value are contingent upon labour's clout on the historical theatre of the class struggle.

On its own, the point that capital exercises downward pressure on the cost of labour or living wages for profits to rise is not an innovation. It is a point neo-classical economics puts across, however with the twist that social life reaches an optimal condition (Pareto efficiency). Contrariwise, Marxism sees in competition for profits a regeneration of capital by the forms of capital, and a race to the bottom. Besides lower wages, waste accelerates social de-reproduction, or the waste produced thus far – war, austerity, and pollution – reinforces the downward spiral. Once the cost price of expended labour power is pressured to fall, the wage form of value whose content is socially necessary labour time, which also serves as input into the production of wasted lives and reproduction at the same time, must also fall. To reduce the cost of labour engaged in the production of shortened/wasted working-class lives is to reduce the socially necessary labour time or value invested in the life of the labourer engaged to shorten the life of another labourer. Unless the worker is an organic partner of capital, as in a Northern working class, the gun-toting worker mowing down the life of other workers, will be short-changing the value of his own labour represented in the meagre wage he receives. In such vicious circle, the value outlays required for the reproduction of society fall alongside falling living conditions, a proxy of which is the longevity of man. Over society's lifecycle, the relative wage share drops not only by the power exercised by capital, but also by the endogenous impact of waste accumulation upon life. As the wage of the worker whose job is to waste his fellow worker falls because of working class dividedness, so decline over the shorter lifetime of the worker the costs to recuperate the losses in health and living standards.

Furthermore, the low cost of lives expended in production, slotted against a matrix of prices in social time to produce more wasted lives, auto-reinforces by the fetish of 'excess population.' It is this contradiction of capital with population growth, made real by the repression of labour as the activity resolving capital's crisis, which turns into capital's principal chimera. The construct *become* hypostatised subject here is that there are too many humans relative to carrying capacity. Naturally, human numbers must go down. However, in an overproducing, underutilising and mechanising system, there will always be too many people willing to work for a wage relative to spare capacity. In such world held hostage to capital's twain of guns and ideology, the wage or the price of labour power, the counterpart/magnitude of value outlays upon which life depends, gathers more *animistic* qualities. The process of people sacrificed before their historically determined time at the altar of the fetishised price system, the scramble for wages, encapsulates the process by which capital grinds human lives for profits.

Waste begets waste by the forms of value construed by capital. The metamorphosis of value into waste may be established as an ascent from concrete, the saner capital forms, into abstract, the now ubiquitous waste forms. Objective waste in form and substance, acts as a super capital, it reproduces by producing more waste alongside the growing demand for waste. Waste does not redistribute to the working-class. The demand for waste generates profits from the de-reproduction of society. The more emaciated society, the more capital captures in rents arising upon its monopoly of waste production. Through the power platforms of Eurocentrism and the legacy of colonial wars mapped against dominant ideological constructs, waste acquires a divine-like status. The modes of thought that seize the social mind are based on the falsity of scarcity. So much more waste is required to get fewer and fewer sane commodities becomes the norm. Increasingly and since the onset of capitalism, militarism remains the principal waste and surplus value generating activity, which socially orders and undergirds the totality of social production. Obviously, without a revolutionary turnaround in the global balance of forces, there is nothing to rearticulate the local struggles into the necessary momentum that vanquishes waste.

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## Imperialism and Waste

This chapter investigates the militarism of imperialism as a subcomponent of accumulation by waste. Harvey (2018a,b) has argued that the US is no longer ‘the sole imperialist power’ and that China and Russia are as hegemonic or, inferentially, as imperialist as the US. Such qualification is erroneous. It de-substantiates the concept of imperialism; it strips it of its ideological determination and defines it either by its material constituents or metaphysical attributes. As such, it potentiates US-led imperialism and justifies further aggression towards other nations of the developing world.

In probing this issue, the thesis posited here that imperialist war is both a production domain intrinsic to capital and an application of the law of value assumed in the practice of destruction. Destruction/waste is a reinterpretation/development of the concept of waste worked out by Mészáros (1995). Lastly, imperialism is regarded as an intensification of capital’s reproduction by destruction. Goldman (1976) noted that imperialism as defined by Lenin and Luxemburg, with its variants since, could effortlessly double for capitalism proper. Such a process, particularly the measure of war as a subcomponent of accumulation by waste, gains prominence under US-led imperialism. A discussion of the interconnected questions of who the imperialists will be resumed in chapter 4. For the time being, the chapter discusses what prompts wars of encroachment at this late stage of imperialism.

### 1 Imperialism with Reference to the Arab Region

The Arab region is the playground where intense global contradictions unfold. It is there where global differences have been exploding and remain unresolved. The Arab region, with its entwined war and oil economies, is a principal repository of the US’s global hegemony. Needless to say, the control of oil and war flows is of tremendous social and moneyed worth. To formulate a hypothesis about imperialism and permanent militarism without an emphasis on the shifting balance of global powers attendant upon the rise of China, the intervention of Russia in Syria and the suite of crumpling states across the Middle East, would be short-sighted. As the regional and global structural crises deepen, a tipping of the balance of forces in the Arab and surrounding region against the dominion of the US and its allies may precipitate a shift in the global system.

Just as the defeat of the Ottomans at sea in the sixteenth century unleashed European savagery across the globe, today, we must consider the possibility of an end to the dominance of Western-war civilisation from the very corner of the world that witnessed its beginning. An end not only to the physical dominance of such civilisation but also to its amassed war-inducing cultural stock, its dominant ideas, operating by so many shades of social and cultural discrimination, which are the toxins asphyxiating life on the planet.

In the age of nuclear deterrent, imperialism stakes new territories either by economic incursions or military encroachment. In the case of economic incursions, the US's financial and economic hegemony is being compromised by China. The rise of China may be attributed to all sorts of reasons, but foremost China latched itself to the unconscious side of capital, or capital's search for cheap labour and resources, while retaining the rule of labour represented by the Communist Party of China (CPC). Labour was cheap in China, but it was not poor. The gains of socialism under Mao were such that the essentials of life were made abundant and less costly, while the development of pure sciences created the absorptive capacity to nationalise knowledge. China internalised Western production know-how and expanded by feeding the addiction of Western capital for cheap resources.<sup>1</sup> It has matured into a real nemesis of US-led imperialism. China is converting dollar assets into real assets in an otherwise US-controlled or owned planet. In real terms, China controls/co-produces significant production and exchange of use value, the consumer goods satisfying the demands of global society. It is only natural that it will also soon control the sphere of circulation, the money flows and/or the means for exchange value.

As to how military encroachment operates in the days of nuclear threats, Zbigniew Brzezinski (2015), the former US presidential national security adviser, best illustrates such cases. For instance, he has recommended that the US and its allies deploy troops to Baltic states to deter Russia from staging a possible invasion of those countries.<sup>2</sup> Once US troops are in, the Russians cannot attack and are further encircled upon. Not much could be done when the terror of nuclear war hangs in the balance. Anecdotally, Brzezinski should have been known for staking territory first, or put your foot in the door first

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<sup>1</sup> *Prima facie*, China's astronomical growth over the last few decades relies on productivity growth from internalised knowhow. However, such knowhow is not superficially borrowed. The ongoing rivalry and tech-race with the US *post facto* imply that interaction with foreign investors was active as opposed to being a passive learning experience.

<sup>2</sup> Brzezinski: US Should Deploy Troops to Baltics, <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2015/01/21/brzezinski-us-should-deploy-troops-to-baltics/>

strategy under the nuclear umbrella, rather than financial and other forms of containment.

Propelled by auto-expanding finance in search of markets and real assets to underwrite the huge volumes of paper dollars, the US-led capitalist class engages in imperialist practice. Such practice is particular to capital expansion since the beginning of the twentieth century or the onset of the age of monopoly/finance (Luxemburg 1913; Lenin 1916). It involves the production of huge waste products, the wars, the pollution and devastation to man and the environment. To be sure, the waste, the militarism and the wars are themselves sub-articulated domains of waste accumulation, industries *in their own right* and means to prop up a profit-driven system.

However, in 2015, Russia entered Syria by invitation and had since tipped the balance of forces against the US and its allies. At the time of editing this work, it is also arresting the spread of European white supremacy by de-Nazifying Ukraine. Meanwhile, on the economic expansion side, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has gathered steam, penetrated new corners, and antagonised imperialism where it counts: assisting the South in improving its productive capacity. The US empire appears in retroversion. Account taken of the tightening NATO noose around Russia in Europe, its move in Syria cannot be said to be taken out of desperation. Russia operates under the structural impact of a growing Chinese clout.

Meanwhile, the US has shifted into protectionist mode and declared economic war on China. As argued in Kadri (2018), China's rise is inexorable. Short of an unthinkable US first strike upon China or, less severely, a tightening of control over strategic resource areas, there is little the US can do to delay the speed at which it will be economically unseated. For now, the Litmus test of Empire appears to be the ill-fated performance of the US in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan amongst other failures in strategic resource areas. To hedge the domino effect, the US empire must re-upholster the seats of its collaborative regimes, else it might come undone.

## 2 History Omitted

Mainstream accounts neglect history as a continuum of real events carried forth by a social subject. They personalise it as storytelling in chronological time, and selectively so. History, however, is the objective and impersonal force, the concomitant of social forces that command space and time. With regard to the Arab and similar regions like Africa, history was an overbearing historical structure. Since the birth of the developing but modern state, there

were disproportionate imperialist forces assaulting its autonomy. The imperialism that has engaged the nascent state has also restructured its class formation. Not a single resource in those states escaped the war effort. Schools, hospitals and industry have nearly all been lost in the whirlwind of the real/physical and ideological wars.

Even during the onslaught of American sponsored Islamist mercenaries during the current war in Syria, Israel declared publicly what many in the Middle East have suspected has been the real policy of the US and its allies: ‘to see a continuing conflict in which the two Syrian sides wear each other down as a better outcome than the decisive victory of either’ (Cockburn 2013). Israel here was the mouthpiece of history personalising the interests of US-led imperialism. As a state, it is a by-product of imperialism constructed around an ultranationalist group armed with nuclear weapons. Lest one forgets, imperialism is the violent facet of capital, which accumulates by destruction, the wasting of social nature or by relative and absolute depopulation. By depopulation, I do not mean that the sturdy current of global population growth is turning negative – not yet at least. What I mean is that in relation to what the population growth rate should have been, it is undercut by an imperialism, which banishes the social support mechanisms required for the balanced reproduction of the population.

To the value system of an imperialist class projected as indefinite progress, the advance of capitalism gauged against precapitalist conditions is said to more than offsets its associated loss of peoples and nature – the ‘it is worth it’ argument. For US-led imperialism, wrecking a nation not fully submissive to its policies, wrecking and not just containing it, provides that supplementary dose of power that strengthens its hold over strategic areas and, by implication, its power far afield. Reflexively, the only rational policy for these targeted nations is to combine development with popular resistance. However, already existing polices of development are not much their own: they are not sovereign enough to own their policies. The disfiguration to the national class structure, its growing ties to external capital because of successive defeats in wars and the downfall of the internationalist socialist movement, transferred autonomy over policy to imperialism. The pressure was structural by the weight of received theory serving as capital’s ideology and/or derived from an unfavourable balance of forces. Once these weakened nations set traps for themselves by adopting imperialist-imposed market policies and sink into indigency, the next step is the war of competition for the remaining crumbs, armed and orchestrated by the US-European constellation. The cornered regional nations would gravitate into the putative industries of the region, the war and oil industries, bolstering imperialist accumulation at the global level.

The broadly held hypotheses are such that while the control of oil entails wars, whoever controls oil, especially in the Arab region, has the whole world on a very short leash. The other side of oil control is war making. In terms of output, the war's efficiency is the optimal rate of consumption of both living and dead labour per unit of additional value simultaneously produced and realised.

War's output is literally the wasted human that is produced, sold, and consumed. It is easy to imagine war-waste as marketed output realised for its use value, or because many rejoice as Western war machinery produces death for a price. Society auto-consumes by its consumption of war-waste more so than it does in what is commonly known as consumer or civilian-end use commodities, e.g., bombs are more waste than coke cans, but the latter is waste to a degree. War also consumes/realises military materiel and nature. It is itself pure waste and pivotal to the broader category of accumulation by waste. War is the predominant activity of the imperialist age, a stage in which exchange value overly vanquishes use value, such that, the category 'disuse-value' becomes of benefit to humanity and replaces what is truly of use-value. Since war is production by destruction, the more war destroys, the more war produces.

### 3 War and Historical Surplus Value

Workers' lives are inputs into the war industry. The number of dead bodies, the wasted lives and annihilated natural species, are the products of that industry. Just like other industries, war profits originate in surplus value. They stem from the value of the many hours of socially necessary labour condensed and consumed in a very short chronological time span. Moreover, as briefly discussed in chapter one, they issue from the relative reduction of the population or the depletion of the human resource over a socially regenerative lifecycle. Because war financing is state funded, the profits of war are the profits of finance/financial class. Allegorically, such is a match made in hell. Imperialism mobilises the moneyed monopoly surpluses or the excessive tradable claims to existing wealth, altogether the pressures that fictitious capital and those of the vastly inflated asset-value laid upon economic activity to turn debts into real assets. The excess moneyed profits and monopoly credit must be underwritten by imperialist debt (bonds and securities) to be secure over the long term. The state could be indebted to support the well-being of labour, in health and schools, and, alternatively, it could be indebted for war effort, which creates demand. Capital prefers the latter because it undermines the share of labour from the social product. As war absorbs excess moneyed profits and turns it into sovereign debt, it requires further financing,

while its expansion of financial debts triggers fiat money growth and more financialisation. For Lenin (1916), the frequency of financial-instrument issuance portends war.

A social class is a subcomponent of history and just like history it is a composite of social relations, real but abstract, historical, objective, and impersonal. For the imperialist class, war is a win-win situation. It is itself a market and an industry, more appropriately, a sphere of production. In addition to the usual trappings of an industry, it has the additional quality of transmuting some of its concrete labour into abstract labour without appearing that it does so through the deliberation of the markets for exchange. Concrete labourers turn their bodies into moneyed commodities. Incidentally, the money spoils of war can no longer reengage the war dead. Such dent in the commodity money circuit – capital cannot rehire the dead – the transmutation of abstract labour back into concrete labour turns into a process of capitalising the living from the proceeds of death. Logically, if war kills everyone, there would be none left to perform concrete labour. Nonetheless, war relatively depopulates to attenuate the tension between the underutilisation of human resources and overproduction.

In deaths attributed to war, war acutely shortens longevity to meet the requisites of social time, capital-commanded time. It forces people to sacrifice much effort, including the sacrifice of one's own life, in very short period. Unlike the milder repression of the civilian-end use commodity attendant upon the labour-process, the demands of the law of value for the type of socially necessary labour time required for the production of pure waste, are best delivered by war. Since the product of war is the wasted life, war relatively depopulates to the demands of its own profit-making process.

Overproduction may be the absolute oversupply of commodities, but it need not be considered that all the time. Production is a social process that matures in commodities under the command of capital. It meets the demands of a market with a specified amount or purchasing power. A glut in the salient economic sense occurs when commodities are overproduced in relation to the class whose consumption has been saturated or ones that cannot afford what is being produced. The concept of overproduction extends the notion of economic glut because the anarchy of capital has an inbuilt kernel to permanently overproduce for all markets at the going price. As a social process, overproduction always takes place in relation to a respective market. Through the power of its sponsoring capital, overproduction forces underutilisation or disengages resources, which could potentially dampen its expansion. Overproducing capital, which is all of capital by definition, also arrests the expansion of the developing world through labour-saving technology and product dumping displacing national industry. Typically, capital must regiment the working class to the

travail of the labour process or create the cheap and disciplined labour engaged in production. Cheap not only in relation to wages but also to all the health, education, and other costs of labour reproduction over society's lifecycle. To reduce the wage bill and other labour costs, capital must reduce the average wage per labourer paid over her lifetime or the number of labourers. For capital, people living longer lives and receiving pensions, for instance, should be reduced.

In addition to exploiting labour, war serves the end of shortening longevity. In the case of the war industry, value is not just the thing being produced, the dead body or wasted things; it is a relation of subject to object; the things workers produce (objects) and the workers themselves organised in classes or strata (subjects). Just as all other commodities, the value of war products has substance or is a unity of the thing being produced with the forms of organisation and consciousness codetermining its production. This is a different substance from that of David Ricardo's labour as the substance of value. Ricardo's was only the material substance, the concrete/objectified labour in the commodity averaged out, as distinct from the dialectical category of social labour or mediated concrete labour or substance which is presupposed by a social subject (Ilyenkov 1974; Heinrich 2014).

In parallel with the overarching dominance of the class struggle, workers reclaiming what they socially produced will depend on labour's solidarity and revolutionary consciousness. Workers' struggles against capital are reversals of the contradiction between use and exchange value at the heart of the value relationship. For workers to be successful, they must overcome their capital-reared subjectivity, or the subject whose consciousness is a by-product of capitals' ideological rule. Capital produces both the commodities and, through ideological means, the consciousness that furthers the expansion of commodity production. It collapses subject into object, and such reification renders man into a thing. Wrestling what is social or of use to society from being privately appropriated in money form requires a de-reification of modes of thought. The process of de-thingification demands not only a reformulation of the concepts with which workers perceive themselves and their material circumstances, but also a re-articulation of anti-systemic concepts deployed to transcend the conservatism of dominant ideology.

Yet, the rate of surplus value wrought by militarism continues to be doubly significant. The war literally consumes the labourer and through war's placement of nationality above working class solidarity, it divides working people. Profits rise in relation to rising surplus value; however, just as alluded to in the previous chapter, there is no identity between value and its moneyed value form. There is a concrete or dialectical unity in which the categories of essence and appearance (value and form of value respectively) manifest in their

state of becoming. Recalling, value to money form of value is a relationship of essence to appearance whose measure is price. At first, value's transformation into production prices requires movements of labour and capital to equalise the rate of profit, as well as consideration of the monopolisation of technology, which are measures imposed by imperialist practice. What technology to pass to a developing country, or how many refugee boats should sink at sea, is what makes the higher technical composition of capital and the associated purchasing power of the North. It is not the things, the backward machine, using more intensive labour emitting more value vis-à-vis price, which impels value to fly to the greener pastures of the North, it is the imperialist assault that reconstitutes all the conditions for the formation of low wealth and low prices in the South for value to transfer North – value transfer booms by the growing differential between prices of production and market prices, or the low costs of production of commodities in the South and the high prices they fetch in the North. The law of value, the regularity of practice of which reconstitutes the social conditions for most profit with least costs, midwives the grounds of price appearance and profit formation. Inferring a specific moneyed form of value from value, or *vice versa*, is an estimate under uncertainty, which depends on the ideological bias in the conceptualisation of value and its moneyed form.

Through imperialist assault, the further the price of products accrued by the direct producer in the global South sinks below value, the lower become the costs to upkeep Southern society. With arithmetic certainty, as the necessary labour falls, the surplus labour and profit shares of the North rise. Yet, it is not imperialist assault or Europe's historical surplus value, which redistributes higher shares of income to the North; as argued by Western Marxism, it is rather advanced Northern technology. Better machines that produce higher end commodities, which fetch higher sums of money, are said to be constituents of higher surplus value. However, the development of the productive forces is not the product of European civilisational advance *per se*. It is more decisively a product of colonialism, which has undermined the South as subject and hijacked its history. In other words, the development of the Northern machine has been necessitated by the de-development of the South. Framed in a waste accumulation context, the machines and their commodities are primarily determined by the prematurely extinguished lives of Southern subjects. In such waste/value social relation as sociological subject, it is the wasted lives whose destruction transfers value and, which are agents of history by their very demise.

Labour deemed excessive was decommissioned to ensure the efficacy of market-engaged labour. The value forms of nationality-labelled high-tech, say by the provenance of the better machine from Germany, has also contributed to Northern racial superiority. The Northern working class became part owner

of the Northern machines and/or became alleged principal creators of surplus value merely because their productivity followed wages. Surplus value, however, is not productivity. The former is a social category, the activity of production as a form of value, while the latter is an economic or a quantifiable facet of the social category. Moreover, surplus value in its relative and absolute components, which are in actuality the indifferentiable historical content of the profit rate, lends itself to measurement by the unit of currency of the dominant power (the dollar) with the higher technology, and its inherent bias.

A value relation exposes the way society structures its reproduction. Mentally distinguishing the value category from its money form allows us to examine the conditions of each separately. Value or wealth formation is a global process. It begins and ends in human reproduction under capitalism; from birthing people to dying people. In social reproduction, all labour is productive (Marx 1859), including the labour of giving birth or the labour of the trenches. Although the prices or the money sums will be much lesser in the South, value more than appertains to the most short-changed working classes. The subject in value, the power labour exercises in the process of de-alienation, confronts capital's effort to efface labour from value completely. The mainstream's neglect of social class is a projection of labour effacement from the value relation. In value, all the working classes are alike or different by how strongly they concede to or oppose capital. The differing quantities or sums of money associated with the national productivity of a working class do not set it apart from other working classes. Being for or against capital does so, because it is class power that lays the grounds for the formation of the moneyed wealth. The subject class whose product is most alienated from it, or the subject associated with most value formation correlates with the least moneyed amount of moneyed wealth. Class power determines the differential shares of the global social wage.

The decisive relations in capital's totality, are a relation/contradiction of subject to subject or labour to capital *cum* South to North, as well as another ontological relation of subject to object, labour to commodified nature. Inter-connectedly, the first contradiction fathoms how the value relation and its law of value coordinate social reproduction, while the second contradiction defines man's relation to nature or the metabolic rate of social reproduction. A more powerful labour, the de-alienated subject, collapses use value into socially necessary labour time or value proper.

#### 4 Brinksmanship without Organised Labour

Imperialism has already taken the planet past the brink. Regarding its impact on nature, recycling and sorting trash to avoid calamitous capital is a ludicrous

prank masquerading as science. Capital's profits rise by how much it commodifies and pollutes now and in the future. Accordingly, there is no escaping social planning, which brings to mind the dictum, 'we must organise man and nature' (Davis 1991). Yet not a single day goes by in which mainstream intelligentsia does not deprecate communism – heretofore the ultimate form of planning. Across Europe and in the US, the Western working classes are so 'comfortably numb' such that they vote in droves for governments practicing imperialist war abroad. Lieven (2004) broached this result by how tenacious American public was when it voted George W. Bush twice into office; however, that is a longstanding class position. The duality of the working-class structure in the West is such that those who vote align with capital while a significant proportion does not vote, but still reproduces capital. The voting class and the bourgeoisies factually share the same opinion. The non-voting classes are beaten to a pulp to count for anything. While empirical studies show that US public opinion bears little impact on public policy (Gilens and Page 2021), a decomposition of such surveys, especially on the sources of social spending finds implicit agreement between governing and governed that imperialism is a credible source of income.

There are thousands of self-proclaimed Marxist professors, yet Western communist parties exhibit membership numbers in the hundreds. Such reveals the point to which revolutionary thought has been contained in the West. Such individualism exceeds Gramsci's (1971 [1933]) note that '[s]truggle for the sake of struggle ... brutish apoliticism ... lacking the party spirit which is the fundamental component of State spirit ... is one of the most critically important assertions to uphold. Individualism on the other hand is a brutish element ... like the behaviour of the inmates of a zoological garden.' At this juncture, the multitude of individual professors have come to act in concert, as the vocal expression of liberal imperialism. When nothing is achieved without discipline and concrete strategy, Western Marxism regards organisation in the abstract. Lenin (1904) pointed out that to consider organisation only as pure abstraction, something that has no causal connection to real world, is to leave the proletariat needlessly defenceless and confused. The impotence of the peace movement as the US, Britain and France bomb or intoxicate the planet is testimony to capital's triumph.

As to the imperialist wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen and others, these are often carried out by the alibi of the Hollywood-like 'evil' leader. While US-led imperialism promotes and funds reactionary jihadists, empowers sectarianism, and incapacitates the state, it lays the foundation for continuous war. However, historical agency is neither that of an evil leader nor of the transhistorical psychological traits and inclinations of a clump of individuals. The abstract (metaphysical abstract) or isolated subject cannot exist. The individual

is a social relationship reflecting the many social relationships of the social order, of which only the relationships organised to produce a political impact by means of organised political action develops into relevant agency.

The agency of the masses confronting imperialism faded with the disintegrating state, which is ordinarily the medium of political expression and practice. While most refugees originate from the Arab region, after years of the supposed War on Terror, one estimate puts the number of dead at 4 million people.<sup>3</sup> The disaster and its ramifications are *ex-post facto* proof that US-led imperialism in the Arab region pursues a clear policy of state decapitation and depopulation (Kadri 2017b). While most countries in the Middle East are in ruin, it is possible that things could have been worse. Logically so much power and wealth flows to Europe by the rate at which the Arab region declines. Typically, one cannot entertain counterfactual history as a process that has no predetermined outcomes because the likelihood of the other outcomes associated with the hypothetical state is not known. If we assume one thing to have changed in the past, we must be aware that at the time other related things will also change, which is impossible to guess (Hobsbawm 1997). Additionally, it is redundant to speak of what would have happened when we know what has already happened. Likely reasons for the actual rate of devastation, as opposed to an abrupt and comprehensive collapse, would be either the absence of measures to deal with outright chaos, or hesitation due to opposing powers from around the world fearing the same fate.

In mainstream politics, two messages clutter the airwaves. The first is the doublespeak of International Relations, ‘the negotiations are ongoing’, ‘the threats,’ or the drivel that ‘the EU cannot absorb more refugees’, etc. This last point is peculiarly laughable because there was never a time in capitalist history in which there were no wars and refugee flows. Marx’s catchphrase that there is nothing more abominable than to posit the great deportations as the future of humanity has already been borne out. As for the second message, it is history that whispers it. History is not the person of an abstract president commenting on various incidents and tossing the course of events one way or another. History is the totality of social relations of production, governed by the capital relation, to remake the capital relation. Unless one hallucinates that her vote changes the world, history is the real, alien, and an impalpable material force that runs social life – *history or god*.

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<sup>3</sup> Physicians for Social Responsibility as quoted by Mint-Press News. Do the Math: Global War On Terror Has Killed 4 million Muslims Or More A recent study suggests the War on Terror has had two million victims, but reporter Nafeez Ahmed claims this may be only a fraction of the total dead from Western wars. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/do-the-math-global-war-on-terror-has-killed-4-million-muslims-or-more/208225/>

To paraphrase Mészáros (1995), capital, the dominant relation of history, is not a material entity, let alone a rationally controllable mechanism, but an ultimately uncontrollable mode of social metabolic control. It escapes any meaningful degree of human control precisely because it has itself emerged in the course of history as a most powerful totalising framework of control into which everything else, including human beings, must be fitted, and prove thereby their 'productive viability', or perish if they fail to do so. One cannot think of a more inexorably all-engulfing totalitarian system of control than the globally dominant capital system (Mészáros 1995). One senses in this remark the weight of history, the primacy of ideology, its forms of social organisation and institutions, which lock production relations in place relative to the advance of productive forces.

To illustrate the constancy of production relations in the context of a political event: during the 2016 US electoral campaign, the phrase 'Trump is anti-establishment' became the refrain of the mainstream media. However, such a buzzword was not to last. Had the working class apprehended the deeper meaning of the concept of *establishment*, that is, the social and institutional apparatuses of class rule, the tremors of such an understanding and their aftershocks upon remoulding consent and the reigning forms of consciousness could have been significant. To best illustrate objective and impersonal history, this mainstreamish notion of *establishment* is helpful because it snaps a still picture of capital's forms of social organisation and its ideological frame of reference – the apparatuses of capital. Figuratively, the populace can vote Trump or the much more morally astute character of Bozo the clown, yet history's manifestation in the empire's organisational structure of power, its so-called establishment, would still run things at the behest of the leading world financial class. A principal condition of production relations, the means of political control, remains firmly in the hands of capital.

The history referred to in this work is history manifest in waste and its sub-industries of wars and measures of depopulation. This history is a surrogate of consummate capital, and its deliberate aim is to reduce by violent means the moneyed magnitude of value of natural and human inputs by reducing nations of the South to indigence. Not to forget that the exercise of immigration is production and a form of value. Although this omnipotent history bears resemblance to Hegel's *Weltgeist*, that immutable and cosmic, impersonal and purely creative force with an evolving design, it is not the same as the history in question here (Hegel [1831] 1956). The history unfurling before us is one that abides by profit-making under conditions of overproduction, in contrast to the dialectic of spirit in time. It requires the underutilisation or disengagement of resources, the cheapening of inputs and the setting aside or destruction of humans and nature. There is no reason it should assume an

ascending trajectory, unless of course labour organises with anti-systemic or anti-private property ideology. It is more in conjunction with Marx's history, the materially founded social relations, or the actuality recomposed as social activity perceived by thought as a concrete totality.

In formulating the relationships pertaining to the totality, Marx takes into consideration nature, organic bodies and objective-social ideas. Hegel, on the other hand, and correspondingly so, considers an abstract totality located in the heavens, or a totality of forms of thought unrelated to their correspondingly changing substance in the real world. Idealism is not too different from *monophysitism* in the sense that reality conforms to the holy spirit or divine ideas (the divine is stronger than the human side of Christ). The chasm is indeed profound. For Hegel, forms are reasons for themselves. So pure being for Hegel makes its beginning as pure thought and immediacy itself, simple and indeterminate; and the first beginning cannot be mediated by anything or be further determined (Hegel 1830). Meanwhile, for Marx, no form, category, or abstract idea can be reason for itself (materialism). All that exists in thought and in the material-world is interconnected and changing in relation to social activity, specifically, labour. Like Hegel's, however, Marxian categories are historically specific categories, with the added decisive layout of materialism, which according to Althusser is a complete departure from Hegelianism – although the logic remains contiguous, as the premise or 'first principles' changes from idealism to materialism, the whole philosophic body changes too (Althusser and Balibar 1977).

Although both philosophies posit an uncertainty to history, Hegel's history will necessarily find its way to the ethical state. For Marxism, a forked path of development and or reverse development is possible, *thence*, the either socialism or barbarism cliché. Uncertainty in idealist history arises from uneventful periods dulling spiritual development, which meanders back and forth by disruptions to the self-realisation of species-being (social being) and culminates in the transcendence of man into the ethical idea or some liberal democratic state (Hegel 1807). Hegel refers to prolonged peace as a state of regression in the development of the *spirit*, which is best abruptly be shaken by war, and which catharises the woes associated with lethargic stages. In Hegel, man self-realises as she becomes the state. In typical idealist manner, this is an inexorable process of humanity working itself up to an ideal or the *absolute*, which is a *causa sui concept* – *Hegel dubs it reason for itself because its reason that brings it into being*.

In materialist history man self-realises into an exploitative labour process where 'the means of production monopolised by a certain section of society, confronting living labour as products and working conditions rendered independent of this very labour-power, which are personified through this antithesis in capital' (Marx 1894). The things man produces acquire mystical qualities

and rule mankind, not because these things do things, but because there are men who fall under the spell of these things and start being things themselves. Through these products of labour acquiring social forms designated by capital, the competition of free labourers for wages un-frees them and bids them against each other. Capital, the rather 'definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character,' authorises its things to *become* forms of capital and to reproduce the activities of labour. And although changes in consciousness are determined by changes in the material circumstances Marx (1845), the ideality of the Marxian system rests on the mediation of theory into practice, otherwise, the state of *praxis* sown by revolutionary ideas and evidenced in revolutionary struggle. The following passage from Mao (1937) elucidates the point.

If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but--and this is more important--it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment.

Unlike Hegel, the perversion of revolutionary thought into a pro-imperialist ideology for Marx could end in dystopia. As of late, the 'ideal' has become the form of capital underlain by the state of socialist defeatism. Counter-development has shifted the ideal from sane egalitarianism into a barbarism. Subject to the prevailing hegemony of capital countered by negligible anti-systemic organisation, society seems lightyears away from Marxian classless society. However, the receding power of the US vis-a-vis China heralds the retreat of dominant ideology and its ways of thinking. To reword Marx (1852), most of us may continue to be irrelevant historical agents or to make history as we do not desire, under imperialistically imposed and lopsided power structures, given and transmitted from the past, until *necessity* deems otherwise. Necessity in the practical sense, as will be discussed below, is the appreciation of China leading the counter systemic forces.

The illness of nature and the many war-dead testify to undesired history. History, overdetermined by the Western structure, transmitted from the past

by its grip over the *reason and rationale* for development, charts the state of becoming of particular developing nation. Facing the resultant vector of colonialism and imperialist class power, a developing nation state is in command of itself to the degree it successfully engages in anti-imperialist struggle. Defined as such, an anti-imperialist developing nation is not a failed state, no matter the physical ruin, so long as it opposes US-led imperialism. The state as the institution that mediates the disparate interests of the proletarian class and global capital, as per Mészáros (2017), stands or fails not by the loss of territory in anti-imperialist wars, but by its servility to imperialism (Kadri 2015).

Since capital is immanently wasteful, forecasting events may just be an extrapolation of the bitter Arab and African histories onto future dates. To juxtapose such to the prediction of past events, the ethnic cleansing and occupation of Palestine in 1948 that ushered significant Arab defeats and loss of territory, a long Lebanese war punctuated by smaller ones, and many Iraqi wars, etc., is straightforward. And although Egypt has had its last war in 1973, it nevertheless was devastated by the neoliberal policies instituted after the Camp David Peace Accords. Egypt's case is a reminder of Lin Biao's (1965) remark that 'war brings destruction, sacrifice, but the destruction, sacrifice and suffering is much greater if no resistance is offered to imperialism as the people become willing slaves.' Egypt's current rate of abjection and the malnutrition of its children could only bespeak of tragedy incurred in wartime-like conditions. As can be inferred, the losses to the expanding Zionist-imperialist alliance triggered the underdevelopment that followed (Dana 2006).

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the number of refugees, war and war-related deaths in the Arab and African regions is in the millions. Together, deaths related to war, expulsion from the land, and premature austerity-related-mortality, or deaths occurring long before the historically determined life expectancy, are tantamount to depopulation. Note that this is not different from a whole history of systemic depopulation under capitalism, but the rising number of casualties and refugees connote a region experiencing systemic but gradual de-development.

Unlike the mainstream's dichotomisation of states into failed or successful states, what history wanted, history got. All are soberly reminded that the course of events in this region cannot escape the grip of imperialism and accumulation by militarism [Lenin (1916) more so than Luxemburg (1913) emphasises war as a path of accumulation]. Antecedently, militarism and its wars appear as waste in Marx's Economic Manuscripts. He refers to war 'as the direct equivalent of a nation throwing a part of its capital into the water' (Marx 1863). Militarism as waste comes out clearly with Engels in the irrationality of militarism in Anti-Duhring (1877): 'Militarism dominates and is swallowing Europe. But this militarism also bears within itself the seed of its own

destruction.' Militarism also emerges as a pre-eminent means for the realisation of the surplus in Lenin's early works (Lenin 1908).

Waste arises first in production. The concept of waste as treated by Bauman (2003) rightly addresses and criticises the irrational consumerism of the modern world. However, as mentioned in the introduction, it does not cover a process of production growing by its waste side and controlled by monopoly capital. Its selection of consumption as a socio-behavioural pattern removed from a primacy of production overlooks the laws of capitalist development, especially its law of value. In a planet controlled by abstract as opposed to concrete time, everything and everyone is waste to some degree. The natives of the American continent were nearly exterminated in the early years of the capitalist age, which was also consumption adjoined to production. Irrational consumption predated the liquid world of Bauman. History is rational only when tested against the elimination of private property, otherwise people incarnating capital as hsitroy are just the reason of dominant ideas. In such class rifts co-aligned with the practice of immiseration, the culprit is not only an 'abstract' capital or the idea of capital; it is capital's power and the personified agents of capital. There are different levels of waste, and some are wasted more than others according to their class order or North/South divide. The structural divide between imperialists and the conquered masses is a consequence of the reign of capital re-bolstering capital.

A similar point can be made in regard to Anselm Jappe's work, the Autophagic Society (2017). Jappe's concern is to combat the automatic subject of capital which inhabits everyone as the subjectivity of capital. However, the real development of this structured whole arises upon the law of value, a production side concern. When Jappe attends to the production side, he does so as an abstract whole composed of analytical dichotomies, like productive and unproductive labour, otherwise one-sided categories emanating from sectioned economic activities. Once more, in social reproduction, society is altogether productive. Analytically, reality may be stretched or narrowed, some are said to be productive, and others are not. What is divisible in thought (analytical) in an economic state, the productive-unproductive schism, is in actuality indivisible by its social side, or the side of social relations organising production. Holistically, or insofar as what is given in immediacy, such dichotomy is illusory. It may be introduced to understand an argument, but only to be transcended by the ascent from the abstract to the concrete of the argument and, finally, to correspond to the phenomenon being addressed. One can analyse *ad infinitum*, but one must move closer to the actual process, which is society altogether produces to consume. That some are productive, while others are not by some criterion, down the line runs counter to the thesis that the wage is social. That is, it takes a whole society working together to produce and

earn a wage share of total income. His separation of concrete categories such as productive and unproductive labour demonstrates a knack for formalism, which is fine but only to the point where the whole must be treated as independent while being at the same time a transmutation of its parts. Without this ascent to the abstract, the law of value, which reworks society into the productive entity that it is, disappears because its history has disappeared as a result of formalism. What also disappears with the workings of a law of value without history is the disproportionate equivalatation of value for a specific moneyed form. Without transformative history, capital's charade of free and equal exchange is maintained to get the most out labour for the littlest prices.

Rarely cited for his contribution, Thorsten Veblen has masterminded the sociology of waste. Arthur K. Davis (1957) has considered that wasteful consumption was just as a central to Veblen's work as emulation, leisure, recognition and conspicuous consumption. Factually, these concepts are interrelated because to conspicuously consume in order to be recognised or gain status implies more wasteful consumption (Veblen 1924). Consumerism and the model of earning without effort, the emulation of the rich, the leisure, the recognition associated with conspicuous consumption are interrelated (Veblen 1899). However, this view remains a demand-side led waste process: waste consumption instigates more waste production, in contradistinction to waste production creating the wasting subject alongside the waste-commodity. More to the point, for Veblen 'capitalism frustrates science and workmanship, and incites to waste, fraud, and artificial scarcity as the upshot of Veblen's analysis of the existing order' (Davis 1957). In another more remarkable passage, Davis explains how for Veblen 'the technological apparatus, by virtue of the obsolete and hence arbitrary institution of private property, is privately owned. And the owning business interests consistently restrict output to increase their profits. They can readily do so, whether the modern machine process, pictured by Veblen as an endless chain of specialised dove-tailing links, is artificially broken up into wastefully competitive sections, or whether it is unified under monopolistic trusts.' *Thence, Veblen's definition of ownership as the legal right of sabotage, or equivalently, private property immanently wastes.*

## 5      Militarism versus Military Spending

There is a marked absence of the law of value in demand/consumption side theories. The law of value does not equally devastate social subjects. Imperialism, the intense application of the law of value, effects high doses of violent repression in the South for the purpose of commercial exploitation (the slave-type evolved into waste exploitation). War, more so in the finance-monopoly stage vis-à-vis

earlier capitalist stages, becomes systemically an end in itself. Capital accumulates by means of war and war is itself a sphere of production. It is so not only in the making of the weapons but more importantly in the financial spin-offs, the tech-development, and the foundational act of mowing down lives as an initial, intermediate and final stage of production. War incorporates the moments of cultural reproduction that rejuvenate the knack for more war as waste. Militarism as a domain of accumulation is not the same as military Keynesianism. The latter is the economicistic version of military spending denoted in capital's price-accounting, the supply and demand for military materiel and corresponding state spending. Aside from being a social realm of accumulation, militarism accounts for the impact of war on value outlays denoted by the consumption of lives. It comprises the social cost of labour's reproduction, the necessary labour allocated to society whose money form abides by the demands of the militaristic rate of surplus value. The variation occurs as living labour whose labour power serves as cheap input into the production of expensive dead labourers. Labour contributes super profits to capital when it engages the cultural industry of death, and specifically when it reproduces itself dead. With hegemonic militarism, a labourer is more valuable to capital dead than he is alive.

To elucidate, militarism mimics the factory, in its social organisational structure, its industrial culture, the class system that reproduces it, the salaries of the professors and media pundits who promote it, all lumped together. As an investment area, militarism unlike other investment areas that dip as time goes on, it always has the potential for growth. It is a peculiar province of accumulation capable of infinite expansion (Luxemburg 1913). It is the social, cultural and financial spheres welded together, which balance the reproduction of the capitalist order through metabolising (consuming labour to gain value) high rates of human and natural inputs. Militarism is an object of capital, while 'capital itself ultimately controls this automatic and rhythmic movement of militarist production through the legislature and a press whose function is to mould so-called public opinion' (Luxemburg 1913).

The imperialist state – unlike dependent states – creates sovereign debt/credit as it borrows in its own currency. The financial obligations it emits also oblige it to further expand by imperialist aggression to underwrite the fictitious (excessive) part of its debts (Lenin 1916). Imperialist state debt is both the financial instrument afforded to its own financial class at low cost due to global seigniorage and the harbinger of future imperialist wars – only harbinger, the *casus belli* is the balance of the class struggle that re-enacts the condition for social reproduction through and by war.

Under crises of overproduction, or as returns to capital decrease with lower rates of surplus value, the metabolic rate of value destruction and creation,

the furnace of value proper, entwines the war with the civilian economies in a waste partnership to redress falling rates of profits. Unlike the civilian-end use commodity industry, militarism expands because state funding of waste is the effective demand side continuously satisfied with the provision of dead people from an excessive population. Mészáros (1995) infers this growth by waste point as capital severs the correspondence between use and exchange value, or as the gap between what society produces and what it really needs widens.

In radically disengaging itself from the structural constraints of use-value as tied to human need and real consumption ... and thereby the humanly meaningful measure of legitimate aims and objectives is repudiated as an intolerable fetter to 'development', the road is wide open to displace many of capital's inner contradictions. And this can go on for as long a historical period as the new outlets and modalities of realisation remain free from the pressures of saturation on the one hand, and from serious difficulties in securing the necessary resources *for the cancerously growing and ever-more-wasteful pattern of production* on the other. This type of, by Marx unexpected, structural change in the capitalistic cycle of reproduction is accomplished through a radical shift from genuinely consumption orientated production to *destruction*. (my emphasis) (Mészáros 1995)

However, the destruction of which Mészáros spoke only glosses over the destruction of human lives. The reason is not because it is too horrid a subject to explore. The notion of living labour consuming living labour as a value activity and form of value escapes his broader argument. Moreover, it is rather his mentioning of capital's *civilising mission* that makes it cumbersome to reprioritise depopulation as the leading value/production activity into his argument.

However, there is no sane civilisation that value imparts. The commodification *qua* objectification of labour under capital's hegemony also re-establishes the moral grounds with which capital dispenses with the human resource. Formulaically, the rate of relative depopulation becomes positively related to capital's ideological hold. Depopulation as a value activity offsets the human resource underutilisation by the outright elimination of humans. Although much is said that under the mature forms of capital culminating in mid twentieth century fascism, race-based demographic policies forged the thinning of minorities in pursuit of full employment for the superior race, the relative depopulation of the Third World has been afoot since the dawn of capitalism and for similar reasons.

Unlike pre-capitalist days past when empires amassed tribute from expanding the population and investing in new irrigation techniques and

infrastructure, the capitalist system devours labourers' lives whole as commodities. Prior to the current capitalist mode of production, when humans came to depend on the market – that is before people started to sell their labour for a wage to produce in excess of market absorption capacity – feudal empires would for vested interest avoid smashing the peasants, their irrigation systems and their low-tech tools. They needed them for tribute. Long periods of stagnation and stability took root, longue durées as they have come to be known, because although political regimes may change, the economic base of society experienced few upheavals (Braudel 1992). The ancient conquering empire would soon repair the irrigation canals and restore stability. Pre-capitalist crises were crises of underproduction and underconsumption, primarily caused by nature – chapter six deals with this historical issue. Capitalist crises, however, are about overproduction and historically/socially predetermined underconsumption. At the present juncture, grain and cereal overproduction is more than sufficient to meet demand, but hunger is nurtured by capital. Hunger is one of the tools by which imperialism regulates labour and responds to the requisites of the labour process. To subdue labour by hunger wastes labour and also shrinks the time and space into which revolutionary ideology may threaten capital. 'The politics of diminishing the grounds upon which revolutionary ideology may sprout' assume priority over the economic concerns of capital. Capital's hold on power is the class reason of why value relations exist; hence, all the more reason why imperialism is primarily sociological.

## 6      The War Event

Of the waste domain of accumulation, war is an event to which the same labour input, which serves both as living labour and output is a condition that stands out. The involved working classes perish way before their due time. War and the broader militarism contribute to the regulation of the reproduction or de-reproduction of labour. And just as any other industry deals with its commodity in surplus, it calibrates the stock of labour power to the historically desired level. Some industries scrap commodities, while obviously the more acute militarism scraps human lives in shorter intervals. Crucially and by undermining the autonomy of labour, war facilitates the expropriation of resources. That is, war cheapens the moneyed equivalent of labour power, the wage rate. War is both killing as an end in itself and killing as end to strengthen the warring party's position. There is always the issue of competition with other capitals, which curtails imperialist thirst for blood. All warring imperialists produce death for sale and would as capital proper benefit from an enlargement of wars; however, the issue of the expansion or diminution of the reserve army

of labour, the excess population to be wasted, is a matter that must cohere with the demands of the rate of capital accumulation.

A corollary necessarily follows. As capital accumulates by the domain of militarism, it reduces humans to objects, that is, to their labour power or to simply their physical bodies. Naturally, it also de-subjectifies labour or lets labour dwell in the subjectivity of capital. It renders a human being thing-like or slave-like. De-subjectivation here is the adoption of the subjectivity of capital pressed upon labour; capital beats labour into submission before it reifies it. In its elemental state, capital is the reason of a commodity with many thingified adherents.

In the organic relationship of living to dead labour, the accounts are straightforward. The more living labour is cut down vis-à-vis dead labour, there will be less value outlays on living labour (represented in the wage bill) and more surplus labour turning to constant capital to enhance productivity in order to meet average profits. Over time, people are paid less, while a remaining part of the surplus goes to enhance the capital stock leaving less for profits. On account of lesser living labour, the rise of the value composition of capital dampens the rate of surplus value (Marx 1867; Saad-Filho 1993). In war, however, living labour transmutes into literal dead labour at high frequency. More living labour would be needed to produce itself as dead labour or the commodity on offer. The re-switching of labour for labour (instead of labour for constant capital) means that the numbers of fallen people engaged in war, or quickly consumed in the labour of the trenches, mitigates the dampening effect on the rate of surplus value resulting from the tendency of the organic composition of capital to rise. Rephrased, there has to be more labour hired, which is also raw material for itself as dead labour. Additionally, capital would require more of the deaths of war per given level of technology to eliminate labourers, the death product.

Didactically, however, a human as social being is producer-consumer. She delivers as input her labour power while she produces commodities, and she participates in or commands/submits to the various stages of the realisation of that commodity. She makes a commodity and may consume other commodities. War with its several social time-defined stages of realisation is a slightly more complex production-consumption process. In one clear aspect of this process, a labourer makes the bomb, but the bomb consumes a labourer. Although consumption is entropic, the higher degree of auto-destruction in war demands a requalification of its high state of social entropy, or the socially unnecessary waste paid for over time.

Set against the crisis of overproduction, commodities exchanging on markets foreshadow resource allocation. They presuppose the operations of the law of value. These commodities lay down their rationale as *fait-accompli* insofar as what to consume and produce. Plainly, they assume a fetish status.

In the commodity as it exists objectively, outside of us, the private, or exchange value, is set against the social, or use value, and these opposites repulse each other. We are in a world where the commodity we created is at war with itself to expand and resolve in the money form. It has to sell above the cost incurred by the private producer, or at a great cost to society. To fall back on Marx (1894), in the formation of market prices based on the prices of production, there occurs the contradiction between the law of value and the general rate of profit. Value stands in a mutually exclusive relation with market price, since the final price contains profit, which is surplus labour added during production. Accordingly, the law of value comes in to reallocate resources in order to keep socially necessary labour time to a minimum and for prices of production to also cover costs and meet average profits.

All the commodities we create roughly constitute our wealth. The owners of commodities adopt the roadmap of the commodity for self-expansion as their own and lay out the social conditions as well as the credit necessary to extend the market. The financial organisations issue credit selectively by activity and in correlation with the rising business cycle. They lend more in times of prosperity and favour firms whose inputs are cheap and outputs are dear. However, the social source of profit is not to be found in the lower prices of inputs, or the reduced costs of capital and/or the cost of labour relative to revenues. Such is an arithmetic operation, which corresponds only to the micro account of the firm, but not the social accounts of value forming activities vis-à-vis market conditions.

Production is a social dynamic. Profits arise via the social or political measures taken to reduce the autonomy of direct producers. These measures are also value forming activities. The outlays on the labour input into every stage of production must be slashed relative to the total labour constituting the commodity. The decisions to do so are marionetted through commodity fetishism. Commodities exchange for each other supplanting the role of people. They set the conditions to be established for the minimum socially necessary labour time required for their own expansion. Commodities control things by the degree of their objectivity/alienation. If they fall outside of social control (become more objective so to speak), their internal contradictions are freed to resolve the predicaments they face during expansion by the most egregious ways. In other words, the less the leverage labour has in class politics, the more the order created by the commodity forces people to live by its rules. History, seen as the series of social events earmarking social reproduction, becomes the manifestation of the encoded but powerful value relation. Society's forms of organisation and reigning ideas re-conform to the demands of the commodity's unbridled drive for self-expansion. To be sure, the violence attendant upon the repulsion between use and exchange value is the roadmap for the permanent war.

While expansion by war abides by the diktat of the expanding commodity, such correspondence is not a one-to-one rapport in chronological time. It is also not about economic performance correlating with its lagged performance to influence future events. The process of expansion builds by the intensity of the capital-labour contradiction and how it settles. Whichever subject is in control, capital or labour, that subject will redesign the time as well as the space available to society.

Under monopoly-finance capital, a different class context, a more concentrated form of capital to which war becomes the primary means to unwind the tension between the development of productive forces and the relations of production, surfaces. The tension in concrete form is between the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies, neo-colonies, and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other (Lenin 1916). The higher rates of financialization and frequency of exchange also encumber social development at higher rates. The social repression required to crush labour rises in scope and scale precipitating severe social crises. Aggression against the developing world picks up speed to bolster profits. Unlike any other time under capitalism, the imperialist age entails more of the violence to support capital's way of social reproduction.

In terms of militarism and its wars under the monopoly-finance historical stage, there are two principal dynamics to consider. First, militarism absorbs and redeploys money surpluses – the thesis originated in Lenin's work on imperialism and later developed by Kalecki (1943). As discussed in Kadri (2017), the point was further elaborated by Baran and Sweezy (1975) and Mandel (1975) among others. Secondly, and via immediate or protracted depopulation, militarism and its wars modulate the reproduction of labour. The rate of population growth under capitalism is lower than what the historically determined level would be for social reasons. The mainstream regards the premature deaths of the many in faraway places, areas inhabited by 'cheap' labour as a mere humanitarian nuisance, in contrast to being the predicate of capital's social dynamic. Eurocentric Marxism perniciously falls back onto some positive correlation of price with value to argue the whites are rich by their own effort. Cheap things or people are of cheap value and therefore unimportant to the restructuring of the social system. The impact of violent depopulation or severe austerity measures reducing life expectancies upon revolutionary consciousness is circumstance specific and difficult to assess. In tangible terms, depopulation influences value outlays on labour, as well as the rate at which the stock of labour power, or the potential of the unwaged labour available to society fluctuates.

Kalecki (1943) pointed out that governments prefer to invest in the military because unlike other social spending, like health and education, which crowds out the private sector, militarism invests in the private sector. Since the time Kalecki wrote, the interest-bearing capital, including its fictitious component,

the financial assets to which there is no corresponding real value, have risen faster than any previous time in history and well-beyond the demands of the real economy for moneyed assets (for a definition of fictitious capital see Fine [2013]). From where Kalecki stood, he could not have envisaged the skyrocketing dollar debt of US empire to which much of the present and the future stock of humanity's labour should be held as collateral. The *de facto* ownership of conquered or collapsing states by US-led imperialism, the control of strategic resource flows, the regulation of the stock of labour available for production and or the pillage/commodification of what remains of nature are altogether the counter-value of US debts, or equally, future dollar issuance guarantees. Since the onset of hyper-financialisation, the costs of pollution and social ills have filtrated into future prices that impute in the current social costs of production as risk premiums and options to be traded.<sup>4</sup> Since Kalecki, the real wealth with its bigger underside of waste have grown and are realised in the market of today for a price. Illustratively, with more efficient but cheaper cars, emitting more altogether because their numbers grow (the Jevons paradox), and much more social misery, each waste element is lain above an exploitation activity, which increasingly consumes humans.

Rising US dollar supplies and profit rates as of the second half of the twentieth century overstretched moneyed capital relative to existing real assets and surpluses. Projecting Lenin's benchmark, the rate of issuance of imperialist state debt adumbrates war, implies that the contingencies of future wars are oscillating at a faster pace, only to be tempered by the nuclear deterrent.

War consumes labour as material substance by consuming the labourer. It literally alienates the life of labour from labour. Relatedly, through the war-enhanced power position of imperialism, the dominant ideas, which instil defeatism in labour, gain ground. Such vortex of ideological dominance falsifies all that is real. It does so by perverting the modes of abstraction by which knowledge is acquired and classified. On the doctrinaire side of things, it rewrites history in ways to beautify the existing order. Revolutionaries and

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4 The world's equity and bond stocks rose from 11 trillion US\$ in 1980 to 234 trillion US\$ in 2020 (SIFMA 2021). The tradable debt has grown, while its growth and steadiness require that more money pumped into securities. Liquid securities, or securities easily redeemed for cash, steady the value of paper debt over time. The demand for dollar denominated liquid-securities pushes up the demand for dollars. However, the size of the debt has no real counter value in the present; it is underwritten by future returns on existing or expanding control of future capital stock. For the rate of exploitation to create enough wealth capable of tallying with the immense size of the debt, it must turn to waste production. The power of the market over the organised dimension of capital emerges in a condition of hyper-financialisation, which allocates resources to bridge the chasm between real and fictitious capital by creating wars, which circularly attract world wealth into dollar denominated securities.

peoples massacred by empire become through the selective facts of logical positivism, or other analytical variants thereof, icons of the very same system that wasted them.

During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred, and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the consolation of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance*, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. (Lenin 1917)

As victims of imperialism become its heroes to further its objectives, the concrete condition of reproducing labour to be realised as commodified dead labour in shorter time spans will still lurk in the background. The maelstrom of living labour consuming living labour, or the conscripted soldier devouring the life of his victim, become the militarism as a domain of accumulation that fires up surplus value. Imperialist war produces dead people whose associated surplus labour adds to dead labour. It expands finance or the monetary space into which value as a social relationship incubates. It also raises the scale of commodification, which increases the scope of objects that capital can trade with. War then becomes a domain of production as well as the mediation of production crises.

## 7        On Imperialism and Essence

In a world of underutilised resources, the class at the helm of imperialism does not comparatively gain much from a subdued but intact developing nation. In terms of finance, the wars may cost trillions, which in turn become the credit of the financial sector. Trade with states like Sudan, Syria or Yemen whose dollar GDPs are negligible is scarcely in the billions. In more foundational terms – that is, in value terms – the wars create surplus value and recreate the conditions for the future expansion of value or, rather, the social grounds for profit making. Surplus value is a consummate moment of the law of value. The law of value or, a sub-category thereof, the law of absolute surplus value (For Marx surplus value is capital's *raison d'être*) reworks development processes to meet

rising profit rates. Naturally, imperialist wars massively adjust social conditions and are the leading practice of the law of value. Chiefly through wars, the law of value is the *essence* of imperialism guiding its development.

At a further remove, essence is not the essentialism prevalent in critiquing mainstream discussions of identity politics; the sort of broad-brush approach to history in which ‘primordial’ identities such as the constructs of Sunni-Shia or the Serb-Croat are locked in a hate relationship transmitted from the distant past. Such history serves as cover for imperialist aggression. Time however is dynamic. And essence as used here is the dialectical category referring to the social laws that constitute the value relationship. In other words, those relations specifically between labour and capital that satisfy what it takes to establish social production. Production exists in and through the value relationships, principally, those of circulation, exchange, production and consumption taken together as the social production totality, and subject to the law of value under capitalism. The practice of imperialism given in phenomenon as appearance is rooted in the value relationship whose essence nests in its various moments, its abstract, use, and exchange values, reconfigured by moneyed mediation and modern finance to ultimately re-actualise by the aggression of imperialism. The contradictions at the heart of the commodity itself break out of their abstract state into their concrete state unfolding as the practice of imperialism.

The essence of value is what distinguishes capital’s social product from previous forms of non-capitalist social products. At no time before the onset of capitalism was the market-mediated product of labour determined by the scope of product alienation from the direct producer. With capitalism, the majority of the population must be dispossessed of its tools and means of production. Prior to capitalism, markets represented a particular circumstance as opposed to a general phenomenon. The performance of capitalist markets influences much of social life. In terms of dynamics, the value objectified in the commodity and its use value repulse each other represents an abstract or one-sided moment of essence. Notice the abstraction here is real as opposed to metaphysical: the worker is truly deprived of her product, which is an observable condition. Similarly, exchange value resolves the *immanent* contradiction between value and use value (the concrete labour stage), which is an ascent into the abstract or the abstract labour stage. The laws constituting essence guide the ascent from abstract to concrete states. Analogously, militarism intensifies the contradiction between the labour of society, value proper, and the social ends that commodities serve, use-value. Through wars, it lays the foundation for minimal necessary labour that eases the realisation of commodities at above average cost. It particularly facilitates the sale and consumption of waste commodities, including part of the supposedly excess labour and its labour power – labour power the commodity is the initial building block of

all commodities. To realise the commodity labour power, militarism and its war industry must destroy the labourer subjected to the militaristic wage system.

Capital, pressured by its intrinsic contradiction, wars to further transform surplus labour realised in moneyed profits into capital. Capital's contradictions and their associated mediations are codetermined. They may be put across as sequential and teleological for the purpose of elucidation; however, there is neither a first nor a second stage to its development. It is overdetermined. There are also no monisms or dualisms of opposites in dialectics, the sort of 'one-sided truths, fragments which await their integration in a third' (Croce 1915). Croce is not alone in calling for the abandonment of the triad, or the commonplace idiom of thesis anthesis and synthesis, in favour of a system evolving by auto-differentiation. It is not a case of capital opposing labour and existing apart from one another, capital is the product and the negation of labour at once. Social production is the totality of social production relations vertically ordered as contradictions resolved in auto-negation.

The making of a commodity involves no stages of production processes consecutively ordered. For instance, a war for raw material in the future could determine the output of the car industry in the present, or conditions of production in the present may incite a war in the future. Even the commodity's consummation in consumption is not its final realisation stage. The energy and pollutants it releases lead to unpredictable but market mediated outcomes. Obviously, these could poison nature and tax man. Conceptually, various stages of social production can be compounded into a single process and are said to be code-determined and overdetermined. Unlike the stagism of chronological time, or the partial story of the factory owner who arranges everything, from A to Z, to produce commodities, the historical context in which he produces is what informs production and it is circularly and indeterminably causal. Production, whether it involves civilian or military cycles, is a time-asymmetric predicate of its own component stages and inputs. Production occurs in social or abstract time, or the time in which its re-constitutive events crystallise at the behest of capital.

The production and the exchange of commodities are concurrently the projection of the contradiction within a commodity, a macro refraction of which is the North-South divide; the greater the divide at the heart of the commodity, the greater becomes the divide between North and South, as well as the efficacy of the law of value incarnate in imperialist practice. It may be as well to note that Marx begins his analysis with the objective commodity as a reified labour replete with contradictions. The subordination of use to exchange value is logically the subordination of the planet to war or pure waste. The intensity of waste accelerates with commodification. Conversely, the expansion of waste culminates in the retreat of sane civilian-end use commodities—sane as in commodities that do not overly consume social

nature. The value outlays that cover the production of waste circularly ration the resources available to the working class. Society has less to consume and what is consumed is polluted.

That imperialist war mobilises surpluses and strengthens control over resources is a thesis central to debates on militarism. Militarism amounts to the central moment in the production process over which all other stages of production pile up. It establishes the brute and ideological power of capital and, as such, it is basal to all production domains and relations. Imperialism is to militarism the genus class. Moreover, imperialist war as a value forming activity, a form of value and a sphere of production is unmentioned in mainstream debates. War is rarely considered as the law of value in practice. Often the second contradiction of capitalism, competition between capitals (the first is the labour-capital contradiction), occupies central stage because its investigation imparts information useful to imperialist centres. However, the origin of profits is in the primary contradiction. It is to be sure the degree to which use value retreats before exchange value. Such growing gap implies that the profit rate rises, albeit, conditionally upon demand becoming increasingly reconstituted by demand for waste products. When use value turns into its opposite dis-use value, or as waste is consumed, capital realises what it produces. The value contradiction settles into a state of surplus value by socialising *qua* expropriating the private labourer of the means of sustaining life as well as life. To expropriate years of life from the longevity of the labourer amounts to an optimal form of exploitation.

Inter-competing capitals war against each other over shares of the booty, while the internal impulses of militarism invoke war all on their own. By the latter point I mean that the inertia of the fetishes of gun-commodities urges the imperialist to war against others. The gun, symbolic of coercion, and as an objective commodity/fetish is in control of the state, and it only ceases to be so when the state becomes socialist (Mao 1938). Aside from the war of capital against labour, inter-competing capitalist wars are value activities that further socialise labour (leave it without possessions) and regiment the labour process. These nations race each other to deepen repression and with that the rate of exploitation. Various capitals compete to control production at source. They disagree over shares and/or whether the competing capitalist state is not doing enough to immiserate its own labour. They also compete to further impoverish imperialised nations just as particular capitalist does for the single labourer. However, imperialism expropriates not the single labourer but the whole of the developing nation. In an organically interrelated social realm, the first and second contradictions of capital join forces in a symbiosis to further exploitative relationships. The retail efforts of the capital-labour contradiction are

reinforced by the wholesale impact of imperialist wars, which broaden the scope for imperialist enslavement of whole nations. For instance, to bomb Chad is to ensure that Chadian resources and labour will flee to Europe or be available at slave-like low prices for a long time.

Imperialism is intense capital or its state of becoming in encroachment wars. As capital in its imperialist stage intensifies the production of waste, the resistance of developing masses in anti-imperialist struggles cease to be territorial wars. Their struggles will not only be wars for the liberation of territory or over territory, they become class wars meant for the liberation of man before territory. Freeing national territory is instrumental only insofar as it repels an imperialism remaking itself by waste. The national liberation struggle becomes a last-ditch fight to defend the very physical and spiritual existence of peoples of developing nations (Habash 1971).

Militarism as a domain of accumulation accomplishes itself by some measure of extermination. Marx could have replaced accumulate in 'accumulate, that is Moses and the prophets' with exterminate and said instead exterminate, that is Moses and the prophets. Imperialism's law of value imposes severe resource underutilisation to maintain monopolistically created scarcity and, in parallel, premature human extermination. It either dismantles labour's platforms or social forms rearing revolutionary labour and its political expression, like anti-imperialist states and unions, or it casts away a certain stock of labour. Unlike previous modes of production, socially exercised depopulation is systemic to capitalism. Depopulation or the downward pressure exercised on the demographic growth rates is no longer about providing a sufficient stock of labour power for the commodity to auto-expand – the case is no more about pre-capitalistic shortages of labour. Capital's contradiction with population growth arises from the restlessness of the too many unemployed and/or the so many poor people to be fed.

Its thinning down the vast supplies of labour and the measures of relative depopulation are domains of accumulation. Recalling, the products of war are the wasted lives peddled as commodities. Humanity's product-alienation from such commodities, the dead people *qua* commodities, is the life of man alienated from man and, therefore, it is doubly problematic. First, there is a part of society, a capital class, which trades in the death of man. Such is a definitive estrangement from the human-self. As the other dies, the product alienation is complete. There will not be a labourer expecting a wage to reproduce in the future because reproduction ends with her death. As to the labourer remaining alive, she also self-alienates by the very fact that she is a social being whose wellbeing degrades by the rise of a culture of death. To complicate matters, the wages that reproduce the person remaining alive include part of the returns

accruing from the sale of the other person's life as a war dead. Putting the argument in terms of imperialist versus imperialised nations, it is the aristocratic nation classes which must develop some ghastly ideology to justify cannibalising the lower classes. For instance, they must ascribe the reasons for warring against the developing world to tribalism in Africa, Islamic fanaticism, or atavistic Slavism, but never to the fact that their riches are based on an accumulation process that requires a culture of mass murder.

Secondly, as society takes its orders from value to produce more of the war commodity, that is, the exchange of the war-dead for an actual or a potential price, such social reproduction by the consumption of war and its war dead further estranges warring activities from social control. The market for the practice of imperialist aggression gains in autonomy. More chauvinist ideological strands *must* flourish to allocate more social resources for war. An example of such war-market chauvinism is the segregation that flourishes with any form of settler colonialism. For instance, Zionism was labelled as a form of racism by General Assembly Resolution 3379 because it does not recognise the humanity of the Arab. Being un-recognised as human makes it futile for the vanquished Arabs to negotiate their fate with Israel. Moreover, as Arab masses self-disarm, the Zionist state will reproduce itself via the accelerated elimination of what it considers as the non-human Arab.

The imperialist class in command mutes debates of constant war. Unlike the much talked about environmental catastrophe, the war is attributed to the phantoms of ancient cultures or a socio-psychological obsession with death coming alive in the present. To the strata allied with imperialism, protecting the environment is a wholesome affair, whereas the massacres abroad or the grind of severe austerity are either trivial or unrelated to central capital accumulation. Capital is fathomed as mostly a nourishing relation whose minor transgressions could be fixed with reforms. That argument is faulty because in the state of things before us, capital's avarice for cheap resources has already overconsumed both environment and man. Equally important, growth levels and residually profits levels arising upon inequality conjoined with waste production continuously rise. In a fully integrated production circuit, whether by *Pax Americana* and its austerity or *Bellum Americanum* and its war, the crushing of longevity in the developing world is of necessity to accumulation.

Meanwhile, the dichotomy man-nature persists for class reasons. Although the accumulation of wealth by colonial wars and wars of encroachment was decisive to the initial rise of capitalism, and later to its continued resilience, the deaths of an estimated 900 million people in European colonial and imperialist wars since 1500 are attributed to a cross between manifest destiny and unintended consequences (estimates based on Jaffe [1981]). Since capital consumes man and nature means that both of these inputs are objects of the same

law of value. We cannot arrest the consumption of one, without arresting the consumption of the other. Moreover, nature is property, commodified and traded, while it is man who makes the value of commodities and, also assigns value in symbolic form to commodities. Under capital, social nature is all there is to nature, while labour is innately the social in social nature.

With that interconnectedness, nature cannot be saved without saving man. The environment cannot be salvaged by Western environmentalists, which posit that imperialist wars abroad are unrelated to their environmental struggles, or worse yet, that the rise of the South will precipitate Western collapse in a negative sum game. Lauesen (2018) astutely notes that whereas the liberation of the South would broaden the scope of class struggles inside the dominant countries and create increasingly favourable conditions for the proletarians of all countries, such ideas (negative sum games) are based on the myth of apocalyptic economism. While wars cheapen the inputs derived from social nature, they also strengthen capital's real and ideological hold, and catharise the state as the instrument of capital. Wars expedite social-nature's auto-consumption over and above sound replenishment rates. Although the economic drivers of war may be highlighted, for much of received theory, war remains just a transhistorical predisposition of empires associated with man's inherent greed and fallibility.

## 8 Markets Past and Present

To re-postulate: the Third World has been cheapened in money terms. It has been beaten into cheapness and it does not count for much in the dollar-denominated economic circuit. The often-aired news item that most of humanity accounts for an insignificant share of world income, and most are plagued with cultural or territorial conflicts, reconfirms by the demonstration effect the putative insignificance of the developing-world. However, such rift also reconfirms the international class divide, not only that between capital and international labour but also between the capital-partnered sections of working classes in aristocratic nations and the rest. The supposedly 'immutable' international class divide, associated with 'inferior cultures or races', has become an advertisement for more of the imperialist wars intended to protect the Northern, especially the American, ways of life. Of course, the imperialist centre does not use the expression inferior cultures or race *per se*. It, in fact, never ceases to remind us of its Humanitarianism and that Third world people when given the opportunity are equal or as intelligent as white people. Imperialist wars, however, botch opportunities and impose scarcities. By Fanon's reverse social psychology reinterpreted here in the spirit of the above text: in the equality of races proclamation, while the system diffuses the sham of scarcity, the 'there is

so little to go around for everyone,' the notion of equality with brown people becomes a threat to Northern classes (Fanon 1952). Contrary to its anti-racist intonation, white sponsored equality incites the wasting of Southern masses.

What is peculiarly awry in the calculation of war-loss are human losses, which unlike the capital stock, humans are treated as bountiful and cheap. By capital's accounts there are far more workers relative to spare capacity, possibly like oxygen in the air. Moreover, the profits wrought by cost cutting measures and mechanisation restructure production in ways that engender redundancy. However, it is labour as subject in the value relationship, which reconstructs the historical conditions, including the scientific progress necessary for Western machine-making. As Southern labour loses its battles for autonomy, it also fails to oppose the de-industrialisation of its own social formation. The flip side of the incapacitation of the South is the capital concentration in the North. The subject relation of the machines in the North – the relation by which Europe industrialises, is the systemic debilitation of the South. The process is represented in the premature dead labourers of the South.

Prior to capitalism, empires traded in low-output technology. Under capitalism, what technology imparts, and the increasing returns of technical progress are skewed and twice alienated from social control. First, technology is privately owned, and secondly, the production of technology is socially funded to support private ends and specifically military R&D, materiel and technology. Under capitalism also, nearly everyone must sell their labour on the market for a wage. A market was called a market in pre-capitalist ages, and it is called a market now. However, the current market is of different content. As time and social relations change, the underlying conditions for production and exchange also change. Changes in market form and content are not deviations from immutable forms. They are historically specific. Prior to capitalism, the performance of puny markets for long-distance trade in luxury goods did not influence unemployment and famines on a large scale, as increasingly does the market in modern times.

The modern market has all sorts of objective god-like signals to move it. Questions of how markets calibrate their growth, their commodification of life, to questions related to the social and natural adversities they have caused and alternative plans, these ought to be central to scientific investigation. However, the 'essentialism' of the mainstream, the idea that markets always existed irrespective of the content they assumed, is a transhistorical fallacy. True, questions of degree matter to science; however, when things grow, they become something different in quality. While information and exchange are common to all markets across history, at no other time in history was the overly produced product of man, the commodity, socially in control of society. Nothing stays the same across history, including the logical signs with which

science formalises phenomenon. Supply and demand may be symbolised by S and D; yet, these are the historical activities of production and consumption. Before capitalism, the surplus product was directly snatched from the direct producer. Under capitalism, the market denotes the surplus product in money form, deliberates upon it, and assigns it to capital by the chimera of free trading agents. Symbolically, the notion that supply equals demand, cannot apply to the pre-capitalist age or the age of consistently low production relative to demand. It also cannot belong to the capitalist age of supply exceeding demand. The identity of supply and demand, as a tool of neoclassical economics, falsifies the reality of modern capitalism because as value equates to price, what is produced is consumed, and there would be zero additional value produced. The observable capitalist phenomenon however tells us that society systemically underconsumes in relation to what is being overproduced, while the rate of underconsumption undergirds the rate of surplus value. Through capital's surplus labour, which as it transmutes into capital's form, the social conditions for underconsumption are continuously recreated.

Similarly to the qualitatively shifting meaning of the concept market, the word war itself has a different content and determination across time. Empires will still seek tribute and imperial rents, but one must look further into the changing reasons of encroachment wars under capitalism. History is not a process of the idea, a rational reality, it is a system of forces as per Croce (1915). And to reread Croce, these are forces shaped by ideas refashioned by material circumstances, such as the rule of the commodity, the financialised market, and overall the way people engage in production to reproduce themselves.

History is not a uniform landscape in which a formal concept explains all stages. All that exists is not a mutation of that *a priori* concept. Historically specific circumstances require specific explanations. Regarding anterior imperialism, Lenin emphasised that 'colonial policy and imperialism existed before the latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism ... but general disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background, the fundamental difference between socioeconomic formations, inevitably turn into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison' (Lenin 1916). And he adds, 'even the capitalist colonial policy of previous stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital.' Finance associates with a higher velocity of exchange. The pressure it imposes upon the real economy takes blind accumulation to a higher structural level. The combination of higher turnover in production alongside the greater objectivity of the commodity further reify the instruments of finance whose expansion is the inevitability of war.

Capital, 'rotten to the core' (Marx 1859), is the totalising-dominating economic power of bourgeois society. Its core activity, the privatisation of all that

is social, must be established as the starting point as well as the finishing point of analysis. Under capitalism, humans are born of capital, not only to be its alienated labourers but also to systematically have their lives shortened before their due time. In the era of monopoly-finance capital, however, the potential for war rises as the principal contradiction of capital with labour further lodges in the North/South divide. Imperialist countries enslave developing countries by stripping them of their sovereignty. The shift in the imperialist class structure from a class-to-class exploitation into its other concrete form ‘the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world’s population by an insignificant minority of the richest advanced capitalist countries (Lenin 1920)’ is a change in the social type of the leading bourgeois discerned from capital’s novel forms of commercial exploitation.

To establish a break in the character of the imperialist class resulting from a degree of change in the mode of production, to rethink an end to imperialism’s Leninist content, one must prove that the imperialist class, which reproduces by militarism, has been drawn to a close. Every other symptom of the imperialist order can change by a matter of degree, its financialisation, capital flows, concentration of power and assets (fixed or financial), etc.; however, the one point that may vindicate a theoretical departure from the old definitions of imperialism is the essence of the imperialist class. Did such a class change from the days of the First Great War or the Second Great War when ‘... the bourgeoisie of each of the imperialist states, hurling themselves pell-mell against their enemies and against the walls of the world, making use of a war to divide up the world anew in order to escape from the economic and political crisis, go on to create an even greater economic and political crisis’ (Mao 1939), or has modern US-led imperialism acquired a different content? It is in the unity of logical with historical discerned from the practice of the law of value that the answer may be found and which will be addressed partly below, but more fully in the concluding chapter.

## 9      The Military Landscape and China

US-led imperialism intercedes at every moment of history. The reasons of the recent imperialism and its imperialist wars, such as the ones ripping apart vast swathes of the developing world, have more or less stayed put. The US has extensive military presence worldwide. It recently rearranged alliances to stunt China’s development (the pivot to Asia). These are rearrangements of tactical moves to meet its strategic objective, which is the subjugation of China. In many areas of industrial development, China overtakes or is about to overtake the US. It will likely unseat the US in terms of nominal economic

size within a decade; in purchasing power parity (PPP) income, it already does (Hersh 2016; Kadri 2017a). While China quietly strengthens in the background, the US's objectives are both the continuation of debilitating wars inflicted upon Chinese trading partners or the blockage of its trade routes.

Incidentally, China's rise breaks the rule by which capital uses the wage system to keep the developing world underpaid while moving imperial rents to buttress the wages of the central classes. In order to free its productive forces, China had freed the value relation – albeit at a cost to its people and environment. In hindsight, these attritive costs established better national defence capacity through positive linkages with Western technology. Given the inevitability of the imperialist threat, the costs of freeing value are less expensive than what China would have to endure had it not been armed with better technology.

The hypothesis held above is such that the only certainty under imperialism is its constant slaughter. In the meantime, in its efforts to contain China, US-led imperialism is supported by an army of Western Marxist intellectuals.<sup>5</sup> It is true that China has invested in Sub-Saharan Africa and has exported/imported capital therefrom; however, does such trade *cum* investment qualify it as imperialist? Not so is the answer. China is hard at work dumping its US-dollar assets. US dollars denominated trade surpluses are just as much a burden to developing formations as debts to US empire. The US is an empire whose wealth grows by its indebtedness. Since most global transactions are required to be in the dollar, value transfers in money form seeking safer assets, convert developing nations wealth into dollars and ship it to the US. Apart from the US, no other nation has more risk-free financial assets, which act as conveyor belts of value exacting tribute from the rest of the world (Köhler 1998). When financial rents flow from this or that nation, it does not mean that these dealings with the dollar would characterise these social entities as imperialists. By such nonsensical standard, a mother receiving remittances from her daughter might turn out to be imperialist. The US-led capital is not imperialist only because of the quantities of imperialist rents it

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5 The list of Western Marxists ascribing imperialism and imperialist brutality to China is long. In an interview with Chomsky (2018), he parroted the US department of State that China has a Million Muslims in Concentration Camps, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KusxMnmvP7A>. The Financial Times (2018) has provided publicity for a 'left-radical' scholar Noam Chomsky who has joined more than 30 scholars from around the world calling for a boycott of Marxism conferences in China as part of the international backlash against Beijing's crackdown on students organising pro-workers groups. <https://www.ft.com/content/68dea512-f2f1-11e8-ae55-df4bf40fgdod>.

draws from the rest; it is primarily imperialist because it is capable as subject to violently subdue those who do not submit to its tribute policies.

To posit that everything is everything proves nothing. Theory is about a hypothesis to be proven. In the odd case of the US, all holders of dollars owe the US dollars wealth they hold to the US. Such is not a matter of opinion; it is a matter of fact. The long list of sanctions and the confiscations exercised by the US treasury may suffice as proof.<sup>6</sup> That is a characteristic peculiar to the class power of the imperialist class exemplified in the structure of the US and its allies. This, in addition to the rents on dollar seigniorage, point to the US-led constellation as the sole imperialist formation.

In reference to labelling China imperialist, Roberts (2015 and 2018) argues that China does not invest abroad through its state companies because of 'excess capital' or even because the rate of profit in state and capitalist enterprises has been falling. He aptly criticised such an approach for lending the lie to the common idea among some Marxist economists that China's export of capital is similar to the export of capital by imperialist nations. For many, imperialist investment abroad, including the militarism and the foreign aid, absorb the surplus capital piled at the centre (Lenin 1916; Kalecki 1947; Baran 1957). However, aside from not visiting any wars on other nations, China's aid to developing nations buttresses their capacity and national security, which is anathema to imperialism. Not that there are physical limits prohibiting China from turning its moneyed surpluses into physical infrastructure, quite to the contrary, China's potential for growth from internal investment or via an internal flying geese paradigm, modernising its hinterland, may absorb its surplus. Yet, its actual capabilities suffice to satisfy its demands for capital goods as well as others.

Roberts however raises concerns over the law of value operating in China with billionaires at the top undermining '*the commanding heights*' approach of the communist party. However, the class subject in value and its law, is an anti-imperialist China, which begs the question of how a country like China whose expansion negates imperialism, would suddenly turn around and become imperialist. In the ideological sphere, this speculative stance resonates favourably with the imperialist trajectories. The other issue with Roberts' position says of China that some undemocratic 'guys on top' might *network* to abort socialist progress. The case may be that such remark is reminiscent of Engel's (1880) critique of German social democracy on capitalism operating under socialism, or there cannot be capitalism without capitalists, which causes a political swerve to the right. It is a point that Amin (2017) raises about the failure of the Soviet Union to reform left-wise after Stalin. Amin thought that after Stalin the

<sup>6</sup> Office of Foreign Assets Control - Sanctions Programs and Information, <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information>

influential Novosibirsk Soviet School adopted a hollow understanding of Walrasian economics, or the notion that perfect competition with tatonnement, leads to fragmentation of property with the state naturally becoming the only source of power and funds for economic expansion. Not that the system's imperfections are the class-materialised circumstances, which surface in the unstoppable global waste, the notion that every worker is also an entrepreneur without class participating freely in the economy runs counter to the fact that many in the top party ranks in the Soviet Union ended up owning what was privatised. What evolved in the Soviet Union was a revolution from above, with those capable of seizing the economic opportunity under private capitalism turning the system altogether into the capitalist fiasco it has become (Amin 2017).

As discussed in Kadri (2021), the same turn to the right in the Soviet Union does not appertain to China. There are no commanding heights in China unconnected to the mass base, but rather a party whose rank and file exemplifies working class participation (Boer 2021 a,b). Robert's networking ascription misses the antecedence of class over its instantiated feature in networks. As argued in the previous chapter, networks are momentary frameworks of class, and dominant classes lay out the context into which organisational structures such as networks evolve. Based on the heightened tensions with the US and the rise of working-class living standards in China, many capitalists in China without capitalist forms of class organisation do not compose a weighty component of its ruling class. As evidenced by the US labelling China 'a strategic foe' and the boomerang effect re-solidifying China's anti-imperialist position, there was no room for China to turn right even if some desired to do so. No matter the networking, the difference with China is such that even though there is a socialism with capitalists, Chinese capitalists must pool their resources with the masses to defend their vested interests in a state-controlled national economy that sources their wealth. They reproduce by national and local financial means as opposed to dependency on rents from US-European financial markets.

In the political sphere, China's adherence to the thesis that détente with imperialism is not a possibility (Mao's position), in addition to working-class democracy exercised through the communist party, have reshaped its class formation in ways that harness the increasing wealth into better national defence positions – similarly to what was proposed by Lenin in his New Economic Policy (1921) where the linkages with the West strengthen the national front. In hindsight, détente with state planning contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union, while a proletarian controlled market opening to the world catapulted China to the top of the global order. Insofar as anti-imperialism defines socialism, the higher Soviet degree of planning vis-à-vis China was not indicative of the former's commitment to socialism.

The imperialist class as a subdivision of history aggresses and exercises power in various forms, including the contemporary allure of Western democracy. Western cultural appeal has enthralled the working classes in former socialist Eastern Europeans, while the working classes of China entwine their cultural values to anti-imperialism. The financial and cultural containment proposed by Brzezinski and Griffith (1961), especially, the attraction of American culture to promote dissent as happened in the Soviet bloc, has had limited effect in China. Nonetheless, in the Western hemisphere, the estrangement of man from society through bourgeois democracy is so complete such that there is scarcely any serious counter-imperialist political dissent. As a means of class-power exercise, Western democracy establishes the fact that the historical ends of white classes are consistent with those of capital. Anyways, the maxim that the stability of political rule by popular consent is inversely proportional to repression, apart from oppressing their minorities, Western regimes need not restrict civil liberties at home.

Roberts further notes that China's relaxation of capital control in 2017 is indicative of 'commanding heights' corruption. However, the lessons from China's history show that its policies are brokered by a balance between national development and national security, with the accent placed on the latter objective. Consider its entry into the WTO, which was initially construed as costly to its national economy. Yet, it is a step China had to take to circumvent the US's obstruction of its many bilateral trade treaties coming up for renewal. China's openness effort was gradual and calculated. It exposed its economy to foreign infiltration only when it was in a position to sustain the costs in ways that strengthen its national security.

A point not so dissimilar to Roberts was made by Weber (2021). She pointed out that the Communist Party's cautious approach to loosening price controls was mainly influenced by the party's understanding of the decisive link between China's rampant post-war hyperinflation and the 1949 revolution which swept the nationalists from power. Here, the price system is theorised as subject when it is a form and instrument of class. The communist party is the working-class institution whose learning curve reproduces its hold on power. The relevant question should address the class typology of the Communist Party of China (CPC), or why time and again through popular democracy it increases common prosperity, anchors policies, such as capital control and inflation reduction, in the strategic interests of the masses.

Furthermore, the operation of the law of value, in particular, the designation of minimum socially necessary labour time or capital's optimal allocation of labour power to further the expropriation of labour, is not only internal to China. The law of value applies globally with a hierarchical order of command

(Amin 1974). The imperialist atop the system or the dominant social relation lays the rules to channel resources. The US's rush to contain China is the permanent offensive, which enables the class formation within China to recoil into a defensive position. The two wars in Korea and Vietnam had the containment of China as their avowed purpose. The CPC also makes it clear that hedging imperialist aggression requires a twining of political and economic independence.

In the final analysis, political independence and economic independence are inseparable. Without political independence, it is impossible to achieve economic independence; without economic independence, a country's independence is incomplete and insecure. (Deng Xiaoping 1974)

It is wide off the mark to pin CPC adaptation – as Weber did – to changes in the price level rather than concern for Western expansion by war, which is the serious threat that repositions China's policy. Doubtless, fighting inflation builds popular sovereignty, but in a developing-context macro variables are tools of national security. It is standard for Western academia to support imperialist aggression, otherwise in such 'democratic atmosphere', it is undemocratic to stand with lesser democracies. It is also standard format in China's political economy to reflect the institutional requirements of socialism that guarantee stable economic growth, and prevent systematic macro risks, in addition to defining a reasonable range between the upper limit of unemployment rate and the lower limit of inflation rate (Hong 2020). However, in China's anti-imperialist war, whether of low or high intensity, it is defence technology and revolutionary ideology that exemplify the weapons of national defence. What brings down a sovereign formation whose defences are weak, is primarily its interiorisation of imperialist thought as proper science. One such idea would be to voice fighting inflation at home while not mentioning that macro policies must be commensurate with building working class autonomy in the face of imperialist aggression. Imperialism governs when its mode of thinking governs or when the national class flips into comprador position. *Thenceforth, the social formation self-defeats with imperialist views absorbed by the working classes as if they were their own.*

Arguably, it is not naivete to disregard the permanent aggression of US imperialism as a definitive steering relation of historical developments. Speaking of the credulousness of taking lightly US aggression, Luciana Bohne sardonically instanced on social media: 'have you been bombed, invaded, occupied, lately? Blockaded? Sanctioned? Have death squads visited your family? Had your regime changed by a fascist military coup? Had your elected presidents

been kidnapped or killed? Had your human rights workers, your journalists, your union leaders been murdered? There's only one country in the world that facilitates all that and more, so world affairs are easy to understand, once you name that country.' Beside the racketeering, the US sets the world interest rate of risk-free financial instruments to which capital flees from riskier developing world environments. It siphons off the wealth of masses. As the US lowers its interest rates – as happened prior to 2007–08 crisis, bonds and T-bills become less advantageous. It pushes institutional investors to speculate on smaller commodity markets, raising the price of basic food across the planet and exacerbating hunger. However, even in accounting terms, locally fired up inflation whether on account of price hikes or penuries may be contained so long as outside pressure on the national currency is blocked off by a regulated capital account and independent monetary policy. With several interest rates calibrating investment with savings through issuance of publicly held national debt (Kalecki 1976), or possibly with the old recipe of negative interest rates at play making holding cash over the long term useless (Gesell 1958). Such capital account regulation remains the case in China. In terms of subject, it was not inflation or price liberalisation that brought down the Soviets, it was an ideologically disarmed working class that relinquished sovereignty and with that control of the capital account to dollarized finance, the principal venue of value transfer.

Most dollar-financialised states cave into a comprador position because open capital accounts and dollarization are the instruments of a capital class expanding in the shadow of imperialism. In China, the material bases of reproduction are national as opposed to dollarized, and these recast the national class structure into a more socialised mode of production. In contrast, the reason Japan accepted devaluation during the Plaza Accords of 1985 is because its state and capital lacked autonomy vis-à-vis US capital. That is not the case of China. The rise of Xi Jinping and his accentuation of Marxism is not a product of personal whims. A return to more socialist practice is a winding down of China's New Economic Policy. The building of the national front to withstand the US's impending offensive is the responsibility of China's nationalistic capital, as well as, the sturdy agricultural sector developed under the leadership of Mao, which remains the crucible of working class autonomy.

Trade and financial surpluses in China imply positive savings, nationally garnered investment and plenty of potential for building capacity (Chun and Tian 2017). China's investments prioritise areas of dual use that promote national security. It does as it must because in every US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (ESRC) report presented to Congress the message

is China's threat must be put to rest. In one instance, the scare mongering says: 'the PLA's long-term strategy to gain advantage over the U.S. military includes developing informationized capabilities and exploiting ostensibly civilian information systems, likely including those built overseas by Chinese companies' (ESRC 2020) In response to China being an alleged existential threat to Western formations, the ESRC report says that 'the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regards the liberal democratic values championed by the United States as a fundamental impediment to its external ambitions and an existential threat to its domestic rule' (ESRC 2020). Not surprisingly, China itemises its national economy together with national security. It converts the moneyed assets into real assets at home and abroad in an effort to dump the dollar and acquire joint-developmental footholds as a matter of self-defence. By pursuing common interests, it hedges against imperialism. By developing itself, it develops others. As such, it confronts the weight of history represented by the structure of US-led imperialism, while its particularisation or the pursuit of its own security and development reinverts into the development of other or universalism.

It may be as well to recall that until China began to make inroads around the globe, nearly all the South was owned by the North – *factually* by military superiority or *conventionally* through the dollarisation of its assets and the spread of its ideology. The South largely remained the North's austerity and war-industry playground. China is gradually rebalancing power structures by its model of mutual capacity building. Its wealth demonstrates its success as a model for others to follow. Moreover, to conjecture that China is imperialist as of this moment, because China in the future will be a bigger economy, is more derision than science. It is an assumption to which the elements of proof are yet to be. Counterfactual theorisation aside, Chinese labour struggles against conditions of global wage slavery through its party and state. A significant share of its wealth is held hostage in US treasury bills. China's developmental practice in Africa cements South–South alliances (Moyo 2016). China has not demonised nations and struck poorer nations, a trademark of US-imperialism in the twentieth century. More important, it has not funnelled value from the Third World through its currency flowing back. China is a net exporter of value to the developing world. It is specious to add selective facts on capital flows from hither and yon to prove that China is imperialist. Suffice it to say, world wealth is dollarized and not held in the Renminbi (RMB). Unless referred back as social constituents of the social production totality, whose leading class (the US) reproduces in real time by means of war, selective empirical observations from actuality do not make much of a theory.

## 10 Actual and Potential War

Theoretically, with respect to war's endurance, US militarism accommodates capital's necessity or the commodity/value self-expanding by means of war. Militarism is not only a platform for exchange or finance, but also as Luxemburg (1913) stressed, a domain of accumulation. As such, it is a social process that involves the production of historically significant surplus value. At least by the damage to the planet and society incurred to date, waste *qua* militarism is growth without a steady state. At this point, there is so much waste such that the civilian-end use economy, the economy of iPad's, trousers, etc., serves as a tributary to the accumulation of waste. The wasted people and extinct nature that went into production, and the waste that comes out of production, is bigger in its size and impact upon dollarized wealth than what is perceived to be dollar-denominated production by the mainstream.

Accumulation is not only about stocking up a heap of commodities, but also about the reproduction of the class agencies and their ideologies that manage the creation of wealth. A Western Marxist definition of accumulation lacking the social agency component, such as the putative 'the conversion of some portion of surplus value into additional (constant and variable) capital, to produce more surplus value', is no different than the Keynesian identity, Savings equals Investment. Accumulation is the social process – and only subordinately the things that presuppose the social process. It involves value creation and destruction, as well as the destruction of social subject by social subject.

The class in charge of imperialism usurps value from conquered formations via super and commercial exploitation. It concurrently consumes value to produce more commodities or waste. Its market, a surrogate of people engrossed in the commodity, adjusts social reproduction to its rate of capital accumulation. The value of living people or resources consumed in war, wasted for prices imputed or to be imputed in production as the cost of waste, need not be dubbed negative surplus value. To split value into positive and negative value, or to speak of forces of destruction instead of forces of production, is the witticism that stems from a class position, which presumes that capitalism has borne progress in its initial stages – Mandel 1975, and Custers 2007 may be representative of the Western tradition dubbing capitalism as progress. The same undialectical-dichotomous approach is applied in relation to dark value (Clelland 2014) – as if there is such a thing as light value. It is the sort of 'on the one hand and on the other hand' analysis, however, with the twist that the ideological tide turns the negative side of capital into a worthwhile cost of development. To say that on the one hand, there are many negative outcomes to capitalist production, but on the other hand, it is positive, misses the point that such

analytical breakdown will be instrumentalised by the tide of dominant ideology. Moreover, the transformation of value to price is not a logical operation. It is a mediated and historically contingent process, which transforms a social production activity into a moneyed economic activity. The value associated with any commodity is at the same time useful and dis-useful/waste, albeit, with the tension at the heart of value wound up to be realised as waste. The value relationship in its actualisation is both its usefulness and its dis-usefulness or waste whose states of becoming (actuality) are conditional upon the balance of class forces and their agencies. Socially, surplus value in its reified form may be thought of as the residual between necessary and surplus labour, however, in its de-reified subject-wise condition, it is not an accounting operation. It is not an arithmetic exercise to which prices could latch onto. The dynamic of the value category is immanently a negative dialectic. The value category is only presupposed by the pile of things/commodities, whereas it is the class culture internalised via a history of repression and exploitation, which recreates value.

Capital's wars are its industries. War is a process that sets aside value, reworks value and destroys value. War as destruction is both consumption and production of value in multi temporal and spatial arenas. War triggers a chain of production and consumption, subprocesses, which diffuse the waste of battles farther afield. The war dead, the input and output at once, is labour whose rate of exploitation is gauged by the shortness of life. People may unwillingly engage in war to literally work themselves death. Moreover, war and its technology are alienated social processes that spur increasing rates of military investment whose average product, unlike investments in other consumption items, rises by the intensity of war itself. War, in its *actual or potential* state is primal to capital accumulation.

Consider Syria as an example of an *actual* war. Syria's GDP is about 23 billion USD in 2019.<sup>7</sup> The sums spent on the destabilisation of Syria or to fuel war are less than trillions spent on Afghanistan or Iraq, but still in the hundreds of billions. The war has contributed to the death of 350,000 (2021 figures) and displaced more than half of the population.<sup>8</sup> For US empire, the spending is an investment in the death of Syrians whose future returns are immediate to its militarism, and subsequent in terms of waste *cum* value gestating to gel into a money form, and more distinctly, from the power positioning that ensures future moneyed flows to US markets.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank, Country data, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/SY>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, Syria: 10 years of war has left at least 350,000 dead, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1101162>; See also UNICEF, Syrian Refugees Appeal, Humanitarian Action for Children, <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syrian-refugees>

Syria is historically an imperialistically aggressed formation. The Western Marxists who back the war on Syria because its president is 'undemocratic' (as an example see the list of signatories on Solidarity with the Syrian Struggle for Dignity and Freedom [Various authors 2013]) typify pro-imperialist Marxism. Not that democracy means anything in a class society other than a form of power exercise, the *de facto* ruler of Syria remains, figuratively speaking, a US/Israeli Howitzer cannon atop of Mount Hermon, which could hit any alley in Damascus.<sup>9</sup> The cannon metaphor is the *ultima ratio regum* or is the final argument of kings, *ergo* the embodiment of the US as imperial sovereign.

Under assault since its inception as a state in 1920, Syria degenerated into a fragile social formation. It was either bombed or carried by the tide of neoliberalism to inflict damage upon itself. In both cases, the Syrian ruling class, conditioned by Syria's productive and security deficits, compromised the security of the working class, and roundaboutly, had sovereignty compromised. Working class security is the backbone of sovereignty. The many wars Syria lost to the US-Israeli alliance and the lopsided power balance cannot be excluded from what came to be the current Syria. Western Marxism conceives of Syria without that history, or without imperialist aggression as the agency disfiguring a social formation to set it on a course of auto-destruction. It regards Syria as a prophetic word, an instantiation in still-time and not an actual/historical social class formation. Such evisceration of history allows Western scholars to apprehend the Syrian ruling class as an omnipotent subject of history. The mainstream argument is as follows: successive Syrian governments made Syrian history, and it is these governments that are responsible and must be deposed, even by NATO. It turns out that the wars of the West visited upon Syria were a sort of costly burden to empire in its pursuit of justice.

Moreover, it is not the case that the US-led imperialist class and the Syrian ruling classes are both equally culpable for the agony of Syria; historical causation is a not cake to be divided (Carr 1961). By class ethics, it is only the regnant imperialist relation that historically causes, and it is to blame. The Kantian moral equivalence in this context is vacuous because under such rational categorisation all are equally guilty, which drops the fact that it is history governed by US-led capital class which founds the undercurrents for the making of events.

At this historical interval, two principal camps, the imperialist US-led camp and the Sino-Russian camp are also intervening in Syria. An alleged third camp

<sup>9</sup> Jerusalem Post, Israeli official: If Iran expands in Syria, we'll bomb Assad's palace <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israeli-official-if-iran-extends-in-syrian-well-bomb-assads-palace-503597>

of ‘un-jailed’ Western Marxists, whose power is the ‘word’ in the biblical sense and, which has less tanks than the Vatican, paraded its affinity to the spontaneity of the Syrian revolt as follows. ‘This is a revolt that was sparked by the children of Deraa and the sit-ins and demonstrations of the youth in the cities, the peasants of the rural areas, and the dispossessed and marginalised of Syria. It is they who rallied non-violently through protests and songs and chants, before the regime’s brutal crackdown’ (Various authors 2013). Beneath the ‘nuanced’ romanticism devoid of class hatred, such statement exhibits a besottedness with Western democracies. They are extensions of BBC type propaganda, where so many partial details are provided with the aim of obscuring the structure of power delivering the blows. For instance, the BBC cries over so many animals going extinct, but never mentions that it is the US/UK headed capital relation, which exterminates life. Worst yet, it uses the sympathy of viewers to later garner their trust and support for bombing in places like Libya and Mali.<sup>10</sup> At any rate, the sequence of one-sided facts builds in a pristine order, except for the key omitted link, which is best put colloquially as who did what to whom or who can really do whatever to whom – which relation is subject. An adjacent question is how Syria could transform into anything better with Israel, an imperialist post masquerading as solution to the Jewish question, by its side. Within the confines of the outstanding balance of power, such petition uses the tragedy to demonstrate that Israel, a settler-colonial formation, is a sit-aside observer that harbours nothing but democratic hopes for its neighbours.

Subject to constant assault in such unfavourable power balance, Syria declares that it will choose the time to hit back against Israel in self-defence. It rarely does, to the extent that the catchphrase, ‘choose the time to respond’ became a current joke extending the defeatism of consciousness as a spin-off of actual defeat. The point to recall here is that real time and the decision to act are at the command of US-led imperialism, while the signatory professors formulate a Syria position independent of real time, which crosscuts with the strategic interests of imperialism.

Regarding control of time, the US–Israeli alliance determined the pace of recurrence of assaults (events) in time until the Russian intervention in 2015. Israel’s control of space had shrunk because it was left with fewer options due to Russian presence; not to forget that Israel was earlier, in 2000, defeated by the resistance in South Lebanon and forced to withdraw.

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<sup>10</sup> The BBC trumpets its concern for hunting elephants, while it backs the elimination of millions under bombardment and sanctions around the globe. The epigram ‘the devil will tell you nine truths, so that you’ll believe one lie,’ elucidates the BBC’s propaganda.

An earlier variant of this ‘anti-campist’ professorial camp was supporting the pro-US factions in Kurdistan Iraq against the successive Iraqi government since 1958. Kurdistan Iraq has become another imperialist stronghold. The pro-Kurdish Western stance has recently evolved into support of Rojava (*Ayn Al-Arab*), which again turned out to be another imperialist bastion. Calls for the protection of the ‘politically correct’ and unveiled Kurdish women from the wrath of other Muslims that veil their women abound. ‘Rojava was an alternative to the crisis created all over the world by capitalist modernity and should be supported and developed’ (Harvey quoted from Guler 2015). However, this is not a fashion war. Such is reminiscent of the mission civilisatrice whose ‘progress’ was the bitter pill swallowed by the natives, the hundreds of millions of deaths, to be readied for modernity (Le Cour-Grandmaison 2015).

US held territory in Syria robs the country of its wheat and oil. In April 2018, the pentagon announced that it plans to arm 65,000 Kurds – actually many of them are Arab collaborators (US Department of Defence 2017).<sup>11</sup> Imperialism is supporting the rise of yet another ultra nationalist group, and signs of ethnic cleansing, as in shooting Arabs returning to Raqqa,<sup>12</sup> or giving the houses of Arab Christians to Kurds are emerging (Bahnam 2018).<sup>13</sup> However, the real issue, to which all other concerns dim in significance, is the strength the US gathers from occupying and installing military bases in this region and the ripple effect magnifying its power structure throughout the world. While for a global society captivated by trivialities, watching the smaller crimes of ISIS, the empire continues to carry out the structural genocide in the shadows.

To be sure, structural genocide is the materialisation of the capital class and its ideology (Marx 1867). Of note, works on structural genocide such as Wolfe (2006) and Leech (2012) are about measuring the volume of blood spilt by capital rather than its historical causation or theoretical determinacy. Although the analysis begins with an impersonal history, as in a mode of production responsible for the reduction of longevity, they end up leaving room for the bloodletting to be measured by the victors, thus reifying the mode of production or personifying history.

<sup>11</sup> Justification for FY 2019 Overseas Contingency Operations [http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019\\_CTEF\\_JBook\\_Final.pdf](http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019_CTEF_JBook_Final.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Syrian Kurds accused of ethnic cleansing and killing opponents <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/18/syrian-kurds-accused-of-ethnic-cleansing-and-killing-opponents/>.

<sup>13</sup> [#SyriacCatholic Arch-bishop of Hassaké Msgr Jacques Behnam #Hindo: #Kurds are taking houses of Christians in North-East Syria to give it to refugees from #Afrin to change demographics of the area.](https://mobile.twitter.com/maytham956/status/987829017008050177)

In capital's ideological torrent, the 'nuanced' analysis of the Western left would equally incriminate Fidel Castro for the limitations to civil liberties he exerts in anti-imperialist struggle. To bring the picture closer with a more insidious example, Western Marxist literature highlights the Mufti Husseini of Palestine visit to fascist Germany to exonerate Israeli war crimes. The ideological resonance of such history is not in the truthfulness or insignificance of such visit. It is impossible to prove that Palestinians caused the Holocaust; however, bringing the issue to public attention, no matter how trivial, will be put to use by the mainstream media. The purpose of funding such projects is not the specifics of diplomatic history, it is to drill into a popular imagination suffused with Disney culture that the Palestinians had something to do with fascism, and as such, Zionist Israel is duly visiting revenge upon them. In fact, Binyamin Netanyahu (2015) noted at the 37th World Zionist Congress that the Palestinian grand Mufti of Jerusalem (Husseini) suggested the genocide of the Jews to Adolf Hitler.<sup>14</sup> The Western Marxist compromise of theory emerges in the misunderstanding that there can be no theory independent of ideology. What would be left in the social memory is not the argument that central capital as an idea exercised is deadly, but the bitter ideological aftertaste that only this person, the Mufti, or these Palestinian natives are deadly fascists.

Within the connection of theory to practice, Western-left theory on Syria and similar issues is born out of pro-imperialist practice to support imperialist expansion. With such interface, theory cannot be progressive because it emanates from the academic class that exemplifies capital. As the practice of Western Marxism misplaces the class enemy, it breeds false theory. Western Marxism conceded on theoretical principles rather than ideology, which have ended up turning ideology against Marxist theory (Althusser 1966).

The war on Syria was an example of an actual war. The *potential* war is the potential of any future war, including nuclear conflagration. The possibility of such ghastly event lingers in the background because it is entwined with capital's reason – *the ultimate waste*. As capital proceeds by pauperising while advancing tech-knowhow, the less-nuclear capable states will achieve higher levels of nuclearisation. In an order characterised by the war of each against all, the existential threat eroding the environment by attrition will suddenly materialise. Whether by reverse engineering or other learning by doing means, nuclear or another form of devastating technology may become a weapon that any country can develop.

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<sup>14</sup> 37th World Zionist Congress, 20 Oct 2015 – 22 Oct 2015, <https://www.wzo.org.il/index.php?dir=site&page=pages&op=item&cs=3278&language=eng>

With a changing global balance of forces, the types of wars that were visited upon Iraq and Libya may face more serious obstacles if implemented in similar places. It is no longer possible for the US to choose the form of war it wants, because it no longer has crushing superiority over the enemy from the very start (Gramsci's remark [1971]). On account of preserving its own territorial integrity, China favours the integrity of the developing states. China also recognises the national rights of the Palestinian people to Jerusalem. This alone challenges Israel, the spearhead of US-led imperialism. It is no secret that the Zionist movement advances the objectives of imperialism beyond Israel and its surrounding areas (Nederveen-Pieterse 1984). Theodore Herzl (1896), a leading figure of Zionism noted that 'for Europe we [Zionists] shall serve there [in Palestine] as part of the rampart against Asia, and function as the vanguard of civilisation [sic] against the barbarians' – Quoted from Machover (2012). Israel unabashedly intervenes in areas experiencing 'human rights' abuse from which the US's and Europe's moral posturing inhibits their direct intervention. Cooperating with embargomed apartheid South Africa in the nuclear field was one such example.<sup>15</sup> Israel's colonialism blended with the myth of the chosen people is the contemporary version of American manifest destiny blended with frontier mentality. At a more general level, Israel's debilitation of Arab states has little to do with any existential threat it could face from these states, and more to do with a settler-colonial society carrying out the mandate of imperialism. If anything, the enormous deaths from poverty and war in the Arab world are examples of Arabs wiped out of existence by US-Israeli aggression. It is after all the clout of imperialism that weaves the constructed facts of what is and what is not an existential threat.

In the broader picture, the US's effort to drive a wedge between China and Russia at minimum cost to itself has not borne fruit. In terms of size and gravitational pull, China's pole attracts an array of states disgruntled with the US's mode of 'accumulation by the gun' and the kitsch of Hollywood-type culture. It may be audacious to envisage the future, however, the current alignment of forces in the shadow of China are actuating the transition to a more balanced global order. Rebalancing power structures in times reigned over by the commodity fetish may actualise the ultimate potential war, the nuclear war; why so?

<sup>15</sup> Revealed: how Israel offered to sell South Africa nuclear weapons, The Guardian 23 May 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/23/israel-south-africa-nuclear-weapons>. Also see: How Israel helped Latin American death squads, 21 June 2018, Middle East Monitor <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180621-how-israel-helped-latin-americas-death-squads-part-1/>.

This is a speculative issue. I will only address one side of it: for rational history, the logical end that capital gravitates toward is an all-wasted world. Waste is a profit-making process. Adjacently, militarism and the production of waste are the rationality of persons exercising the rationality of history as capital or the capital class. These persons promoting the war are circuitously personally affected by their own acts. They consume the waste and their rational choice over the horizon is not rational insofar as it involves lasting damage to the natural basis of human reproduction. Yet, they continue to do so. The commonsense projection of this thesis implies that a consummate form of waste realised in nuclear war may bear Fermi's quip that our world cannot peacefully co-exist with nuclear weapons and that is why earth is not visited by people from the future.

Addressing a similar issue of rational history (history doing what is best for the commodity) and irrational people who war at the behest of capital, Mészáros (2001) labels such processes as the ultimate rationality of developed capital. History's rationality, however, requires capital to bring under its control every corner of the globe to redress its irreconcilable contradictions (Mészáros 2001). It corresponds to the logic of capital at the present historical stage, and it is at the same time the most extreme irrationality in history, including the possibility the fascist conception of world domination coming to maturity (Mészáros 2001). Incidentally, history or capital incarnate in the succession of self-serving measures is only irrational if its organised dimension sows the reasons for its discontinuity.

Leaving aside the point that fascism is capital maturing into its elemental state, and therefore it is a continuation of history's rationality, Mészáros concentrates on the waste processes of European history. He illustrates wastefulness with a case of Western-consumerist commodities – most products are only slightly useful and mostly waste. Environmental degradation figures in his work altogether in more accentuated fashion than the imperialist war to waste in the colonies (Mészáros 1995). However, the colonial and imperialist aggressions are building blocks to capitalist history and its rationality. Growth at any cost is the rationality of impersonal capital, or to parody Abbey's dictum, 'growth for the sake of growth is the rationality of the cancer cell.' Capital's reason self-optimises by increased infighting between proletarians. Nothing could be more self-serving to capital than transforming workers into a lump of flesh, squashing their consciousness such that they dig their own graves instead of capital's. Such why fascism is the ultimate rationality of capital, or the reason of unfettered capital realised.

With regards to imperialist war targeting security-exposed developing nations and its political-economic explanation, it is best to keep in mind the following aide-memoire. Because war, as industry/consumer of resources,

which redresses the tapering rate of exploitation while at the same time re-aligns resource allocation to equalise profit rates, it is both objective, as in being independent of social control, and permanent. The production process is a complex supply chain organised over several geographic areas and pre-determined by the measures taken to pave the appropriate social grounds for exploitation. In the case of war, these appropriate social measures require, for instance, the construction of conflicting identities that eliminate the prospect of working-class solidarity.

Thus, imperialism reformulates the developing formation upon socially divisive lines or through reinforcing imperialist-imposed identities, the genre by which the bigger chunk of the social product flies out as imperial rent. And to be certain, the biggest chunk of the social product is not the civilian-end use commodities and their attendant moneyed form, it is militarism and other forms of waste. Wars and the waste, the continuation of war and post-war debilitation, amount to significant rents. Sectarian divisions are the type of products that mainstream academia peddles with its many conferences and workshops. It treats the hallucinatory identity divides as impassable transhistorical barriers. Not that bourgeois democracy is anything other than an illusion, but imperialistically inspired constitutions enshrine identity-based citizenship as the political form of class and transforms society into a caste-like structure. The citizen becomes a figment of the fictional identity amenable to the reproduction of capital, but not social man. Even constitutions that uphold equal legal rights, these must combine their de-jure proclamations with de-facto unequal social rights, otherwise capital fizzles out.

In the capital-imposed international division of labour, there are states tailored for the less developed 'races', or peoples whose 'spiritual development' remains locked in autocratic orders. Some might be considered free, while the majority are enslaved because of their culture of illiberalism. For the mainstream, these are states in the process of state formation. They never grow up or are supposedly weighed down by the primordial type, the orientalist-conceived Arab or African. However, it is not the vitriolic vocabulary of orientalism, which resembles any other hate discourse of class across history that one takes issue with. It is rather the absence of periodised history and its laws of development. Developing states must be imperialistically designed and reconfigured subject to continued aggression. They are receptacles of war and waste. Their inter-communal wars are condoned by the layers of central working classes that have adopted capital's inner logic as their own. Judging by their passivity, these layers of central strata mutated into capital, as opposed, to mutating into the labour, which reveals itself as a form capital. The distinction between these two transformations is key to understanding the potential war.

When labour becomes a form of capital the possibility of labour re-becoming itself or realising its potential exists. In addressing the antagonism between the Irish and the English working class, Marx (1870) thought that English workers 'must realise that *for them the national emancipation of Ireland* is not a question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the *first condition of their own social emancipation*' (Italic in the original).<sup>16</sup> He added that 'the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland.' However, in view of waste development since, the case made by Marx that Northern working classes may support national liberation movements, anti-imperialism and self-emancipate may not hold. In this letter Marx was commenting on how English workers live off the imperialisation of Ireland, and yet they see in the Irish worker a competitor who lowers their standards of living. The Third World has been similar to Ireland and layers of the working class in the North have become more absorbed by capital. They see the others as threats to their clout that redefines the rent component in their wages and conduct pre-emptive wars to block their development. Thus, whereas the antagonism between workers, as Marx says 'is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. *This antagonism* is the secret of the *impotence of the English working class*, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power' (always in the same letter by Marx – Italic in the original); that secret remains the source of capital's power, but the antagonism is more a North-South antagonism. Although Mészáros (1995), like Marx, may have pinned hopes on Northern labour turning revolutionary, the reversal when reproduction is rooted in waste is not possible. In other words, the antagonism turned out to be labour reproducing by imperialism as opposed to being artificially propped up.

The consistently little impact of anti-war movements shows that Northern classes have more than just conceded to capital under pressure, their plight was about the 'cut' out of war booty. The case may be that the issue of the organicity of Northern labour with capital cannot be argued on the basis of length of time; that is, it is not because it has been since the nineteenth century and still there is no potential of Northern labour being borne out that one can postulate that the Northern working class is a circle of capital. Length of time, and one may add change by a matter of degree in their ties (capital to Northern labour) over time, do not invalidate such theoretical position. There

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<sup>16</sup> Letters of Karl Marx 1870, Marx to Sigfrid Meyer and August Vogt In New York, Source: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Selected correspondence Progress Publishers, 1975, pp. 220–224; [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/letters/70\\_04\\_09.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/letters/70_04_09.htm)

are some remarks to keep in mind here. First, capital and its power are manifest in the degree to which capitalists and their adherents adopt the reason of the commodity as self-expanding value. Secondly, the nub of capital's power is the inter-labour *contradiction*. It is that between the wasting classes of the North and the wasted of the South. Third, the evisceration of the revolutionary vanguard in the North or the co-optation of Marxism and the rise of Western Marxism are not haphazard. These have not been significantly questioned and, as such, they represented a systemic class position concomitant with a redistribution of imperial rents between capital and its adjunct white classes. Together these observations requalify the capital relation, which may be said to be the private appropriation of socially produced wealth amended to include a prerequisite that considers the Northern working class to consistently auto-reproduce by war booty and waste. This white working-class mode of auto-reproduction by waste activities is both ontological and systemic. Recalling that the white working-class sprouts in the South; however, its structure of power lies in the North and it is largely phenotypically white. With waste prevailing as a mode of life, the reproduction of the Northern working classes under the constraints of capital occurs by the de-reproduction of the South. Northern classes situated in the position of the consuming classes and, within an overall degenerative system of waste, practice the class cannibalism that rebolsters their imperialism. As such they have personified capital, and like capitalists, they have adopted the reason of the commodity. With people *become* things in command of history, and with waste *become* self-expanding value, potential wars, including the possibility of a nuclear war, are evermore realisable.

## 11 The Western Marxist Position on War

Imperialist intervention undermines the right of people to bread and working-class democracy. Conversely, that right is only wrought in anti-imperialist struggle. The dominant currents of Western Marxism, aligned with NATO may be distinguished from revolutionary Marxism by the criterion set by Ho Chi Minh's at the 1924 Fifth Congress of the Comintern.

Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that so long as the French and British Communist Parties have not brought out a really progressive policy with regard to the colonies, have not come into contact with the colonial peoples, their programme as a whole is and will be ineffective because it goes counter to Leninism. I will explain myself more clearly. In his speech on Lenin and the national question Comrade Stalin said that the reformists and leaders of the Second International dared not align the white

people of the colonies with their coloured counterparts [Hence WWI] ... According to Lenin, the victory of the revolution in Western Europe depended on its close contact with the liberation movement against imperialism in enslaved colonies and with the national question, both of which form a part of the common problem of the proletarian revolution and dictatorship.

To conclude this chapter, I will contrast the above threshold with some key Western Marxist positions on imperialist interventions. Halliday (2003), amongst many others on the liberal left, supported the invasion of Iraq. The gist of that argument was that although the US and its European partners were imperialists, the Iraqi regime was fascist. Post-invasion events in Iraq have discredited this point. It reaffirmed that fascism cannot pertain to a developing country opposing imperialism – the racism of the slave against the white master is not racism. The point ‘imperialism against fascism’ was an imperialist class position meant to obliterate Iraq by demonising its leadership. The US-led assault on other developing nations presents us with a similar case.

The purpose of sensationalising certain Marxist intellectuals of the Western world is to spectacularise their pro-imperialist positions. It may be as well to note that the dominant ideas are the ideas of the dominant class, or said differently, the dominant idea is the dominant class whose material and spiritual forces lay the grounds for social development (Marx 1845). The hyped issues and questions are the playground of thought afforded by capital to promote itself. Capital cleaning the environment is one such oxymoron; another is its promoted public intellectuals. Consider Chomsky’s (2002) remark that Saddam Hussein ‘is as evil as they come’, which paralleled the media avalanche justifying Iraq invasion by the vilification of the person of Saddam. Suddenly the position of the intellectual, Chomsky, who early in his career was funded by the Pentagon (Rose 2017; Knight 2016) co-aligns with the dominant war currents. The self-imposing question is within the prevailing balance of forces, what purpose other than backing the imperialist invasion does such a statement serve. Neither consequentialist nor deontological ethics, nor any other ethic for that matter, can be invoked to support such view. Although there is no puritanical theory without ideology, the ethic of such ‘beautiful souls’ negates everything and achieves nothing.

The revision of history also serves as an input into imperialism’s contemporary war industry. To illustrate: Kostas Mavrakis’s inquest into Alain Badiou’s fame (Mavrakis 2017), points out that Badiou is a sound theoretician, yet it is only his position on multiplicity undermining particularity, implying a demolition of the particularisation of others in national struggles, which promotes his celebrity status. Badiou emphasises the different struggles on the margin

of Western society, such as the immigrants' struggle to gain legal status in the host country, while he underplays the potential rise of nations like China and others by anti-imperialist and emancipatory politics. This emphasis of the tangential struggles overshadowing nations self-particularising in anti-imperialist struggles does not cross capital at some sore point; hence, Badiou's eminence in the mainstream.

While, Badiou supports some measures of anti-imperialism, David Harvey denies imperialism outright. Harvey conveys a message that does not oppose capital at any of its strategic intersections. As early as 1996, Harvey supposed that Indian land claims, the militant particularism may give rise to nationalistic, exclusionary, and some cases violently fascistic elements (Harvey 1996). This point parallels the Noble savage *become* fascist with bows and arrows theory, which turns Marxism into a colonial settler ideology.

Of late, Harvey (2018a,b) declares capitalism a failure, but he either shuns revolutionary violence, or sneaks into the discourse the notion that socialist construction is an impracticable ideal. The ideological offshoot of such position is to chisel into collective memory the failure of the Soviet model, or the point that despite its faults, capitalism remains the best there is. Much of the anti-systematic theorisation is lost as capital's apparatus focuses on the parochial pronouncement: 'terrible Soviet socialism.' Insidious bits and pieces of anti-capitalist jargon from *semantic* Marxists, the ones secretly infatuated with Western democracy, are flaunted by the Western Marxists at one with mainstream economics to re-ascertain the reasonability and irreplaceability of the existing social order.

Harvey's argument dilutes imperialism. He analytically figures two processes to capitalist development, one of accumulation and overproduction, and the other about territorial expansion (Harvey 1981). Nicely enough, territorial expansion releases the bottleneck of overaccumulation by dispossession; similar to Lenin's (1916) point of war resolving capital's principal contradiction, but without the use of Lenin's vocabulary. Controlling space corresponds to the redeployment of fixed capital assets abroad, or longer-term investment, which ensure higher returns over vis-à-vis financial papers. Harvey's modern forms of dispossession are never at the scale of primitive accumulation (Harvey 2008). However, time does not stand still relative to growing wealth. In relation to existing wealth and the size of the global population, the relative dispossessions, the erosions of social nature, have grown exponentially. The fact that natural resources are dispossessed-polluted and made scarce may suffice as proof.

In his reply to Harvey, Smith (2018) aptly theorises that by downscaling forms of primitive accumulation, which are central to modern imperialist

practice, Harvey denies imperialism. Still to this Harvey-Smith debate, Lenin's sociological definition of imperialism, his primacy of politics, is missing. Also missing are the ideological underpinnings of the imperialist order that trail from centuries back and by which dominant capital reproduces. As such, their discussion cleaves the mode of consciousness from the determination of imperialism. It omits the inertia of the ideological forms of which for example Churchill's (1919) idea that 'the retention of gas as a permanent method of warfare spreads terror and lacerates uncivilised tribes,' still restocks the undercurrent of present-day imperialism.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, and in connection with things that explain things without social subjects, Harvey's long-term investment in fixed assets becomes *causa sui*, whereas their re-liquification (turning them back their money form) by destruction, is more profitable to capital than returns on static assets over the long run. War and its related reconstruction are value-making processes. Militarism exhibits increasing returns because its destroyed human input is also its output. Harvey arrives at this position because he substitutes the leading role of finance for merchant capital, which then lays down the scope for industrial capital. However, financial capital is the leading element that dictates the rules and the length of the turnover cycle. As a trigger of imperialist expansion and a re-actualisation of money in real assets, finance requires more than just an investment that covers depreciation costs plus newly formed gross capital formation, it requires wars that decimate to rebuild, and more important, to control and own the assets of the world. The totalising characteristic of capital is not the homogenisation that merchant capital imposes upon industry, it is the waste that sells.

Harvey's imperialism without an address (2018 a,b), implies that the US military bases and fleets are not bodies of imperialism. Imperialism is just an idea and national liberation movements cannot take aim at the US-European conglomeration. For Harvey, watered down imperialism is found in any space where capital realises its capital as fixed stock. For instance, part of capital has been fixed and flows in and out of China; China is thus hegemonic and nearly imperialist. Such 'new imperialism' shifts blame away from 'whiteness,' the stock of historical surplus value from which most events necessarily but not exclusively gel. To theorise imperialism on the basis of inanimate substance (fixed assets) without subject, buildings or growing real estate by which capital boosts future investment in real estate, is a bourgeois class position.

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<sup>17</sup> Churchill (1919) War Office Memo <https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/churchills-1919-war-office-memorandum.html>.

## 12 Closing Comment

In dialectics, concepts such as primitive accumulation, overproduction and dispossession may be inferred from one another depending on the level of abstraction. Illustratively put, overproduction crisis necessitates an expansion of forms of primitive accumulation with higher rates of dispossession, including the stripping away of labour's autonomy. Accumulation shifts its form of exploitation, from super-exploitation to the much more intensive commercial exploitation, the modern form of slavery by encroachment wars. These concepts mean something only in relation to the totality of social production and in relation to the class context. Of late, the terms imperialism and empires have been introduced into popular discourse as if an inevitable condition, which is constant across time. In an almost schizophrenic expression, today's unequalled imperialism is brushed aside by a glamorised history of empires that does not remotely resemble the socially induced, as opposed to the natural, atrocities of capital. In sounder subordination of ideology to theory, any elucidated concept of imperialism means something only in terms of its impact on anti-imperialist struggles.

The Leninist sociological imperialism, the historically specific monopoly-finance imperialism, differs from the economicistic accounts. In the monopoly age, finance unlocks the expansion of capital. Just as in any turnover cycle, accumulation begins with money and returns in more money – the objective of accumulation in a financialised world remains moneyed profits. To restate the orthodox point, financiers disdain the real production process. Meanwhile, for profits to grow by sublated surplus value – repression cheapening labour to be released in social time – the working class must consume a lesser portion of the surplus product. Alongside this mechanism, capital grows by a process of auto-consumption, a social metabolic process, to which imperialist war is the principal resolution (Lenin 1916). It is in auto-consumption where the primacy of politics first blueprints the trajectory of surplus value making. There is in the Leninist approach a social agency moulded by the developments of its own historical circumstance, not just logical concepts assuming different degrees of abstraction. There is a change in the social type of the leading social agency: the industrial class transmutes into the modern imperialist class.

Amidst a dilution of imperialism argument, one is at liberty to fabricate various imperialisms and to designate who is more imperialist between competing imperialisms. Anti-imperialist could then easily stand for anti-Russian and anti-Chinese position, or a tactic of 'lesser evilism.' Still, the power to which war is foundational in financial and ideological terms is the US. Vltchek (2018) notes that the US, UK and France are already responsible for hundreds of millions of

lives lost on all continents for centuries and have zero moral mandate to judge or punish anybody. However, it is not only the moral mandate that counts in defining imperialism. These Western formations are solely mandated by capital to act as such or to act as imperialists with a chamaeleonid like morality. In the next chapter, I address the mainstream severance of subject from object, or the empiricism that blunts the contribution of theory to anti-imperialist struggle.

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## Against Empiricism

The suggestion that Russia and China are as imperialist as the US only serves to strengthen the ideological barricades of all the reactionary forces aligned against the working masses of the Third World. US-European social democrats and their hired intellectuals have steadily supported imperialism. The contemporary state of socialist organisational and ideological defeat is a direct product of what the liberal left has sown. To investigate history and find that the Western Marxist position, used interchangeably with the Americanism of liberal left, intersects with the imperialist position is not only an academic exercise, rather imperialism is about bomb dropping, and such intellectuals contribute to the structural genocide perpetrated by capital. Academic anti-Stalinism, in particular, remains a well-paid industry that cements the social sciences behind the sanctions, austerity, and massacres of imperialism. The image of Joseph Stalin, which has become capital's scarecrow and the metaphor that summarises the state of the class struggle, is deployed to demolish possible social alternatives.

This chapter argues against the empirical bent in the study of imperialism that characterises China and Russia as imperialist states. The thesis to be argued is that empiricism is the ideology of capitalism. Accordingly, the chapter further explores the sociological basis of imperialism. It illustrates that what differentiates twentieth-century and current imperialism from its previous historical forms cannot be solely attributed to an intensification of the symptoms of imperialism in war and economic usurpation. It is rather the changing quality of the imperialist class, a class whose predisposition to disparage real production and to grow by the acquisition of imperial rents, namely, through the channels of finance and war, designate its sociological type. Moreover, since the early twentieth century, the biggest chunks of imperial rents have been carved out from the steady erosion of social nature as opposed to meeting rising effective demand for sane commodities. Demand for waste has exceeded demand for useful or more sane commodities. The environmental calamity, the austerity and the steady wars demonstrate that the demand for shorter human lives, which are commodities on offer, surpasses the demand for useful civilian-end use commodities.

## 1 The Empiricism of Harvey

To illustrate the case against empiricism, I draw on Harvey-type empiricism (2018 a,b), however, any other empiricist would fit the bill. Harvey (2018 a,b) argues that US-European imperialism morphed into diverse hegemonic centres. Imperialism, the clobbering act conducted by the Western financial class, which siphons value from the Third World, is replaced by the term hegemony. To support his point, Harvey offers an empirical account of shifts in fixed capital formation to the East and financial flows associated with super-exploitation. These flows amass in a capital stock which of late implants itself physically in the East. Growing Eastern infrastructure and other fixed assets demonstrate a geographic tilt in global power and wealth. His, he says, is not a rigid imperialism with a 'rigid geography of core and periphery set out in world systems theory'; it is rather 'uneven geographical development, proliferating and differentiating divisions of labour, an understanding of global commodity chains and spatial fixes ... and the construction and destruction of regional economies within which a certain 'structural coherence' (or 'regional value regime') might form for a time' (Harvey 2018 a,b). Such teleological progression enroots itself in an empirical account, in terms of spatial fixes, or the areas where capital builds its structures to absorb profits wrought by super-exploitation. The logical end-stage is that the capital of imperialism has de-concentrated and decentralised itself to remain an imperialism in the Leninist sense. With hegemony being any act of dominance under the sun, a year later, Harvey (2019) argues against the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

A counter-empirical argument to wealth moving East is the huge market capitalisation sums of US-Europe, which still daunt anything Eastern. The Financial Times (FT 2021) asserted that the US is not in decline because in terms of market value, 14 of the top 20 companies were headquartered in the US, and to boot, many of the world top-ranked universities are American. The West is aware that China's rise undermines the image of the US. The FT adds super-inflated electronic dollars to cast the US in a better light. One may also add all the electronic credit, the derivative and Repo markets and the Collateralized Debt Obligation (CDO's), which make up the hundreds of trillions of US dollars that search for a countervalue in real or waste assets. Depending on the data one chooses the empirical argument may go either way. One thing is for sure, imperialist indebtedness is imperial wealth underwritten by imperial control of future labour. Since it is the US that aggresses, or since it is NATO muscle exercised in war and other forms of pressure that underwrites the overblown moneyed assets, the imperialist subject is then US-led imperialism.

Forgotten in reductive debates is the historical subject whose state agencies club the international working class into submission. Also forgotten is the role of

ideology that produces an amnesia in consciousness as a prerequisite to imperialise. An example of imperialist muscle would be the US bombs dropped by Israel on overpopulated Gaza. Events like these, buttressed by propaganda pieces such as those by the FT, re-bolster the clout of the imperialist subject. They valorise assets in dollars everywhere by a combination of hegemony speckled with empiricism or the science of death produced by Euro-American universities.

To observe money-flows as they are amassed into a stock of capital is a form of crude empiricism. Such empiricism presumes the object of theoretical practice to be reality itself, while the product of theoretical practice, the knowledge obtained, to be a real part of the real object to be known (Althusser 1985). Furthermore, these measures may be logically falsified by any other account of a related experience (Ilyenkov 1977). In an organic totality, an additional empirical observation must be of different quality and does not necessarily falsify what is before it to invalidate the received thesis. In history, any object observed is the *differentia* of other observations; things self-differentiate. The object exists as palpable or logical being in an interrelated whole. Observing the object in its state of change in time invalidates any prior formal conception of its former logical state of being. However, just because another observation quantified into a number serving as a comparative benchmark emerges does not mean that what was construed as a theory of that object requires revision. An understanding arising upon a newly conceptualised fact alters the acknowledged law of thought only when the subject integrated with the object assumes a new form. US-led imperialism does not go away because some capital moved South, it ceases to be only when the imperialist class, the subject, radically changes or vanishes.

Knowledge begins with experience, but it is the concepts drawn from experience, as opposed to experience itself, which are the edifice of theory. For empiricism, since indefinite observations spew out indefinite theories, the outcome is one of theoretical nihilism: nothing can be known because theory changes by indefinite sense perceptions. Drawing on Marx (1859), Ilyenkov (1974) explained this problematic of empiricism with reference to David Ricardo as follows.

When the general law contradicts the empirically common position of things, the empiricist immediately sees the way out in altering the formulation of the general law in such a fashion that the empirically general will be directly subsumed under it. At first glance that is how it ought to be; if thought contradicts the facts, then the thought should be altered so as to bring it into line with the general phenomena immediately given on the surface. In fact, this is theoretically false, and by taking it the Ricardian school arrived at complete rejection of the labour theory of value. The general law revealed by Ricardo was sacrificed to crude empiricism.

(experience), but the crude empiricism was inevitably converted into a ‘false metaphysics, scholasticism, which toils painfully to deduce undeniable empirical phenomena by simple formal abstraction directly from the general law, or to show by cunning argument that they are in accordance with that law.’ (Ilyenkov 1974; Marx 1859)

To adopt a concept or abstract it from observation, without materially grounded categorisation, grounded in a law of development, is to adopt a metaphysical mode of abstraction despite initially drawing on facts from experience. Empiricism intersects with metaphysics because its abstraction begins with experience formalised and then presumes that the observation develops as a mutation of the abstract (Marx 1867). It picks a form for the object and then drops the progress of the object in real time as a result of its own internal laws interacting with its constituent totality. The metaphysic here is the absence of laws of motion or the social subject that affects the changes of the object, otherwise put as the absence of the category of totality/history – a concept without law is an illusion of reality. Said differently, empiricism drops history or totality because its theory is subservient to a dominant ideology that effaces specifically social class as subject. It focuses only on flushing out what is beautiful in capitalism, because it cannot admit that its one-sided empiricist constructs accomplished the waste engulfing the planet. After all, people practice ideas.

Empiricism’s object independent of subject, the duality, is metaphysics in reverse. The *a posteriori* condition, or what is experienced, turns into an *a priori* logical form, whose development is purely logical and unattached to the real development of the object under consideration. As such, there are things outside consciousness and things inside consciousness, as opposed to the conjoined practice of theory, which follows the motion of the object reshaped by thought-practiced. When an abstraction must miss something of reality by ontological barriers, laws of thought capture the relation of thinking to practice or the relation to the object, the thing outside of us, which develops by the subject’s activity, or the shifting consciousness emerging from the changing conditions of social being.

As abstracts outside of consciousness, Harvey’s spatial fixes are objects in hypothetical time. They are also subjects without self-consciousness. As commanding-commodities, they mould the outcome of development. They interface with the actual state of things and restructure development including our changing consciousness in line with their dynamic. Space as an empirical abstraction is a thing which becomes a subject of other things and history. By replacing the social class subject *qua* the imperialist class by the buildings that capital had erected in the East, space supplants the subject imperialism. Space imposes itself upon the mind as subject seemingly independent from

dominant ideology. The social actors, the subjects of history, are as reified just as space. Hence, Harvey's space and spatial fixes are props for a magical disappearing act in which history as actualisation of dominant ideology vanishes.

In the empiricist line of argument, where there are spatial fixes, one finds mini-imperialisms or milder hegemonic variants thereof. The moment a subject, the specific capital, deals with the financial channels and the degree to which it centralises or concentrates some capital, something which all capital does, a 'new and improved' theoretical concept of imperialism arises. The quantity of capitalist assets and rents defines which state is more or less imperialist. However, variations in degree do not admit theoretical judgment, they merely illustrate the magnitude of something. Such is more model than theory. Moreover, such theory is stillborn or born wrong. Not that theory is supposed to be right, but at least its categorical law should hold steady within a periodised or historically definitive time frame until proven wrong. If the theory changes with the inevitable or that observations change, then it is false *ipso facto* without experimentation. Methods of abstraction in crude empiricism, the object without class subject, is not falsifiable; it is false by the old rule that no truth could be established in a changing world.

The interaction of formal theory unreference against processual observations severs the concept from the motion of the object to which it refers. That happens not so much because concepts are logical entities while reality is fast moving; it happens because in crude empiricism the concept is abstracted as reason for itself – no one did it, it did itself. In a manner similar to the ideal in philosophical idealism, it is indeterminate being. Empiricism begins as experimental, but dubiously turns the concepts derived from experience into an *a priori* form unrelated to experience. It then re-inserts the form back into its dynamic environment with the social subject written out of the picture. The hypostasised form or thing without subject acts out its history. Accordingly, theory ceases to be social theory, and it is hardly natural science.

Consider for instance how 'mainstream' economics accounts for more facts by adding in more variables into its models. It begins with an economy without money then adds money; it deals with a closed economy then adds openness or tariffs, etc. As more of the experienced observations *qua* variables assume *a priori* status and are added to equations to account for a variety of real events, they become no more than the relation of different quantities to one another. Niebyl (1946) notes, and I quote at length:

One cannot perceive these quantities statically, not realising that changes in their relative positions may be indicative of a change in the character of the whole of which the observed quantities are not merely parts selected and determined by what is supposed to be theoretical analysis.

In other words, insistence upon the relative lesser importance of exact quantitative measurement and emphasis on the use of mathematics for the establishment and description of existing relationships between quantities does not extricate one or those who work on the same basis from the difficulty, nay contradiction, of wanting to present a moving scene with a static slide-camera. No fundamental departure from the basic assumptions of quantitative theory has been accomplished. Reality has been only removed by one more stage from theoretical perception and analysis.

The issue is more delusional than just clocking the approximated difference between a static reality to a moving process. The reality removed is the social subject removed. For crude empiricism, the static process, the initial abstraction from the phenomenon in question, is a transhistorical characterisation. Things are so much alike across time. It also has a primordial and atemporal subject interwoven with its substance, as opposed to a historically specific subject. The object then becomes quantifiable and measurable across time, with loss of content justified because for something to make sense, it must adhere to mathematics. The object rendered variable lends itself to arithmetical operations: markets, consumption behaviour and allocation mechanisms, etc., are quantifiably the same units and add up across history. However, the concept that captures each and every observation transmuted into a variable is itself a fabricated whim of capital. Even as we formalise experiences/events and signify them in variables and, subsequently, relate the variables to each other by mathematical operations to provide an *a priori* synthesis, capital-biased knowledge would still be irrelevant to the condition one wishes to study. Aside from the fact that capital chooses what to quantify, in departing from transhistorical assumptions, one arrives at a gelatinous conception of reality – the sort that says people consume, but not that they consume differently in different times. There is no socially specific history to which any of the crude empiricist formalisations appertains.

Crude empiricism is gauged through an already established capital system of accounts. It is objective only insofar as the system erected by capital counts as objective. Such is beyond the pale. Capital's system of accounts is as utilitarian as its theory. On account of missing qualitative change, it is also strictly tautological. The relation of output to its various components, such as investment and consumption, is mutually self-reinforcing. Output rises or falls with its recorded components. However, much of output is un-recorded waste. Capital will not compose an accounting scheme to measure how much damage it has created and marketed.

Still, there is much information to be gleaned from the formal accounting framework of capital. There is all the waste that has been produced to be sold, which is interred alive in the quantities and prices of utilitarian variables. Consumers do not pay cheap prices for commodities because producers are 'efficiently' using resources, they do so because the producers have not paid for all the wasted lives and nature. The commodity's moneyed form of value or price is competitive because of the unpaid waste prices imputed in the sale price as social debts against the future. Although there is no cross reference between the form of the variable and the laws of social dynamic, some information about the system is better than no information at all. Capital's variables are not reformulated subject to the changing nature of their social origins. The consumption of the poor is treated on par with the consumption of the rich, although the rich consume the poor. Then again, these accounts are made to be just applied (the positive philosophy) and not to better society. Conversely, the genuine test of social theory should be set against the perfectibility of global society. What purpose does it serve to speak of buoyancy in the stock market when the upshot of such fervour is social immiseration?

Complacency by reliance on logic, the eloquence of mathematical models, voids any meaningful exchange between *a priori* synthesis and actuality. Crude empiricism is not about knowledge inaccessible by experience, the noumena, it is about experience captured in a concept that bears a subject-less and one-sided (biased) relation to the reality it addresses. Empiricism begins by circumscribing the idea from objective reality, drops its relation to the fast-moving condition from which it was initially drawn, and then assumes that its capital-skewed logical synthesis delivers value neutral knowledge. Yet to meaningfully approximate, the subject, or the historical social relation, must be *ex-ante* accounted for in the construction of concepts to be measured. Liking chocolate to gain in utility is symptomatic of history as subject, but not subject. Empirical conceptualisation inadequately captures change because it begins with the indeterminate one-sided instead of the one-sidedness whose subject relation develops from within and in relation to the whole. Relatedly, Niebyl (1940a) commented that 'if it is true that qualitative analysis, analysis containing basically the element of change, must start with the understanding of a process, and that particular events can have meaning only as formations within a field of relevance, then any start of an investigation in the opposite direction, from the particular event to the whole – the process can lead only to an approximate characterisation of that particular event and as such under all conditions must contain a certain margin of error.' The overarching field of relevance is the class struggle. For instance, it is not possible to obtain useful information from the money form of a commodity without understanding

what the balance of forces are at the heart of the class struggle, which determine the grounds for the formation of the money form by means of repression. For instance, capital subdues labour by violent means to lower the price of labour services or wages. Moreover, the activity of subduing labour is value forming and a form of value. Niebyl stresses reverting the particular concept of an event to its field of relevance, or the context from which it arose, to rectify the mis-conceptualisation of the object, which then forms justification for an otherwise unavoidable margin of error.

Without considering the role of US military bases, its world reserve currency status, and the isomorphs of the dominant imperialist class sprouting in the South, the fullness of the background that realises capital flows into 'spatial fixes' will be missing. A concept grasped by sensuous perception in still time without the dynamics of its law-subject does not address what is being investigated; it looks at things but not the social makers of things. The concept money flows stocking up in fixed capital assets independently of a historical subject, the imperialist class laying out the policies to accumulate capital, is a one-sided abstraction. It is also partial truth meant to falsify facts. Partial truths are inescapable; however, when situated within a context of developmental laws, they deliver processual truth as opposed to false meaning. The confluence of US militarism, ideology with symbolic forms of hegemony echoes the social relation or subject that defines what and who is imperialist or anti-imperialist. True enough, the US-European imperialist class is becoming weaker facing China; however, this imperialist class still imposes itself as the sovereign that commands the channels of wealth transfers to empire. A variation in degree does not set the standard of whether the US is less or more imperialist or has ceased to be imperialist.

A historically grounded theory constructs its universal (general) as the process mediated by the multitude of self-differentiating particulars (Ilyenkov 1977). Their mediations obey the historically specific laws of development. This is not to be reduced to the platitude of diversity within unity. Theories, which track observations constituting an epiphenomenon – here the capital flows to the East – without addressing its general laws of development or the history of the social forces behind the rise of the epiphenomenon itself, fail to account for the transformation of the particular into the general. Capital flows to the East not because a single capitalist decides to do so, but because capital as a whole or history decides to do so. More broadly, unmediated theories fail to account for the subject undergoing change and unfolding as history. By adhering to the law of value, the development of the subject of history, heretofore capital, is the realisation of the imperialist class in its practice of imperialism. Such practice culminates in waste whose socially entropic rate surpasses that of a planet whose relatively low entropy supports life over the long term.

## 2 Diluted Imperialism

Empiricism thins down the concept of imperialism to the point where the statistical figure and its correlation with other figures homogenise all the social actors behind the making of the figures – master and slave become alike. In what they choose to quantify out of reality, quality disappears. All subjects, consumers and consumed, are similar by the unit of measure, whether Kilograms or US-dollars. Although nodal shifts in the development of the measure inform of qualitative change, capital's measures are one-sided enough such that deducing changes in quality from corresponding changes in quantity varies to the whim of capital's prefabricated accounts. The many countries exporting, importing, centralising, or concentrating some capital in kind and moneyed form can be categorised to some percentage as hegemonic or imperialist. In the such metric scale, some regional powers are labelled sub-imperialist or mini-imperialist. The measures of capital are put together to conceal its essence or the laws that intermediate its development. Any or all the social forces engaged in the international class struggle could become imperialist because quantity-wise they deal with dollars and engage to some point with the loot of US-led imperialism. At any rate, they are all capitalist and are engrossed in a wage system. All nations are crucibles of exploitation. They erect capital assets in spatially fixed structures, export capital and receive it. In crude empiricism devoid of categorisation, quantity trumps the sociological subject. The *differētia specifīca* of the social type determined by its social relations disappears. Quantity would never re-define quality by dialectical inversion. The measure as unity of quantity and quality comes into being prepackaged as a unity of quantity with quantity, as opposed to mediating their contradiction. In the Kantian vernacular, the sameness of such empiricism voids the possibility of judgment. If everything is of the same quality or subject-less, the variations in the measure only inform of structural changes when capital decides so. The omission of defining social relations internal to the object or more, aptly, the content, implies that the imperialist American-Israeli-Zionist alliance is similar to the Russian-Chinese alliance. Both alliances anyway rely on the size of fixed capital assets in space, capital flows, market extensions, etc.

Expressed differently, for a quantitative approach to define the imperialist as imperialist and/or to nuance imperialism, as in the farcical question ‘who is more imperialist,’ the agent of this or that imperialism must be of univocal historical qualities. However, the quality that the mainstream prescribes to the object doubles for the quantity it ascribes to the same object. Quantity and quality are interchangeable. For instance, prices are the equivalent of utils/value in neoclassical value theory. An individual consumes and she gains in utility while consuming more, although at a decreasing rate. All the while she

pays preferably low prices for commodities that equivalate the utility gained. Because her tastes define what is of value, what is true of her consumption driven wellbeing is true of society. Yet in society, some consume or derive utils from the bombs that obliterate many others. The conventional approach or to consume and be happy (gain utils) is a one-sided and trans-historical characterisation of consumption. Its subject is the same throughout history. The taste-subjective determinants of value miss the fact that the grounds for price formation are shaped by violent de-subjectification. The lower price that buys more stuff to make someone happy is also an even lower price paid for violently extorted labour and resources elsewhere. While all consumption is auto-consumption, under capital, the process is degenerative, and waste holds sway.

The system's auto-negation, its transformation into waste or the self-evident qualitative shift before us is not yet tapped by capital's putative accounting systems. Quantification by capital's accounts writes off the variations in quality attendant upon the activity of the subject. It is the tool of special-interest groups by which they cloak themselves making it difficult to discover the dynamics of social production (Niebyl 1946). The more sophisticated quantification techniques deployed by the mainstream, the more the capital effaces itself. It outrightly reduces the social relation to symbols devoid of social content or reference to the inter-dependence of reality. In their measurement of growth, for instance, Nordhaus and Tobin (1972) to whom war is an 'unfortunate' event, '[e]xclude defence expenditures ... they see no direct effect of defence expenditures on household economic welfare. No reasonable country (or household) buys national defence for its own sake. If there were no war or risk of war, there would be no need for defence expenditures and no one would be the worse without them.' Within the confines of waste accumulation, or the consumption of waste (bombs) for utils, military spending is an investment that enhances the welfare of the North relative to South. In the downward welfare spiral of waste, to instigate the bombing of several states in the developing world at once does not dent their incomes relative to others. Niebyl dubs such procedure, fitting symbolic math un-referenced in reality back onto reality, or an ideology whose formalism preserves the stillness of things, the conservatism, and the dogma.

The premise that all nations in the historical stage of capitalism are capitalist nations is a truism; however, that some are more capitalist and better than others is an even more specious proposition since capital as subject is a social relation. It is possible to build an argument of this nature only when the initial building block of social theory is the abstract man of metaphysics or a thingified man, as opposed to the socially interrelated man, the subcategory of class or the masses. Once a discussion of imperialism deliberates the

nature of the imperialist class from selected facts given in immediacy rather than the history of facts or events effected by historical agency, the actuality delivered by necessity, it departs from Marxist social man. One is reminded, Marxism does not parrot the saying ‘man’ makes history, because this expression understood as abstract man is exploited by bourgeois ideology which uses it to fight another true expression, one vital for the proletariat, which is the masses who make history (Althusser 1971).

Harvey says his theory is not ‘rigid.’ Pinning capital to space as a start to working our way towards a definition of imperialism is as rigid as space. It is a hypostatisation of capital—capital the living social relation. Capital, which is ‘not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character’ (Marx 1894), becomes a thing realised in a spatial fix. The spatial fix, which is also waste, is a form of capital, but the measure of the form in moneyed capital constructed as an ideological weapon and concretised in salient currency or dollar form is also a form of capital. The measure does not tap into the changes in the essence of capital, it merely taps the appearance given in the fetish of moneyed form of value.

To conceive of imperialism as a world system of economic-financial accumulation, uncentred and without a structure-subject at the helm, is an understanding with which the conservatives would be at ease. Such is a world in which demonstrators in central New York who pay taxes to fund US military adventures presume their social formation does not perforce acquire surplus value by means of destruction. They postulate that their token activity, un-articulated with the mesh of global power, sways capital away from its accumulation by waste production. Judging by the bloody trail of capital, far from achieving the desired results, their protests humanised imperialism and bestowed upon it a pseudo democratic guise. In un-centred imperialism, the US amasses the capital flight of the Globe because the ‘barbarians’ of the South, now dubbed hegemonic or mini-imperialists, are incapable of peacefully cohabitating or self-governing. The projection of capital as a rhizomic non-hierarchical world order without an imperialism is itself a tributary of dominant ideology and a capital-form.

Waste is an ongoing industry. With the strong buying power of a few dollars the US-led class constellation can wreak havoc upon the developing world. With its NGO’s, it can hire hungry intellectual mercenaries to instigate conflict and undermine the national base of social reproduction. More so, imperialism invests in the creation of ‘essentialist’ forms of social organisation, such that when the supposed tribes of the Third World war against each other, it can hide the class dimension as well as its role in the conflict. The propositions of

diluted imperialism and its alternate side, the many hegemonies, are of capital's cultural arsenal. These are supposedly confronted by the messianic world unity of peoples lined-up behind the many 'red professors' in US universities who teach capital as an accounting exercise rather than a recipe for Molotov cocktail. To draw on the experience of the developing world, opposing imperialism consisted of real armed and cultural struggle or the primacy of the war of ideas, in which universality *qua* internationalism, was asserted by the exercise of particularity or the national struggle.

Harvey's approach to imperialism follows the old structuralist–functionalist hegemonic ideology, an issue that Abdel-Malek (1977) called merely Marxist, but not at all Marxist, at the end of the day. To resituate Abdel-Malek (1977) other remarks in our critique: imperialism uncentred in the crude empiricist sense becomes an amalgam of well-defined units, with a more sophisticated epistemological vocabulary, or a more refined methodology, not method, with a zest for universalism which truly belongs to the messianic vision of the grand epoch of the white man's burden. Moreover, spatial concepts or core/periphery concepts referencing fixed geographic notions bereft of a sociological definition of imperialism also belong to the universalist–reductionist tradition (Abdel-Malek 1971); as can be seen Abdel Malek is critical of the dyad core-periphery that does not prioritise imperialism and its comprador as the class, which transforms the separateness of North-South into unity.

To revert to first principles: capitalist history, the totality of the social relations of production, the capitalist relations, can be summarised as capital, a totalising relation without limits and with a rationality of its own. It transforms everything social into private-class wealth and power. It continuously tears the worker from her tools or means of production, it socialises her, just as it erects barriers between use and exchange value or between anything social and private. It does so *decisively* by means of war. I caveat decisiveness since in social as opposed to formal determination events gel necessarily but not exclusively, in contrast to absolutely. The capital relation, the contradiction of capital to labour, the first contradiction, projects itself onto a North-South plane under imperialism. Capital actualising its essence, the practice of genocidal colonialism, is capital's 'unconscious tool' and first appearance on the world stage. In this oneness or totality, capital makes history in as much as it defeats anti-systemic labour. Equally, capital's structural constituents, its different spheres sub-articulated with it, and born into the frame of its totality, make history not as conglomerations of atomistic individuals or formal subsystems, but as sub-agencies of capital. Their political thrust is historically relevant when it furthers the necessities of capitalist social transformation. In the hierarchy of capital, the subordinate comprador is historically relevant when it exercises excessive forms

of repression levelling the social grounds for exploitation. The Apartheid South-Africans, or the Zionist Israelis unabashedly prove more aggressive than their patrons in central empire. For the central capitalist to raise the rate of exploitation they would have to revert to fascism, a position which it re-defends of late.

The intensification of capital is imperialist practice, which amounts to the de-sovereignty and socialisation of the Global South – socialisation as in to make more social than private the worker or to deprive the masses of their resources. Imperialist war in connection to other venues is the principal activity that reasserts the rule of capital. True to form, a studier capital rule promotes economic gains down the line. New markets ought to be forcefully engaged to be expropriated or to expand commodity production and profits, *ergo*, a new war is undertaken for financial gains. However, at times encroachment wars are carried out for no apparent economic gain. Wars against states may be argued as wars for no apparent economic reason. Generally, wars cost billions or trillions while the bombarded country or its market generate little revenues for empire. The resources that the aggrieved country possesses could be of picayune moneyed value. The Western left is awash with literature pointing to imperial campaigns as losses or unintended consequences. On balance, the moneyed expenses on Western wars are quite high relative to the lowly moneyed income of the aggrieved nation. However, US expenses are the revenues of its financial class. The war's ramification upon the reconstruction of imperial real and cultural forms of power is of incalculable worth insofar as it swirls into an agency of surplus value.

The structure of power nestled in the US recreates the money forms of capital in ways to promote the expropriation of the Global South. The West prints the safer currency principally because it is more hegemonic. Nonetheless, the blinkered social democrats leave out the war campaign as a value relation. The value produced by militarism as a domain of accumulation, together with the value spiralling from the disembowelment of labour, are the engines of current and future surplus value. The imperialist bludgeoning measures inflate the power of the subject of value in inverse proportion to the decline of the Global South. Power then marks up the prices of final commodities while cheapening all of inputs used in production.

Aside from the irreparable damage to social nature, the purposeful development of the Third World by imperialist assault predicates central development. Furthermore, the global repercussions of encroachment wars funnel capital from around the world to US empire. Either through the financial channels, by direct dislocation and disengagement of Third World resources, by waste selling or by shortening lives, war as the exercise of the law of value must be expanded to boost surplus value creation. The reason

of history commanded by capital appears as a shrewd act only by the extent of capital's power. The powerful is right and emerges as intelligent, whether right or wrong. Empire lets its moneyed form or dollar act as a veneer by which it extracts much value for a little price; all the while, the notion of reified exchange rates acting as subject hides the battering that created the conditions for the same exchange rate to appear as a god-like (fetish) figure.

The degree of alienation of social processes from social control corresponds to an objective reason of capital, which is formed by impersonal history and is as impersonal as history. Such reason directs capital's activity in tandem with its needs for a specific stock of labour power on offer and for a socially necessary labour time derived from the stock of labour power effected in production. Capital requires a reserve army of labour and a lean workforce delivering much lowly paid concrete labour in short time intervals. It is in a struggle for time. The time to regulate labour reproduction and the time to employ labour in production are a major concern. For that, it has to own and control not only the past with its memories rewritten to its advantage, it must also be able to own and allocate future socially necessary labour time. Because it has full control of the past and future labour of society, time to capital is no longer the uniform and irreversible time or chronological time. Every hour, minute and second, past and future, are under capital's thumb. Reigning without opponent, it picks and chooses from chronological time to fit into its social time. It pawns the future of humanity by remoulding its past, the history, symbols, and power platforms of the working class to its turnover cycles, frequency of exchange, or more broadly, the rate of accumulation.

Capital takes concrete time, the conventional time spent in production and reproduction, and turns it into an abstract and or social time, which is tradable against the moneyed form value. It gathers all the heterogenous conditions of labour and converts them into one homogenous process in which the present does not need to issue from the past. To the alienated working class, the class that does not control the time of production, the continuum of time loses its qualitative aspects. Time becomes similar to algebraic time. The masses born into misery are alive but cannot decide to live their lives since they cannot decide on the allocation of resources across time to obtain a better standard of living. The time of socially necessary labour time with which society reproduces is moneyed. It is the moneyed property of capital whose bent for waste de-reproduces society.

Capital's ability to control time and raise its rates of exploitation entwine with other forms of social control. The barometer of such control is the extent to which man is thingified, or as man introjects the consciousness of the commodity and accedes to its expansion at any cost. Once thingification is achieved, the fantastical market of neoclassical economy, a fiction that cannot

be real, becomes real and discloses itself as efficient. It carries out capital's orders handed down by price signals. It shifts resources about, including subject-less man. Humans become the *materiel* of its production process. To maintain a state of thingification calibrated to the rate of surplus value, it also maintains an adjacent class of consumers who can afford to make choices. Capital's predicates of value are in the living labour turned into things-wasted, and its adjacent class which devours the thingified living labour.

The issue of whether imperialism is sociologically determined or not boils down to the threshold at which economic exploitation reaches a maximum or a point of saturation as markets farther afield become over-exploited; hence, capital reaches an economic limit. Luxemburg (1913) noted that 'capitalism comes to a dead end, it cannot function any more as the historical vehicle for the unfolding of the productive forces, it reaches its objective economic limit.' That occurs when most labour is waged and when there would be no room to enhance labour's share of the social product by effective demand policies for profits to rise. However, the rate of surplus value or exploitation determinedly occurs by the emaciation/de-reproduction of society. In a two-tier system of slave owners who do not recognise that they live in an age of slavery, German labour could for instance endlessly feed off the earlier deaths of developing world labour. Accumulation rates rise, while cheaper labour from the South with its cheaper resources offset Northern crises of underconsumption. Consumables become so cheap such that German workers can afford to buy and clear more of the backlog in surplus commodities. Furthermore, financialisation or the expansion of credit and growth accumulated in fictitious capital thrust imperialism into new wars. Destruction becomes the principal commodity produced by capital. Militarism will lead accumulation, which will theoretically demolish any limit to capital. Logically and historically, an explosive system whose moneyed products on offer, the waste and militarism, cannot be exhausted – unless labour reverses the process. The economic logic of capital with limits faces off against a social reality that grows without limits.

In relation to economicistic views on imperialism, Abdel-Malek noted that sophisticated epistemology, crude empiricism mathematised, cannot conceal Western deep enmity towards the East, especially China (Abdel-Malek 1971). China is integral to the South. It has not colonised nor lived off the avails of prostituting the South. Abdel-Malek's understanding of imperialism as sociological is not anomalous. Marx's definition of capital is also sociological. By sociological I mean that capital first entrenches its rule, and always in relation to the signals it receives from the undulation of the business cycle, and then adjusts the social conditions for reproduction to meet rising rates of exploitation. The repressions or the social activity realised as the exercise of the laws of capital, which continuously reinstate capital, are the sociological dynamic. Economics

matters in the last moment, or rather, the teleological end-stage. Capital's rule is its weight, real and ideological, within the framework of the international balance of forces. Economics dissimulates the sociological dynamic. While profit rates require severe austerity or wars to be restored, what must also be restored first is the clout of capital. It is the politics of the class struggle, not its economics, which is the vestibule to the logic of imperialism.

### 3 Concretising Some Forms of Capital

Before proceeding and to give concrete shape to some forms of capital, which bolster its rule, I will illustrate with three outstanding cases.

1. Institutions: The world is governed by capital's class organs or institutions like the World Bank, NATO, the IMF, other Western statal and para-statal institutions, etc. These are incubators of dominant ideology, a stock of guiding ideas historically or impersonally built up as forms of capital to reproduce capital. Similar to the spirit of a thingified, impersonal and objective history, there is no right or wrong or good or bad in dominant institutions or ideology. These are the outgrowth of a reified subject, a thing or the objective commodity reasoning its own self-expansion. As Marx (1867) noted the relations of things/commodities in exchange act as surrogates of humans in their relations to each other. Thingified institutions are inanimate beings animating society. They are subjects or the expression of social classes concretised in structural institutions to deliver policies that strengthen capital's rule. More precisely, the activity of ruling class institutions fuses the ideology of the ruling imperialist class with the imperialist class. Ideology and class become one and the same.

On the face of it, these political organisations abide by the Charter of the United Nations whose objective is to criminalise wars. Below the surface, these institutions of capital lubricate the channels for converting social into private wealth, however, as always with an eye to the future and the stability of capital's rule. Although they appear to peddle education as panacea for social ills, such that none opposes the principle, the education they press upon the masses are the false modes of thought. Their projects are social opportunities forgone to society and invested in wasteful activity. Their role in lending into financial bondage, foments war and adds to the wealth of empire. As per the dire condition of the planet, not an iota of peace or prosperity would filtrate from the logic of their development.

These mega institutions of capital are not equal representation bodies. In capital's hierarchical order, they sit atop the pinnacle of power. They are principally ruled by the leading imperialist class or the US leading class, which is heir/partner to the colonial European empire and its stock of culture, power, and wealth. Naturally, such a lopsided power structure trailing from the past privileging the Western World reproduces by maintaining unequal political, social and trade relations with the social formations of the South.

2. Ideological production: At a more basic level, for capital to further its interest, that is, to produce things to sell on a market for profit, it also requires wars to extract cheaper raw material and it must crush developing nations to lower wages. Since the discovery of historical materialism, warring for resources has been somewhat an accepted tenet of historical investigations. However, the imperialist system must beautify the preponderant ugliness it foists upon the globe. It must introduce ideas that convince people suffering that such is a price worth paying for 'ours is the best world of all the possible worlds.' It cannot just declare we are going to kill Africans and Arabs for their resources, as it blatantly does. Capital encounters organisationally preserved working class and national liberation war memories, plus other symbols and conventions extolling working class rights: these must be circumvented. With so many *just* working-class wars fought for equality, capital must appease the populace and employ a cant of humanitarianism, such as the salient R2P, to legitimate its aggression.

For capital, the aesthetic make-over is relegated to ideological production. Social production is not only about the emission of the consumable or poisonous commodity alone, it is also about the simultaneous production of ideologically flattened man. Flatness or uniformity of the mind is the appropriate adjective because it captures the lack of depth or the obviation of history in the putative modes of thought. It is reason devoid of real time, which instantiates self-consuming man alongside commodity production. Capital produces the commodity and, through its schools, temples and media bombardment, its Althusserian apparatuses (Althusser 1994), it also hollows the state of consciousness such that people submissively engage in self-consumption.

3. The price system: In addition to capital's institutions and related ideological production, the role played by the fetish of the money form as subject of exploitation is epitomal. Money fetishes acquire a symbolic structure, which not only signifies the magnitude of value, these also create the social rifts that are the source of auto-exploitative processes.

As if by occultation, the money form of value delays its emergence or conceals the price associated with co-lateral input/output commodities within it, especially the waste commodities. It lines up at the pinnacle of the symbolic order to abuse man and nature now and force society to pay for the damage in the future. The price of waste may be precluded or delayed in synch with the requirement of cost cutting for profit making. Prices, which are tools and forms of capital, are presumed to be the value of things. With so much depending on making ends meet with the wage, the moneyed form is perceived as an omnipotent icon whose acts are fateful. To establish the power of the money fetish, capital clubs society into submission. Society ceases to question why certain costs or rewards are effaced from the price at the time of purchase, which transforms all of society into a form of capital.

The reproduction of the immediate essentials of life is in the final instance is the determining factor in history (Engels 1884). The activities of social reproduction and commodity production are co-determinants. Society produces the worker who produces. Productivity is social or the worker mediates the input of society in the act of production. A social worker is society producing. At the initial stages of production, as in the mother role bringing up a child, the value relation and the surplus value appear non-market related and un-priced; hence, the mother's labour resembles a non-value relation; a vestige of the past alive in the present (Federici 2012). However, the price of mother's labour is current, and realised instantaneously in the value of the inputs rearing the child and, subsequently, will impute in the latent prices for which the labour of the child grown into man will sell. The money form and its appearance in the price are omnipresent, interwoven with the edicts of capital's social time, and arise as the symbol of the magnitude of value – by market exchange. These prices, even when they seem to count for naught or are negative as in debits, signal the power relation which *ex-ante* under-priced the work of the mother. Prices, low or high, reinforce the divisions amongst supposedly free labourers. They short-change the cost of social reproduction to emit more of the surplus labour.

Whereas value creation is a process of production, a social relation deepening social fissures, prices *qua* the appearance of the money form of value circularly re-entrenches those fissures. As such, they are inherently flawed representations of value. Where socially necessary labour time counts for much expended concrete labour or for the intense consumption of life in production, the price deriving its authority from the money form of value camouflages the value relations at the heart of surplus value making. Prices arise as an uncertain manifestation bound by the

necessity to lower the value outlays on labour. A theory of prices is not about accurately predicting prices in relation to other prices or quantities. Prices are constituents of immediacy whose mediation ties up to the uncertainty of history or the contingency associated with any social practice. They are the *after the fact* realisation of the power rapport in a market ticking away by the signals of the price system. As opposed to predicting what is impossible to predict, a theory of prices informs how an emasculated class-subject delivers social resources for a lower band of prices relative to other prices in order to provide capital with profits. It delivers socially necessary labour time for little or no price. The act of purposeful labour or the drudgery of work, and the prices monetising the work, are respectively the different contents of value and price.

For capital, the money form of value attendant upon commodity exchange is an end in itself and means to reconstruct value relations. Price movements adumbrate the path of capital. Fluctuations of profits, the amassed moneyed wealth, permit capital to respond by controlling labour and/or by regulating its social metabolic cycle or the rate at which it destroys value to create value. Through the primacy of politics, the reassertion of its class power, capital uses the symbolism and the actual content of the money form, alienated value, to raise the rate of exploitation. The estranged money form coerces working people as they pursue decent living wages. For example, workers in Greece submit to paying back an odious debt, from which they did not benefit, and which is in reality the credit of the financial class, is an opportune example of a moneyed fetish that estranges decent living standards from the working class.

Capital, the abstract but real, and historical relationship, encodes the reproduction of social life by the practice of the law of value. The law of value works the social grounds to condense the chronological time in which socially necessary labour time is spent in production. Concomitantly, its associated violence strips labour of autonomy and cheapens man and the nature owned by social man. These processes follow the command of capital whose many emboldened fetishes and actual physical coercion, especially its formal institutions and price system represent the summit of a vertical command order. The domineering structure guides social reproduction by synergising the transition of commodities from proper value, socially necessary labour time, into its moneyed form in profits. By dialectical inversion, the price appearance of the moneyed form restructures the real social conditions for the allocation of socially necessary labour time. As overproduction and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall precipitate in crises requiring a relaunch of the condition for surplus value, capital further shifts into a destructive mode. It begins to overconsume social

nature at low or postponed prices to redress lagging surplus value. Capital's over-entropic demands drain the value destined to the reproduction of the working class and turns it into its surplus value. The feedback loop of destructive reproduction, the lessons learnt from recurrent crises, informs capital that there is no steady state to the process of producing and marketing waste. Using the platitude of neoclassical economics, capital discovers that waste commodities annul the diminishing returns to factors of production. In waste jargon, capital discovers that its rate of surplus value rises by the outright consumption of the labourer in the shortest time span possible.

#### 4 Excessive Entropy

The production of waste, destruction overtaking useful creativity and accelerating the entropy of the system, is the indispensable condition of capital (Davis 1960a). Currently, waste has proven to be the leading link in the value relation, a form of capital, and the preponderant product of capital. Waste products, wasted humans and nature, raise surplus value and profits. Their excessive rents allow capital to buy more time as it usually does by bidding one part of the working class against another.

Financialisation pressures capital to shorten its turnover cycles or increase the rate at which it consumes more of the social natural inputs shifting the costs upon society. Formulaically, there will be less resources for society to maintain itself both because of the costs it will defray to cover the damage and because of the irreplaceability of its lost species and sane resources. The repression exercised to deprive working people of their resource and/or to splinter them weakens their position in the political arena allowing capital to grab a bigger share of the social product. In value terms, in terms of what it takes in wealth to reproduce society, less value or less necessary labour leaves more surplus labour for capital.

In fulfilling its intrinsic drive to disengage or extinguish people and nature, the very act of putting to death social nature becomes a process of value creation that reproduces by the destruction itself as the commodity on offer. At least from what is given to perception, pollution is paid for, and the war-dead are paid for. The dead person as a commodity contributes to accumulation while she is constructed as the subhuman other or because of an ideology presenting her life as superfluous. That there are too many people relative to spare capacity and the planet is overpopulated are clichés widely held as beliefs. Moreover, natural-value wise (what it takes to live), the elimination of the living person whose death is the commodity realised absolutely lowers the numbers of people and, under steady class power ratios disfavouring workers,

necessary labour falls. With working class defeat spiralling out of the nexus of wasting lives for the purpose of sale, a process that grounds the diminution of working class representation in politics, the wage share must plummet.

It is intuitive that by reducing the power and numbers of working people, a lower wage share emerges. Circuitously, a lower wage bill in combination with forms of physical and ideological assault re-disempower the working class. The grip of ideology flattening thought, by the variants of the demonstration effect (Veblen 1899) or the more evolved trickery of the society of the spectacle (Debord 1967), relegate the working-class subject to abeyance. Over its lifecycle, labour delivers a similar substance in concrete labour for a lesser price and in a relatively shorter life. Meanwhile, the life of the labourer requires a healthy nature, which supports the continuity of nature and man in unison. The assault on nature is doubly favourable to capital because working class power may regulate the price of nature in favour of labour, while a nature abused for low prices, such that it becomes a dying nature, reduces the cost of labour reproduction because it terminates labour's life earlier.

The controversial point should be how most people have come to think of other people as just things whose greater numbers, as opposed to their class power, reduce the price of their labour. Another equally bewildering point is the reification of the social subject devouring social nature (things consuming things). Patnaik and Patnaik (2016) argue that the rising cost price of tropical and subtropical commodities rises by production constraints, the limitation of fertile land raising the cost of production and, subsequently, raising the prices of commodities – commodities (tropical) unsupported in the harsher Northern environment. However, imperialism is the rise of central production upon the suppression of peripheral production by an act of subordination carried out by the imperialist class; it is the relationship presupposed by the act of subordination. The case may be that the pursuit of tropical or sub-tropical commodities whose supply-cost price is rising heralds more of the imperialist assaults, but so does the interdependent price system in general. Prices rise or fall by the social power relations that makes their corresponding commodities scarce as distinct from the natural conditions that rations them. The reason Patnaik and Patnaik pin imperialism to declining land productivity is their adherence to the categorical independence of under-consumption, whereas underconsumption is a necessary offshoot of overproduction/anarchic competition – the causal order is relevant.

Imperial conquests and wars were all about war booty prior to capitalism. What has changed under capitalism are the reasons for warring have come to be social processes independent of social control. Unlike past times when lack food may have incited war, the objectified, plentiful and/or alienated commodity, auto-expanding as value in its moneyed form, becomes the social chart of

war. The commodity's own motion resolving its internal contradictions magnifies its resolution in alienation from society by means of wars. Wars serve to generate and grab value, and as forms of capital they reproduce the capitalist class. To strip peripheral labour of its revolutionary consciousness is the primary social and historical re-constituent of surplus value since it resituates the imperialist class in command of history. The degree of power of the imperialist subject mirrors the rate of surplus value. Apart from the fact that wasting lives is an end in itself, countries with or without sub-tropical commodities may be suppressed or decimated by imperialism because their powerlessness is the power of imperialism.

Nearly all commodities are destined for exchange. Also, nearly all commodities are laced with a socially and environmentally deleterious content. Deadly pesticides, the child or slave-like labour and the blood of wars are ubiquitous. Their use value transmutes into socially acceptable disuse value commensurably with the rising real and ideological power of imperialism. The commodity at war with itself to expand in money form, now wars upon its consumers. Considering the already reached, ongoing or impending environmental ruination, all the commodities that constitute wealth also constitute a heap of waste registering in exchange against a price. In this degenerative process, waste has become the measure of wealth. Moreover, unlike the inventory stock of run of the mill commodities whose excess stock beleaguers capital (products that do not sell), the stock of waste is there being consumed for a price and waiting to be priced and sold because someone must pay for it in shorter life years or taxes.

The issue remains that the impairment to social nature is irreparable and harmful to all, but the thingification of reason boosts the tolerance of waste. In point of fact, recent studies postulate that it is politically unlikely that humanity can reverse the damage (IPCC 2020; Ajl 2018 and 2019).<sup>1</sup> A healing process requires transforming the world economy at a speed and scale that has 'no documented historic precedent' (IPCC 2020). Such phenomenal waste being priced, consumed, and put to use reverses the Marxian concept of wealth, defined as the heap of commodities characterised by a use value that betters society (Marx 1867). The waste is the wealth of the rich, or the differential between necessary and surplus labour, no matter how dis-useful to the broad population. Waste automatically broadens the material rift behind the social-class divide. The ruling class affords the costs of a clean environment in gated communities, whereas the working class cannot.

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>.

The novelty of waste is twofold. First, the consumed poisoned-commodity consumes the labourer at a faster rate relative to the historically determined level of life expectancy. More so than any other time in history, every product of capital resembles a bomb. Second, in comparison to the huge damage already sustained by the environment, the good side of the wealth, what remains unpolluted is *determinedly* insignificant. The Green GDP measures are by definition illusory because they do not assess the irreparable losses, which are irredeemable in any money form. As mentioned in chapter one, the quantity or the amount of dollars signifying green losses are based on a power platform in which the Third World's masses count for nearly nothing. Simply put, the dead humans are too dead to negotiate their worth in dollars. So far, the waste, within the wealth and apart from it, exceeds the supposedly 'good' wealth – if there ever was such a thing as goodness in capital. Given that the trajectory of the system is exponential/explosive, the costing of the historically destructed inputs, man and nature, exceeds any amount in prices associated with the usefulness of the value in the current wealth.

Curiously, it is not the theologians, ones similar to father Paneloux in Albert Camus' novel, the Plague, who hollers the end is near, it is the scientists. Eschatology is the thesis of capital's environmentalists. The world, however, will not end on account of sins. It will end as the constituent cells of the system die, or as it experiences a state of *excessive entropy* comparable to a protracted and slow death. In theory, the losses sustained relative to a sane social and environmentally sensitive mode of production are on course to meet their potential.

Alternatives exist. However, unfettered imperialism subjugates nations to over-use nature and man. Ransacking weaker social formations eases the conditions restricting the overconsumption of resources. Although conspiracies abound, the process perseveres not on account of some conspirators working in the dark who make history. The personalised side of conspiracy is doubtless lurking about, and there are plenty of declassified documents to support this point; however, such conspiracies are a symptom of class politics and not the nub of history. Insofar as relevance to social science, the dominant ideology is an act of conspiracy against man since the planet of man is being undermined by its associated practice. The identities, history is impersonal, and history is class struggle, imply that social class is impersonal as well. Had the personal conspirators been subjects of history, the world would have probably been a better place. Sentient humans as opposed to things feel and as they sense the wrath of the social natural calamity, they might temper the harm associated with capitalist production, which harms them too. The damage imparted so far is at an existentialist scale. The class encased within Northern national walls work to keep the trash and pollution out of its gated communities. Still, gates are an ineffective prophylactic. Rich persons are or will be sickened too. To their

misfortune, it is not the person or each and every conspiring profiteer, which can control social reproduction by the production of waste. It is things, the fetishes or the commodities created by labour, foremost the waste commodity, which grows by creating the man who reproduces or rather de-reproduces by the consumption of waste.

Impersonal history or class struggle also proceeds by the internalisation of the rationale of the commodity by real persons. Self-expansion at any cost, a process refracted in a stock of dominant ideas and forms of thought, which governs the labour process, actualises by the agencies of history. Its control over the power platforms that incubate the money-form appearance of value to correspond to its essence or value, shifts the costs of production in ways that generate higher profits for capital, and conversely, higher costs to society. Such is not a conspiracy behind closed doors that investigative journalists broach, it is the phenomenon playing out in plain sight. Nonetheless, conspiracy is spoken of when people are or feel ensnared. The existential trap has ensnared everyone and since it is carried by the application of dominant ideology. The state of the world is what it is because the subject is a commodifying impersonal history *motorised* by a class struggle realised through the agencies of dominant ideology. So far, the working classes do not make history and the power of capital in the complex structure reproduces the capital relation whose reason for being is to profit out of the devastation of social nature. Apart from the dominant white class uttering accusations of conspiracy to berate inquisitive academics, the real conspiracy is the instantiation of their ideas in the *a posteriori* condition of social-nature.

The subject of the overly entropic system, a system whose cells are auto-collapsing, emanates from the synergy between owners of commodities and commodities as fetishes or, correspondingly, the violence exercised by capital to shore up its ideology. The symbiosis of thingified capitalists and the things they produce moulds the conditions for production on the 'cheap' while mounting the social costs to society. The state in which living people become things or just factors of production, and as things they come alive when they assume a capital form, such that, money works and capital produces, it is then that one sees that the reality that people live is swapped in the mind for the reality that dominant ideology created (Marx 1867). People work and not things (Perlman 1968). In pursuing wage employment to survive without laying claim to the product of her labour, the worker seeks the very thing that re-creates the capital relation or, analogously, reasserts herself as the wage-slave in capital (Marx 1867).

The knowledge horizon of the worker must be bounded by the desire for a wage, an element of the sphere of circulation, never to go beyond and question the social end of the product she *socially* produces or the conditions in

the sphere of production. Bombing for oil or engaging child labour in mines abroad are supernaturally ordained conditions not to be questioned as bases for the higher wages of the Western workers. These conditions are positioned beyond the spectrum of possibility. They are allegedly shaped by the fetish of moneyed wealth as opposed to social labour – money works here not people. Dominant discourse rams through the idea that the social end of labour's products is 'legitimately' private as opposed to social. Once the state of social consciousness absorbs as science that wealth is not the product of labour and that its social end serves society by serving capital, then even the waste produced to the benefit of capital counts as efficient production. The pinnacle of the alienation-waste spiral appears as estranged labour-power becomes a fetish-subject whose productivity is its capacity to waste itself by wasting the labourer. The labourer doubly works to self-destruct once by the reduction of the living wage, and twice, by the consumption of waste.

Wage employment splits society from its product. This material chasm, the separation of the objectified labour in the commodity from the worker, or the exclusion of the labourer from the product of his labour, is the material foundation of the alienation that percolates onto consciousness. The separation surfaces most in the imperialist-violence deepening the structural-rift between North and the South. Exclusion is an outcome of the fetishisation of private property, the essence of capital that commands key instruments of physical and ideological control.

When crude empiricism captures the social imagination and things begin to make things happen, such as space and money defining imperialism as opposed to the legacy of wars of extermination by the white nations, only the *rapture* of Northern Marxism could pave the way to emancipation. With objective commodities, driven by their own internal value contradictions, and exchanging for each other, these things having godly powers lay down the conditions for their own expansion. As already postulated, the qualifier objective attributed to the commodity connotes beyond social control. While the earth's entropy is lower than the universe's to sustain longer life, by the weight of history manifest in the violence and waste, the encoding of the commodity enters a state of auto-destruct or excessive entropy.

## 5 A Periodised Imperialism and the Mainstream

How is contemporary imperialism different from the practice of empires in Marx's time when Britain competed with other imperialists and exported its colonial loot to Canada and Australia, etc? How is modern imperialism

different from imperial looting in Roman/Byzantine times? Long-distance trade routes would shift wealth from place to place, but the wealth centre of Empire remained Constantinople. Is there uniqueness in recent developments to warrant an overhaul of the Leninist theory of imperialism?

In c. 400 BC, Sun Tzu posited that the acme of skill is to capture the enemy's cities without assaulting them and to overthrow his state without protracted operations; however, in today's world, many countries fall upon the anvil of empire and are set ablaze for no apparent reason. Although the waste accumulated so far clearly distinguishes capitalism, a quick look at the difference is of relevance to defining modern imperialism, to clarifying who the imperialist is and, accordingly, to laying the intellectual foundation on how positions on US intervention in Africa and the Middle East are to be framed, and to what ends.

The imperialism of the capitalist age, as a process of wealth expansion, differs from any other time prior to capitalism. Fetishism, 'the illusion of the epoch' as Marx (1867) had said, now doubles for the germane relationship of capital. Prior to capitalism a god was called upon to conquer the enemy and nature for food, now a god (the fetish) is called upon to crush those who may produce food for themselves when there is too much food around. That is not to say that the imperialism of Lenin's time is stagnant. It has undergone various mutations beginning with beggar thy neighbour, demand Keynesianism up to neoliberal financialisation (Patnaik and Patnaik 2016). However, imperialism itself did not perish as a distinctive historical stage into the multitude or decentred hegemonies (Hardt and Negri 2000; Harvey 2018 a,b).

Since the turn of the last century, finance and monopolisation have grown. A cursory look into the power of corporation over the market will find that less than 100 corporations entwined with finance control much of moneyed world output. With financial expansion comes more mysterious forms of fetishism incarnate in the layers upon layers of moneyed credit. The debts and their associated financial instruments emerging as fictitious capital acquire more of a lead over the making of the social process. The growth of moneyed rents spinning away from finance compels capital to search for real asset by which it securitises its otherwise overextended credit.

Although the Minsky cycle shows the excess credit piling up in high performance times, in level terms, the private control of the money supply consistently creates money in excess to induce real economic activity (in relation to Hyman Minsky). The pressure on the real economy to turnover at faster rates in order to follow the exponentially expanding moneyed capital sharpens the contradiction between the way production is socially organised and autonomously developing productive forces. To get the most out of invested capital and increase profits, capital must splinter labour, as well as hike the rate of exploitation. These two processes of power and exploitation are the

intertwined constituents of surplus value. They principally gel in imperialist wars of encroachment and super exploitation. Aggression to subdue the masses of the developing world alongside a liquidation of labour's life in shorter periods are indispensable. The decisive link is the growth of financialisation that independently of society's command orchestrates reproduction principally by means of war.

In his critique of Hilferding's definition of finance capital, in which he declared the banker is being transformed into an industrial capitalist, Lenin (1916) reemphasised that such was not growth by degree; rather, finance is a new subject of capital defined by its oligarchical structure, and hence, the evolution of more competitive capital into monopoly-finance imperialism:

It is silent [Hilferding's explanation] on one extremely important fact: the increase of concentration of production and of capital to such an extent that concentration leads, and has led, to monopoly ... The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry – such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the *content* of this term ... under the general conditions of commodity production and private property, the 'business operations' of capitalist monopolies inevitably lead to *the domination of a financial oligarchy*. (my emphasis)

There is a metamorphosis of the leading class from industrial capitalist to a financial oligarchy. It grows by oligarchic competition into post-war détente and until this moment of full blown financialisation. When the industrialist clones the financier, industrial activity becomes fully marked by finance. For Patnaik (2009), the industrial firm's financial operations, such as buy-back stock, banking on futures that may never actualise, and defining production by the revenues from finance, complete the transformation of industry into finance. Hudson (2022) estimates that 90 percent of US corporate revenue is 'used to share buybacks and dividend payouts to support company stock prices.' The quicker rate of turnover in finance, its shorter gestation period and ephemeral pursuits impose short-termism on the real activity of production. These processes cram the lives of man and nature in industries of war and super-exploitation.

However, change is not only earmarked by the financialisation that has taken over. Commodities become decisively less useful and more harmful. Not only bombs, the perfect waste, but apples and oranges also pollute and poison. The measure by which commodities consume man depends on the power of capital vis-à-vis labour. The degree of capital's war upon society has become a magnification of the degree of the contradiction between use and exchange value at the heart of the commodity. The sharpness of the value contradiction

gains a further edge because, while ‘the commodity is money and money is the commodity’ Marx (1867), the money appearance of the commodity, or its fetish, determines its production process without concern for the social conditions of production. The thesis ‘finance disparages social production’ becomes ‘finance fully decides the social conditions of production,’ including the increase in waste. Moreover, since the product of labour and its usefulness are alienated from the direct producer and mediated by exchange, which is now the trade in finance adumbrating commodity trade, waste-laced production must, necessarily but not exclusively, rise – the historical contingency is accounted for. Instead of just going to war for oil, bananas and oranges, capital wars for waste products and for war itself.

The bigger and more frequent wars of the twentieth century may not on the face of it indicate that the capital of this period is different than that of the preceding period. The question is then, is this capital different enough from nineteenth century capital to re-periodise capitalism into pre and post monopoly stage. Change, the bigger wars, may indicate growth by a matter of degree but not a change in the class content of the historical period. For the content to change and for history to be differently periodised, the subject class and its reigning ideas must undergo *a qualitative change or a change of essence*. The newly emerging laws (essence) must redefine the class content of the still trailing imperialism of the past. It must transform the new class at the helm into the financial oligarchy. These new laws of transformation work first, to fully financialise the activity of production, and secondly, to produce waste with the aim of cutting short the life of society. In the former case, a financial instrument trading for another financial instrument (the tradability of debt) defines the course of economic production and exchange. In the latter case, waste paves the social foundation of profits, its surplus labour wrought from a shorter value turnover cycle, which exponentially expands accumulation. The efficacy of waste gains grounds by reducing outlays on labour as a result of the waste that trashes longevity, and jointly, by the amount of waste that sells now or in the future. Of the waste accumulation, the pure waste of wars, the mechanism by which nations freely dispose of their resources as per Marx (1894), reinforces the capital relationship, and always by the state of social alienation. Wars as products of capital, as commodities alienating the life of the labourer in death to become a merchandise, and to then be consumed by another labourer, epitomises social alienation.

Waste is thus a money-making degenerative process that amounts to a negative dialectic, or things going from bad to worse. It permeates all levels of social reproduction. On a social-psychological level, indulgence in abstract individualism desensitises social being. Many individual acts of self-consumption cohering with state policy prolong immiseration. Desensitisation peaks when

mixed with a dose of psychoanalysis and genetics from the modern frenzy associated with the genetic roots of human behaviour. The epitome of such discourse may in a roundabout way speak of 'fascism as love' as just another state of social being (Reshe 2018). Reshe for instance speaks of evil as excessive goodness and then says that 'the most sincere love and desire to care for others does not guarantee humanity ... mankind is in a desperate situation—what can destroy it, is also a condition for its survival.' This is exemplary of the way Western academia obviates the South and normalises hate through an essentialist type human condition. What condition for survival does NATO afford to the developing world? Just as history becomes devoid of sense and moral responsibility, so does humanity by being conceived as metaphysical substance, the *a priori* instinctual drive, its Augustinian human nature.

The negative dialectic is augmented alienation as a material process that strips the developing world of its resources. Alienation is not the psychoanalytic point of snatching humanity from its own humanity – although that is what motivates the herding toward the precipice. Alienation is the worker's labour, which is alien to the worker since his labour power has been sold and it is being controlled by capital. Moreover, the wage is reduced to deprive the worker from much of the social product, while the social product undermines the worker by its waste content. Alienation underscores the gap between social being and social consciousness. The damage to man and species under the rule of capital faces off against underdeveloped revolutionary forms of organisation and consciousness.

The production of waste has been instituted in forms of social organisation and reasoned as inevitable. Indeed, waste is the *indispensable* cost and product of any industry. All commodities, apples, oranges, and bombs, produced and alienated from labour, acquire a moneyed form determined through exchange by the various powers governing the market's time and space. The money form of waste, as opposed to how useful it is to society, preconfigures the workings of the social metabolic order, whether it is sane or wasteful.

However, by including bombs in the range of commodities, one includes a purely waste product under the commodity category. The peculiarity arises because the fetish of the bomb has to justify to society its usefulness to self-expand as value. Since the investment in the bomb is a dis-investment in society, the socially necessary labour time that goes into the making of the bomb tugs against the use value of the bomb, which is its productivity or the amount of war-dead – unlike Keynes (1921) who thought that military expenditure is unproductive. The money form of the bomb is the magnitude of its value. Value here is created by the labour of death sustained by workers obliterated on the ground. The labour of ex-colonies engaged in the realisation of the Northern

bomb pays capital and its allies by the death of its own labourers under the bomb. The working classes of the South dip into their resources to create stronger foundations for Northern surplus value. They have less value/wealth to socially reproduce with. With the pure waste of the bomb, the substance of surplus value forms by imperialist aggression deepening the North-South divide. Conjointly, the prematurely actuated deaths of the Southern masses are a source of Northern surplus value. The bomb's iconic status is also the rent in the wage of the capital-allied working class. It discloses a class content *become* structure in which the class to whom the bomb is lucrative and useful consumes the class to whom the bomb is the shackle of bonded labour.

The money form of commodities with its concocted holiness contributes to apportioning lesser value outlays in the form of wages to the working class. Money, made scarce to labour, reinforces lower costs of labour reproduction to maintain the capital's profit margin. The freedom of free labour in pursuit of scarce money wages turns labour into capital when workers compete against each other. However, unlike the lesser waste components, like pesticides in apples, the bomb's iconicity is literally its stature as a weapon. In the pantheon of commodity gods, the bomb ranks highest with *Anu* or the sky god of Akkad. It is an object of war, or the process that mediates the deepest crisis of capital.

Social being is sub-articulated with the imperialist class in the stage of imperialism. Classes are the relevant historical categories, and social being is best conceived of as sub-division of class. In imperialism, the concentration of capital expresses itself in imperialist war. The product of social labour is a globally integrated input-output process. Factually, the concept social labour translates into the extirpation of the private labourer. On account of globally interrelated conditions of production, the substance of value, signified by the wage share and destined to reproduce the working class, is the share of the global working classes. The shares are based on a capital-imposed system of distribution. National and identity-wise significations built up by capital are the basis for merit or demerit. Some deserve more and some not on the basis of nationality, skill, gender, employed, unemployed, colour, etc. Capital allots a share of the total wage share to each these groups in ways that reinforce sectarianism. Labour stands in opposition. However, splintering the working class, regulating the labour process, is an uncompromisable issue to capital. The labour process is capital's reason d'être; otherwise capital becomes only the fiction it truly is. The shares of wages are doled out as scarce rents that further difference working people. Marx (1875) already critiqued the Programme of the German Workers' Party for its emphasis on the distribution of income rather than equalising the conditions of production under capitalism. Wages, the exchange of labour power for a moneyed form of value, belong to the sphere of circulation. Such sphere falls under the purview of financial capital and the state.

Distribution is the political-economic root and function of the state. It is the genus of its evolution. Capital, through the state, specifies the class order. Through it as well, it redesigns the social terrain of production and ownership relations. Concerning production relations, the state predetermines the layout for the social division of labour and the role of each stratum in social reproduction. Because it serves as the dispenser of the wage share to each class, it also defines the concrete living conditions of working folk (Lenin 1917).

The neoclassical framework is silent on the mediating role of the state in the distribution of income. Its second welfare theorem, adjusting incomes through subsidies or taxes to redistribute to the poor, is fundamentally a price distortion that thwarts capital formation. Nothing new here: in neoclassical economics prices are given and any tinkering with market prices leads to less-than-optimal welfare. The obvious drawback is the market price itself, which is not given and which could not be anything else but the product of a power platform. Conventional economics ignores the role of revolutionary consciousness as subject not because it is unaware of how knowledge is formed through practice, but because it does not want to draw the slightest attention to the presence of social alternatives. It posits trickle down and productivity leading wage growth without historical forces. It discards capital as a historical force in a social environment in which the inclinations of capital are held as popular beliefs. Its evaluation of the wage is the wage of each equivalated to the marginal revenue product of labour. The wage bill is the sum of these individual productivities, or individual wages add up to the wage bill. Obviously, it adds different and un-additive qualities in productivities. By the rules of the capital controversy, capital is inherently heterogeneous as well as of varying age across the economy, while wages go up and down, the value of equipment will go up or down depending on the labour cost of the equipment (Robinson 1953; Weeks 2014). Labour produces the machine whose price correlates with the cost-price of labour. As such, the substitutability of capital for labour becomes null and void. In a roundabout way, the point reasserts classical political economy that things are a product of *history* or that concrete labour is the substance objectified in the commodity.

Neoclassical economics theorises that price is a measure of productivity. It may do so because both price and productivity are its concocted constructs. However, the money form's basic function is to distort the value contribution of labour. Moreover, all movements in shares of incomes are driven by rents. The money form given in the price is an epiphenomenon of market power balances, which had created the conditions for scarcity to mark up prices. Price-making processes, including the notion of what is productive or unproductive, are reformulated time and again by the organised dimension of capital to re-ensure capital. It is not much theory to sum what is un-summable, the different qualities of productivity. It is also unrealistic to tautologically explain the

productivity that capital has designated by the price that capital has assigned. Capital as history had already laid the grounds for its symbols to remake itself.

Wealth grows by the development of the productive forces. The accumulated dead and living labour are the substantive content of the productive forces. These comprise the instruments, know-how and modes of organisation of production, in addition to the social class subject, which is the universal legacy of human culture. The know-how of production is the past store of social labour realised in minimum socially necessary labour time for a social wage. The price at which a commodity must sell to meet average profits, the production price, lays down the threshold for what is the minimum labour to be employed to stay afloat (Marx 1867). This price is set by inter-capitalist competition. The less competition (more oligopoly) there is, the more control of production prices capital will have. The share of wages, however, is determined by the power of labour in the state, its position in the labour process, and its hold on production. Altogether consequences of class power. The wage of each stratum within a class formation is representation of its power share within the global wage pool. In macro-accounting terms, Kalecki (1943) has shown that it is the product market and not the labour market which is responsible for wages. The real wage – wages over prices – is not determined by productivity, but rather by the degree of capital's monopoly power and resource leakage through the external account. In other words, capital's hegemony/clout and its usurpation of the surplus, typically by imperialism, are wage setters. Capital's macro policy pressures the wage share down through austerity. Also, excess credit/state indebtedness pushes up the general price level, such that real wages fall. Competition assigning minimum labour must be accompanied by state policies that compress the wage share of labour.

The masses of the developing countries, especially, the bombarded ones, receive low wage shares not on account of their productivity but rather because the masses are not well armed to confront imperialism. The unshakable maxim is: in popular sovereignty there is development. The higher wages of the North are not high on account of productivity or some moral component trailing from the past. For Marx (1844), humanity is outside of political economy; inhumanity is in it. Capital has never shown a moral obligation towards anyone. These high wages are the dividends of imperialist adjuncts. They are the premia derived from the historical surplus value, the accumulated material substance of wealth and its corresponding culture, which favour a section of the working class for its organicity with imperialism.

The global wage share rises with internationalist solidarity. The substance of value, the reified socially necessary labour time, is what all of society invests in a commodity. It is similar to humanity's natural patrimony, as in it does not

belong to a sect. The global wage share also belongs to the global working class. Capital's mainstay is to pay a certain section of working people high or low wages, so long as these are believed to be deserved entitlements by received theory. These differential privileges reduce the overall share of labour from the global social product. The mainstream hides from view the reality that society produces to reproduce and that all of global society earns.

The wars of the imperialist class, its austerity and assault on the environment, disproportionately immiserate and reduce the numbers of working people in the Third World. The relative population decline contrasts with a secularly rising demographic trend. Although, the rates of fertility change with modernisation or as the accumulation of capital re-writes the cultural norms of human reproduction, imperialistically imposed de-development compels de-modernisation and unemployment such that the dis-engaged rural population never internalises the low fecundity of modern industrial society (Macura *et al* 2000). Healthiness and longevity schisms mirror the capital-enforced class divide. Capital is innately enciphered with the class cleavage and the social nature of production since these are foundational to its being real. Its reification, and the way it relegates historical causation to things, tallies with its objective to secure the rule of capital. Its science never lays blame upon the capital relation. Exposing value relations and new forms of capital, especially the waste, is the de-reification that meets scientific enquiry. The exposure of the class responsible for the waste is the counter-ideological offensive whose moment of critique is the truth within a torrent of falsehood.

## 6        The Persistence of Waste

Of the totality that is the waste, militarism is the germane layer of capital's system – without it, capital ceases to be. US-led empire floods the world with its dollars, imposes its dollar as the surrogate but leading currency for all imperialised nations, issues bonds to underwrite, absorb and redeploy the monopolyaccumulated moneyed surpluses. The bonds, private and public, expand the assets of the financial sector and its capacity to lend and further expand the money supply. The private sector free rides on the war-economy tech-innovation, or as the state invests in the military and leaves more of social spending, health care or education to the private sector (Baran and Sweezy 1966; Magdoff 1969). At a foundational level, militarism is key to the resilience of capital because it mobilises labour power and engages the demobilised labour in the industry of death. Inferred from social productivity, every living human is a productive labourer. The work she performs, even the act of dying

under a bomb or as a result of austerity registers for a price. Militarism lowers longevity, the rate of population growth, and strips the working class of its autonomy by undermining its potential or actual forms of social organisation. Militarism is a domain of accumulation that lowers the overall share of the working class from the total social product.

In terms of future value, US corporations may account for more than half of the globe's business sector (FT 2021).<sup>2</sup> That inflated worth, the electronic dollars promised against to-be-acquired future assets, is sub-guaranteed by US power and prospective aggressions. At any rate, the transmutation of many of the world's mega firms into dollarized institutions sheds their national differences. US hegemony over the world's business sector through the dominance of US-finance, open trade and capital accounts, and the storage of wealth in the dollar homogenises the rents of differing capital classes. Although capital turns its competition into inter-capitalist conflicts, such occurs only if the competing formation is nationalist-capitalist. The US could impose a re-evaluation of the Yen upon a surrendered Japan in the Plaza Accords (1985), and not war with it; however, it could not do so with Russia.

The US-financialised class formations differ from nationally based formations, whose social product is home grown and denominated in the home currency. The former has its wealth stored in the dollar, while the latter's capital account is regulated and national money circulates as home. In contrast to financialised and homogenous capital, labour auto-differentiates by some identity, which is a condition derived from capital's ideological dominance. Weakening capital boomerangs into weaker identity divides. Workers' weakness positions class above identity. Capital then appears internationalist before capitalists and, as nationalist-chauvinist before labour. The two poles of

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<sup>2</sup> These corporations are sub-categories of the imperialist state institution. Just like the wealth of the US grows by future indebtedness, so does the putative worth of these corporations. The dynamic of US wealth expansion depends on the acknowledgment of its power to command future resources. Unlike any other empire, its wealth is mostly its indebtedness. To shrink its wealth, the power of the US must shrink alongside the consensus that substantiates its power. The decline in dollar transactions lessens the demand for dollars and therewith the credit/debit that the US issues to reconstitute its wealth (every credit is debit). However, there remains the issue of the dollar acting as the world savings medium and the depth of the US's financial market, specifically, its ability to convert assets into more liquid assets (debt tradability and futurity). The depth of its financial market is the depth of the consensus it generates by the use of force and geostrategic control. Still, surpluses must be saved, and these are best saved in a risk-free medium, which is the dollar and to which there is no practical alternative at the time of writing. Theoretically, an alternative universal bond may be devised, practically however, it is the development in the balance of power that sketches the shape of a different bond market. To borrow and at the same time become wealthy is an unprecedented occurrence, which only the US empire commands.

the first contradiction of capital, the labour capital contradiction, become the homogenised and dollarized capital, on one end, and the fragmented global labour, on the other.

In the age of imperialism, this first contradiction actualises in a North-South divide. War, the epitomal practice of militarism, functions as both a predicate of the capitalist wage system and a self-contained wage system. War pressures Third World wages down by commandeering third world states—states are forms of social organisation that either abort or potentially express the will of the masses—and it also employs workers for wages. The concept masses as used here are peoples armed with revolutionary consciousness. The modern forms of imperialist wars are realised on the political economic stage as massive forms of enslavement. Slavery is a category of the working class whose social cost of reproduction pushes below the necessary minimum. This class was optimal for capital when militarism effects demand by means waste. While colonialism massacred the natives and replaced them with slaves then, capital at this juncture consumes the wage slaves in shortened intervals.

The crushing power of capital is its bequeathed historical surplus value. Within capital-commandeered class relations, doing anything for profits at any expense, is capital's reason on display. It mobilises all sorts of agencies whose beliefs are summarised in the catchphrase 'the system is great.' The perception of power varies by class angle. For the generic Northern academic, there is a Cartesian duality in the structure of power, it has a soft and a hard side. Analytics separate real aspects of phenomena in the mind to recompose them as a synthesis or false reality also in the mind. In the words of Nkrumah (1964), 'the concept of an object cannot be properly formulated in idealism. Having once dismantled the world, idealists are unable to put it together again ... It is as if one could not have soup anymore, but only its ingredients.' Soft and hard powers are however real forms of power in which the soft power prepares the grounds for hard power to materialise as waste. The resultant processes swing between less and more extreme violence. The rule remains that depending on the positioning of capital's power at the heart of the class struggle, repression is inversely correlated with regime stability.

There is rarely an investigation of the interpenetrative structure of capital-class power whose gravitational field inclines toward imperialist genocide. For instance, a child in Gaza who has experienced Israeli bombardment has a firm comprehension of power, not only because of its imagined horrors, but also because she witnesses the instantiations of the deliberations of capitalists in the act of bombing. She sees a unity between thought as subject and the act of violence as object actualised in practice. Her reflection of material conditions automatically identifies the subject with its activity – Zionists are what they do. Rather than a dualistic or monadistic tradition in which things are reducible to

one reason or another, or are united in one ultimate source, her experience is the discovery of the practical-critical, which the basis of revolutionary activity (Marx 1845). In her contemplation and fear of the next attack, she will know the futility of attempting to predict the precise time of the next attack. She will however know with certainty that so long as capital is exemplified in Zionism, the subject that spearheads imperialist activity, the next wave of bombardment is just around the corner. Her identifying the sociological type of the enemy, the class practiced in bombardment as the self-actualisation of its reason, is precursor to method. The unity of subject and object in thought, to conceive of a bomber-state dropping a bomb with a single concept, a concept that shifts with the activity of the subject (the bombing state), re-conforms method to the requirement of practice, as opposed to the practice of method (Vigotsky 1929). Although such practical-critical activity rendered in thought is the womb of revolutionary consciousness, capital's co-optation of Marxism has turned the masses' mistrust of capital into self-blame, or worst yet, into blame upon individuals rather than upon the system. Capital's feat is to conquer social science, in particular, to drill into mass consciousness the personalisation of history. Reducing the power of history to the person is social democracy's key mechanism in the transition to higher forms of capital, its evolution into fascism.

So far, the imperialist system has proven resilient. In systems parlance, its feedback loops, its feelers for balancing ideological with physical assault to subdue the working class, had served it well. Foremost, its organised dimension, its forms of social organisation, subsumes the working class and the means by which its ideology builds; it now could store the memories of the working class on its servers and manipulate the information to re-emphasise only the point that breeds working class defeatism. The systemic distortion of modes of thought with an accent on the elimination of history in the historical method lubricate the wheels of militarism.

Central capital's oscillation between the concessions of social democracy and fascism responds to the strength of anti-systemic labour. Whereas crises of overproduction conjoined with income inequality must raise central consumption to redress profitability, militaristic consumption acted out in imperialist wars has instead become the optimal countercyclical measure. Militarism grew alongside the crisis of capital, not as a tributary, but as seedbed and key sphere of production. And just as other spheres of capital, militarism culturally reproduces by reproducing the subject who consumes and engages in the production of waste. Figuratively, Coca-Cola has its sugar-kick loving subject-object/producer-consumer just as much as the bomb has its bomb-loving subject-object/producer-consumer. The war's cultural stock, the spread of democracy by drones, re-energises militarism and its imperialist practice.

Defined at a more general level, imperialism is the state of becoming of the global law of value in violent forms. From such a definition, a sociological understanding of imperialism does not preclude the use of structural concepts such as core/periphery or East/West nor limit them to geography. These are structural as well as ideological descriptors, which specify the broad outlines of class struggle. Davis (1960b), a pioneering theorist of core/periphery applied the dyad to the study of the relation of the native Indians to the white Canadian settlers. His metropolis and hinterland are cast as the structures of capital versus working class. Similarly, the use of core/periphery or North/South as structural cleavages echo the class rifts between imperialism and national liberation movements.

The overwhelming repression reigning upon the surviving Canadian Indian population in the 1960s remains to date a continuity of expropriation by annihilation. Indian morbidity, their principal cause of death, and a life expectancy that is way below the white folk are continuations of the Canadian white settler mode of extermination (CPC 2017).<sup>3</sup> As a paragon of structurally racist formations, Canada's hate culture is of the standard Western norm in which everyone is equal before the law, but many are highly unequal socially.

## 7      Lenin's Imperialism

Lenin refers to imperialism as parasitic or decaying capitalism, in which oligarchies strive 'for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations' (Lenin 1916). It is nation exploiting nation of which, as I have emphasised in Kadri (2017a and 2017b), the principal forms of exploitation are commercial exploitation enacted in wars of encroachment and, only subordinately super-exploitation, which earmark imperialism.

Profits emerge from the repressive activity boosting the rate of exploitation. Imperialist war visited upon the developing world masses is a resolution of capital's first contradiction. Alongside it, inter-imperialist competition, or the second contradiction of capital, promotes more exploitation to meet

<sup>3</sup> It is no surprise that the politics of Canadian liberalism, just as its earlier genocidal practice, devastated the small percentage of natives remaining alive. The data from the mid-eighties show that in most socio-economic indicators, the native population fares so badly when compared to the white cohort. More recent indictments of genocidal policies appear in the following, Communist Party of Canada (2017), Canada 150: Whitewashing the genocidal history of colonialism <http://peoplesvoice.ca/2017/06/16/canada-150-whitewashing-the-genocidal-history-of-canadian-colonialism/>

minimum socially necessary labour time. Together these two relations-contradictions combine to deliver optimal accumulation conditions.

Monopoly-finance imperialism is not a repetition of primitive accumulation in the colonies. Forms of primitive accumulation, the enforced transformation of the private labourer by 'fire and steel' into the social labourer has never stopped. It assumes varying modes across history. Primitive accumulation is 'when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled as free and unattached proletarians on the labourmarket. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods' (Marx 1867). The extrication of communities in the English countryside from their commons was the primitive accumulation of England. However, primitive accumulation was widely practiced in the colonies. Colonial Genocides extricate the communities of the South from their lives. This is a different level of primitive accumulation.

Horne's (2017) account of how the rise of the commercial class in Europe unleashed massive slavery and American Indian and other genocides, corresponds with Marx's position.

Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance ... Without slavery, North America, the most progressive of countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy – the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations. (Marx 1847)

Marx established that modern capitalism has been built on the backs of enslaved labour. Slavery is the form of capital that has hitched the colonies to value making processes. At a rudimentary level, for social production relations to transmute into value relations, labour power must enter the market for exchange. Social life comes to depend on the sale of its alienated and objectified labour. Commercial exploitation alienates the labour of slaves from slaves. It consumes the lives of social labour in shorter times – recalling, it either murders the native and installs the African slave, or reduces the longevity of the modern wage slave. Patently, capital must get the most out of the slave while under imperialism it intensifies the business of shortening life.

From a waste accumulation angle, the consumption of Africans in slavery and American Indians in genocidal war are stages of production and industries in their own rights. They are measures for crises resolution under capitalism or the practice that resolves capital's contradictions.

History is a transformative process. From feudal forms of slavery, into chattel slavery, up until the enslavement of nations by imperialist encroachment, the name slavery persists but its content and function change. The financial class is heir to the commercial class. Modern commercial exploitation is recognisable in wasted social nature and forms of structural genocide. Then as now, commercial exploitation revs up the rate of profit. So pervasive were the gains from chattel slavery according to Horne (2017), such that John Locke stipulated that 'every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves, of what opinion or religion so ever (Quoted from Horne 2017). Although Locke regarded '[s]lavery as vile and miserable and so directly opposite to the generous temper and courage of our nation' [Two Treatises of Government], he also argued for it via a liberal route. According to Lenchman (1995), Locke attempted to legitimise slavery by portraying it as a form of punishment for crimes committed where no central political authority or justice system exists. If a victim of an assault is entitled to take his attacker's life in self-defence, Locke reasoned, he must also be entitled to take his attacker's liberty. In other words, since the barbarian who lives in tyrannical surrounding may assault a white man, it is justifiable for the white man to enslave the barbarian in order to save his own life and civilisation. Peoples unlike the liberal West, whether persons or states, must be enslaved; however, the real reason remains slavery reproduces the white man. Losurdo (2005) sardonically commented that the reason for Locke's justification of slavery in the colonies is that he [Locke] was a shareholder of the Royal African Company, whose initials were imprinted on the bodies of many black slaves. Aside from the analogy with Kafka's penal colony, supporting slavery is a class position, which must grow over time since accumulation itself is primarily the power of the capital class exercised over labour.

Fast forward to the current times of white dominion: one could only flip through the daily papers to notice that the West may be preparing to enslave another weaker nation because its dictator is a non-liberal barbarian. Since chattel slavery, few persons own in wealth as much as half of the world population. The system has augmented its dependence on slave conditions rather than on free-wage labour. Furthermore, to entrench their gains, slave owners had to hold absolute power of life and death over their slaves then as they do now when they condemn nations to sanctions and war.

Veneered by humanitarian cant, the novel form of primitive accumulation in the imperialist stage, or the expropriation of the masses of the South, actualises in a combination of climate-induced evictions, austerity and imperialist

wars. Capitalism in its imperialist guise hegemonically articulates peripheral modes of production. Since there is only one capitalism – the historical stage, defined by the capital relation, there will only a capitalist mode of production whose forms and functions vary from place to place. There would not be a non-capitalist mode of production trailing from the past, which remains active in the present. Such would only be a historically irrelevant vestige. Old traditions linger, including ways of subsistence agriculture, but these all the same are under the thumb of the imperialist class. Insofar as its form and function, a mode of production is the state of becoming of the productive forces and production relations. The process of such mode is dictated by the more powerful subject, which is central capital or imperialism.<sup>4</sup> For instance, it is not the culture or old machinery of Mozambique, which characterises it as precapitalist, it the power of the US navy ship that could eradicate that nation with a single salvo. The labour and other resources of subjugated modes of production may be maintained in suspended animation until capital deploys them or destroys them. Capital classifies by class power and sociological type within the hierarchical social structure. The category of non-capital within the pyramid of capitalist relation is a non-functional trace.

The sausage-minded may still posit that there is a good capitalism in the centre and a barbarian one in the surroundings, however, the capital relation is not a sliceable salami sausage. Capital is indivisible. The burqas, the Taliban, and a life expectancy of around 50 years in Afghanistan are symptoms of the industries of imperialism into which the financialised US-led class invested a few trillions of dollars. To jolt memories, the war costs are not costs to capital, they are investments to waste and cap the potential of the Afghan masses for years to come. As opposed to the Northern welfare state whose aesthetic

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<sup>4</sup> Financialisation may obscure forms of property and ownership. Duménil and Levy (2018) speak of a new managerial class, as opposed to salient proprietors, and a new mode of production. With CEOs buying back their company stocks to boost their earnings, and the creation of bubbles, fictitious capital picks up speed accentuating parasitism. However, a social class cannot be reduced to administrative skill and the stake that administrators hold in capital. A CEO does not behave differently only because French workers seek higher pay, he behaves by the historical feedback loops originating from French aggression in Africa. Social class is the state of social being, its ideology and the social relation exercised by the class to self-reproduce. Management skills are the tools of the impersonal financial class. To gauge changes in class by changing persons and their skills and presume the novelty is some variant of the capitalist mode of production is possible, but as a rule admitting all sorts of observations means that many modes of production are also possible. However, a capitalist mode of production must rest on its law of movement, the law of value. Only fundamental changes in the law, like having to raise longevity in the developing world, may imply changes in the mode of production.

appearance is the blood of the South; that is, the highest capital relation is defined by its most genocidal facet, which emanates from the North.

Articulating the South by belligerence, or its transformation by bombardment ingraining ideological defeat, rips away the property of a whole nation, accroaches the resources of the masses, and turns their national character into a socialised global asset readied for production or waste. In a context in which the waste commodity leads, the capitalist mode of production loses for society not only what it gains for the individual capitalist (Marx 1894), society sells what labour produces, as well as the lives of labourers economised and eliminated before their due time. The working class is cornered into a socially subject-less asset, a *materiel* of capital, readied to be engaged or dispensed of as a waste product in capitalist production.

The actualisation of modern accumulation appears as primitive accumulation writ large. Aside from war itself epitomising waste production, for the scattered resources to be mobilised into slave-like conditions, a whole culture of submission must take hold. A culture of 'house Marxists' becomes the pervasive tradition imposed by the synergy between the power of the imperialist gun and the fetish of commodity – like the house slaves of Malcolm X. The old whip of the slave driver fades and submission inbuilds into social consciousness by the rate of alienation whose actual condition is the expropriation of the masses. The rate of alienation has always been the degree to which the worker's labour-power is not her own. However, under the onus of waste industries, it is the life of man, which is a product reared by society that is alienated to be sold.

It may be alternatively possible to argue that dead social nature sells because the same nineteenth century Marxian position that argued abstract labour as the universal, which arises upon an advanced price system, now has an even more complex and integrated price system of futures and virtual markets. Marx (1859) demonstrated that with the advanced US price system, 'which can practically reduce the value of all forms and quantities of labour uniformly to sums of money, so that any kind of labour becomes an interchangeable, tradeable good or input with a known price tag – and is also practically treated as such;' at this juncture, the world is dollarized, while labour power trades against commodities worldwide. Any commodified social activity trades in versatile time on an exchange platform and ledgers against a price. However, there is more to this than meets the eye. It is not only the price of the sold product that registers in exchange, it is the many unrecorded prices of the social activity supporting the production of that product as well. Hedging and futures markets are cases in point. Any price is an amalgam of other time-transcendent prices that are imputed within it. Unpaid for or, even the negative prices (a debit price that undermines life), of wasted lives and nature have for long reconstituted

grounds for profits. Irrespective of how complex the apparent price system, waste has sold for a price since the onset of capitalism. In short, every social activity that predicates the coming into existence of a product sells at some point in time and is, therefore, attendant upon a value relation.

Although slavery under capitalism is ownership of the person, the purpose of ownership remains the exclusion of the working class from the right to control its stock of labour power. The auto-defeatism of a working class internalising the ideology of capital backed by a US military base is an optimal form of control, and also ownership. Private property, in its de-jure or de-facto state, is the state of being of capital. Property expands from the ownership of a person into the ownership of a nation, including, its modes of demographic and cultural production. Under imperialism, the labour of the nation becomes slave labour. Since labour power is physically undetachable from the masses, no matter the statutory rights of workers within the enslaved-nation, labour will be disposed of in waste production and in shorter lifecycles. By the demands of minimum socially necessary labour time, capital employs the concrete work of a labourer in a time span sketched out by the requisites of its re-empowerment. Just as water and air are commodified, the displacement of living labour into the reserve army of labour, or conversely, the preponderance of idle labour or labour whose contribution to the surplus product is waged indirectly and assumes a low or negative share from the social product, compels its commodification. Once commodified in a world where everything has a price, labour is wasted for a price. The rate at which waste turns over reboots the rate of exploitation. Capital accumulates by quickening the frequency of waste. The lump of un-sovereign workers, and everyone is a worker in social reproduction, the humans turned into objects, like water and air, call upon capital to industrially waste them. Their defencelessness expands the substance of value as well as deepen the value relation.

Capital draws the most out of labour, ejects it, and constructs an industry to eliminate it. The labour of the modern wage-slave is productive through early death because it is waste-productive. In war, as per our hypothesis, living labour produces dead labourers who are forcibly engaged in the work of self-defence. The dead are dead labour, a form of war raw material and product that contributes to value. The waste industry expands to cover much of social activity. The rationale of capital, its cache of ideology circumscribing policy, preconfigures the allocation of labour vis-à-vis its wastage in relation to the rising numbers of the reserve army of labour. Since the latter rises upon a secular trend on account of development in the productive forces, so does the waste.

The twofold nature of intense commercial exploitation is such that the slave-nation hands its output to the imperialist as well the lives of its working-class members to be cut short as products of capital. The shorter life here is not contrasted with an unrealisable longevity level. It is not to say that people must

live to some future and longer life expectancy, people could live longer relative to the longevity already experienced by the central working classes. Adjacently, as capital expands by the production of waste, waste becomes the new form of capital. The waste relation reproduces capital. Whereas in the nineteenth century, the 'money's fetish form reigned as the sovereign of the commodity world, possessing the exclusive social power to establish the value hierarchy of all persons and objects relativised in regard to it (Mészáros 1970), in this century, the ranking of the fetishes of the commodity world has changed. The money form equivilating nineteenth century 'sane' commodities no longer sits atop the decision-making ladder of capital. As imperialism reins in the working classes, production does not only reach a limit that forces it to shift into increasing dead labour, including the death of labourers, it automatically unfolds on its essence: its principal contradiction or the ransacking of anything social for private ends. Thence, the two facets of fetishism present themselves as novel ideals. First, the fabricated glitter of the commodity works in reverse, such that waste becomes of use value. Secondly but more importantly, the reification that places causality in things becomes ideology armed to ensure the earlier than historically-determined expiration of man.

The wasted social nature develops into the collectively celebrated death instinct, which governs social reproduction, or rather, de-reproduction. For the value *qua* waste to self-expand, its moneyed fetish further reallocates resources into waste commodity production. In structural terms reflecting the content of waste, the North has no other alternative but to war or waste in order to accumulate. Accordingly, excessive social entropy mimics the manifest destiny of the US, however, here genocide is dictated by the money-form fetish in symbiosis with the waste commodity.

The waste-related rate of exploitation, the war industry and its related austerity snuffing the life of society in shorter intervals, supports high rates of return for capital. Imperialist-effected commercial exploitation, the exploitation of non-autonomous nations, implemented through colonial slaughter and imperialist wars, raise the practice of primitive accumulation to a higher level. In its material form, wasted social nature and the displaced costs of production, which undercut social reproduction, become the substantive content of value. A labour absorbed in waste, the powerless subject in value, is also a form of capital. In the unity of substance-subject, the more concentrated, centralised, and financialised capital becomes, the higher the frequency of exchange becomes, and the more time must conquer space. Thence, the more developing-country resources must be cheapened or wasted. The sources of profits come to rely upon the very act of liquidating human life rather than what the expenditure of the muscle and intellect of that human life produces in sane-end use commodities. In such macabre state, the wasted life itself is

on sale and the source of profit. The abolition of the working class subject, the gradual erasure of its symbols, memoires and forms of social organisation, which had through its powerlessness within the superstructure contributed little to the law of transformation of surplus value into profits, comes full circle in labour's auto-destruction.

Deductively and in reference to the current geopolitical situation, the defeat of Russia and China will expose the masses of the developing world to further repression. With the powerful capital of the centre articulated with subordinate capitals, the old practice of primitive accumulation, 'the imposition of capitalist relations by blood and fire', persists to one degree or another, as it must since the crisis of capital also persists. Commercial exploitation rises to a degree of exploitation that involves the literal consumption of working classes, which have been turned into self-consuming slaves without a modicum of negotiating power. In English primitive accumulation, the expelled labourer enters a work contract as a wage-slave to be industrially exploited. In the colonies, the commercial exploitation spun around the dynamic of primitive accumulation, even that superficiality of free capital-labour contracts is annulled. There might be marginal circumstances in the periphery where wage-slave contractual enclaves exist, but these all the same are entwined with the central classes that serve as aide-de-camps of capital.

## 8 Misinterpreted Imperialism

Lenin's imperialism, with its capital concentration and centralisation, monopoly finance and export of capital, and the division of territory, is dialectically a totality, which resolves by the medium of encroachment wars (Lenin 1916). Lenin's imperialism is a complex whole prompted by financial capital. The whole is a world in which the colonies occupy central stage insofar as revolutionary potential is concerned. As implied by Ho Chi Minh (1924), the point of theorising imperialism, with its unequal exchange and the global law of value, was since Lenin a debate with patronising Western Marxism that the developing world is just as 'human' as the North.

Of these constituent relations, the export of capital is peculiarly misinterpreted. The centre's export of capital, Official Development Assistance (ODA), or any other form of capital flows and aid, these are investments that deepen the waste cycle. Considered over longer ranges of time, what capital exports from the centre to the periphery, including the costs of military campaigns, are investments construed as costs. What momentarily appears as debit on

the imperialist balance sheet, will over the social turnover cycle reappear as high returns. Although the rich will reap what they spend by the *Widow's Curse* when selling cars and chewing gum, they will earn more than what they spend, when they peddle waste, militarism, and the eradication of social nature. Central-capital exports either to sustain super-exploitation, and the conditions for civil strife, re-ignite militarism. In realising capital's objective, every imperialist act targets surplus drain. In conjoint production, the military campaigns that entail the migration of paid NATO soldiers-mercenaries to the South is what dislocates the cheaply remunerated labour, which emigrates to the North.

Apart from engaging in resource extraction, capital exported from the centre to the South has two historically set objectives: first, the liquidation of developing country assets, and secondly, the disempowerment of the masses such that the imperialists control the power platforms that set the macro prices. Policies of openness in unsovereign, newly industrialising economies shift national resources into safer dollar markets. The flight of resources thrusts the weak nation into some form of inter-communal strife historically orchestrated by the real and ideological means of imperialism. Imperialist war is the principal lever that imposes the conditions of surrender upon the masses. It generates capital on its own and promotes the concentration of capital. The interrelatedness of war with imperialist economic policies makes of war the leading link around which all economic activities coalesce. Although a final realisation stage for any commodity in continuous time is class pinned down, a war commodity may be the only commodity that comes nearest to opening and closing an economic cycle with a higher degree of accounting accuracy.

Then there is the disconnect between finance and industry. Moneyed capital and the rentier disparage the tumult of real production. Under imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, the separation reaches 'vast proportions' (Lenin 1916). Finance also disparages war as a sphere of production – the industry of war requires the making of machines and the training of men, however, the growth of finance rests upon the expansion of war. Crucially, 'the supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means that a small number of financially powerful states stand out among all the rest. The extent to which this process is going on may be judged from the statistics on emissions, i.e., the issue of all kinds of securities' (Lenin 1916). A century later, the speed of US debt emission re-sketches imperialism's pent-up demand for war.

The US market floods the global market with its financial instruments. With a burgeoning culture of financial parasitism, it rears an imperialist class whose inclination to war pushes against the walls of the nuclear deterrent. Despite its

waste-explosive path, there is some reasonableness to be gleaned from such waste-history. History lends itself to decipherability from an understanding of its laws. The sturdier becomes capital's rule, the more it will curtail demand-side policies, specifically policies which may beleaguer capital's inner drive for shifting costs onto society. The anarchic side of capital, its desire to profit by demolishing socially responsible-demand, grows with the power of capital. Additionally, the organised dimensions of capital, its state and related institutions, which balance the relation between the welfare of the North and imperialist belligerence in the South, play a lesser role. The defeatism of labour results in lower labour shares. Capital reaches its logical end. At the intersection of working-class fatalism with capital's demand for war, the unthinkable nuclear conflagration becomes possible, though not certain.

Such nuclear and environment related existential threats were not around during Marx's time. One cannot map Marx's critique of political economy against modern imperialism without re-periodisation. Marx's method however overrides the shortcoming of synchronicity (Lukacs 1919). In particular, his social accounting scheme, which assesses what it takes to cover the cost of labour's sustenance, prioritises a politically empowered proletariat before the economism of unions claiming to fight for higher wages. In a divided world, however, lower central costs of living rely on changes in the mode of production to which colonial aggression and commercial exploitation are conduits.

The order of changes occurring in an integrated global production system is not only gauged against the money magnitude of value usurped to the centre, which concludes in higher central standards of living. It is not only because Haiti and the Dominican Republic are drained into abjectness that Bananas are cheap in the North. Imperialism, un-sovereigns and suppresses any form of cultural identity, which preserves the memory and symbols of past class and national struggles. It especially aggresses anti-systemic thought that places subject over substance, class above identity, or politics over economics.

Lenin's analytical breakdown of imperialism in five characteristics is perspicuous. By the dissection of imperialist phenomena in thought, Lenin was accused of being unimaginative: 'and so there can be no thought of any essential enrichment of the Marxian dialectic on the part of Lenin. In the field of philosophy, to speak of a Leninist school is impossible' (Mattick 1935). What is impossible is the practice of the Russian revolution without a theoretical innovation that corresponds to the requisites of the time. As a matter of principle, a revolution that wrests power cannot be theory applied; it must be theory evolving with practice. The fault in Mattick's critique is dogmatism in thought, and his search for a philosophy, which is dogma in its timeframe (for Marx [1845] philosophy captions the class order) The search for philosophy, is simply a bourgeois proclivity, for philosophies are as diverse as the conditions in which

life is practiced and as still as the period upon which they reflect. Mattick's points are logic devoid of corporeal being/relation to experience. Outside an interface of ideas with material circumstances, logical ideas without structure move nothing. Logical forms cannot brandish weapons to overthrow a political system. Ideas must be transplanted in proletarian forms of consciousness and social organisation, whence Lenin's dialectic in theoretical practice guiding the practice of theory.

Furthermore, these Leninist analytic markers of imperialism are social time-defined moments whose transformative conduit is imperialist war. War eases 'the contradiction between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other' (Lenin 1916). The contradictions of accumulation resolved in war as dialectical *measure*, indicates Lenin's awareness of dialectical *immanence*. Contradictions do not disappear, and their resolution is historically contingent. In commenting on the *compendium* of Hegel's Science of logic, Lenin (1914) noted that 'Hegel brilliantly *divined* the dialectics of things, phenomena, the world, *nature* in the dialectics of concepts: The *totality of all* sides of the phenomenon, of reality and their (reciprocal) *relations*—that is what truth is composed of. The relations, transitions equal contradictions of notions equal the main content of logic, by which these concepts, including their relations, transitions, contradictions are shown as reflections of the objective world. The dialectics of *things* produces the dialectics of *ideas*, and not vice versa.' After noting this observation on the margin of Hegel's science of logic, Lenin commends him (Hegel) for envisioning that the interface of the dialectics of the real world as reflected in the dialectic of ideas, preceded Marx's position on how objective dialectics foredetermine subjective dialectics. Hegel was an objective idealist for whom self-contained reason as opposed to material circumstances held primacy. Nonetheless, Hegel was an Aristotelian student for whom the *art* ( $\tauέχνη$  or concrete activity) informed truth, but always in a subordinate position to the absoluteness of spirit classified in categorical subdivisions. Obviously, Lenin was aware that thought is informed by the practice of theory and that immanence does not spring from applying *a priori* forms, but rather the opposite, from reading into the dialectics of change related to the real history of the object.

Lenin's imperialism stretches capital from being the European 'war of each against all' to becoming the international 'war of each against all.' He rejected Kautsky's (1914) position that capitalists may unite in a phase of ultra-imperialism. Kautsky misrepresented capitalists as pre-capitalist merchants whose proceeds grow by their marketing skills, such that they might overcome their differences to maintain the status quo. In contrast to merchants, capitalists do not buy their product from a private worker who owns his tools.

They engage labour deprived of tools, a social labour, whose output increases with the rate of exploitation. Without command of the labour process, the regulation and socialisation of labour such that it relinquishes what it has produced, capital will revert to being itself, merely an illusion. The originality in Lenin's treatise is twofold: first, the war of imperialists against the colonies and/or ex-colonies to rev-up exploitation, and secondly, the necessity of inter-imperialist war over command of value transfer channels and shares of the surplus. As mentioned above, Lenin *displaces* the thrust of the first contradiction of capital, the labour-capital contradiction, onto a North-South chasm. The inter-imperialist war, the second contradiction of capital, takes its cue from that *displacement* – their antagonisms rise because they must raise the rate of exploitation to earn higher profit rates. Both contradictions unwind in wars and other forms of exploitation superimposed upon the ex/colonies. The second contradiction is not secondary because inter-capitalist conflicts raise militarism and waste, and with that the rate of surplus value.

In conformity with the Leninist proposition on the inevitability of inter-imperialist violence, Mészáros (2015) postulates that 'the formation of modern nations has been accomplished under the class leadership of the bourgeoisie ... in accord with the socioeconomic imperatives inherent in the self-expansionary drive of the multiplicity of capitals and their drive for greater territorial control, in ever-intensifying conflicts with one another, *which might culminate in the potential annihilation of humankind* in our own time' (my emphasis). In the absence of anti-systemic struggle, the thingified capitalists may just bow down to the will of the bomb as it self-expands. However, as a point of departure, the system of capital hegemonises the social kaleidoscope with its own cultural creations (Gramsci 1971). Moreover, with the thingification of capitalists, the identification of the capitalist with the commodity, and when different spheres of imperialist capital compete to deepen oppression and exploitation at source and over their shares of a waste-derived surplus, the chances of nuclear annihilation rise.

With global policies unchanging, the planet is on track for a slow-motion extinction. There is additionally, an endogenous political-economic argument in support of Mészáros' point. Imperialists disdain a competitor who is not sufficiently aggressive against peripheral classes. They contest an entity that receives in imperialist rents a share through financial channels higher than the average returns on its stock of capital – like the US. Meanwhile, profits must rise with the rate of exploitation whose partial feedback is the *ex-post* conditions that meet the price of production; a price over which capital does not have full control. To reassert its rule vis-à-vis the threats presented by nationalist or socialist developing states, and inter-relatedly other imperialist

competitors, all while submitting to the law value, capital engages with the waste currents that position the globe on a downward spiral.

The case for the doomsday scenario augured by Mészáros may also be put as follows. As oppression readies exploitation, the social measures adopted to redress the conditions for receding profits must worsen. Figuratively, the oppression here is not about whisking away the industrial worker of the North from shirking on the job or other moral hazard conditions. The oppression intensifies in the South where putting children to work in bombarded areas to cheaply feed the Northern industrial worker. One is reminded that apart from the intra-national class wars, inter-capitalist wars are also value-forming processes. All unjust wars are *suis generis* pure waste industries. The notion that armaments are more expensive to destroy than to produce (Kidron 1968), is redundant arithmetic because either way, war is the value process and the revenue of the financial class. The unrecognised condition in such stance is the product of the bomb, which is the wasted lives registering as value. Surplus value making is both a destruction and a creation of value process ongoing in social time. In its somewhat unrestrained forms, the forms of capital culminating in post Cold-War neoliberalism, which consolidate the waste in production, the law of value, or the law that systematises the self-expansion of value at any cost, may reach its logical end. In such an absurd state, capital irreproachably consumes the lives of labourers in war and austerity and lodges the product, the deaths of people, against some set of prices from which imperialist rents are derived. Imperialist wars as an application of the law of value consummate in the ultimate state of capital, the condition of waste. Reverting to the initial proposition, waste is already the predominant form of capital. Capital's logical end is a condition in which all that exists is reduced to waste. Mészáros' apocalyptic proposition may no longer be farfetched.

For Lenin, there is a breaking point at which diplomacy between imperialists recedes and inter-rich nations conflict flares. That threshold is socio-logical – in contradistinction to economicistic. In his version of imperialism, a financial-industrial class conditioned by the higher turnover rate of financial transactions may compete for profits, however, it places its primary concern onto the social regulations and measures that lay out the grounds for profits. The bigger European colonial powers in Africa, the UK and France, tolerated the smaller colonial powers, such as the Portuguese or Belgians, because these smaller partners carried out unspeakable atrocities at their behest, else the Belgians would have been booted out of the Congo (Emmanuel 1970). Leopold's brutalities typify the commercial exploitation. In that sense, the disparagement of industry by finance is more about a dissatisfaction with the slow rate of immiseration enacted upon labour by industrial capital. Finance requires more

industrial scale immiseration and coordinates real economic activity with the higher pace of its moneyed expansion. Financial transactions, exchange, and mergers and acquisitions do not create value, but their commanding position accentuates the creation of value by means of waste production and accomplish capital. Labour-process regimentation, regulation, in addition to the literal but combined consumption of labour and labour power to support production, these are the underlying conditions that finance prepares to create value.

## 9      Imperialism and Nature

In relation to the concept of surplus value, the flow of wealth is a transformation of surplus labour or the labour above that which is necessary in value terms for labour to subsist, into a capital or money form. The production-dynamic is a social relation, which is relayed by the subject to object *rapport de force* at the heart of the value relationship. In social production, agency is instantiated class rather than the reified productive forces. Technology does not animate itself, and the very existence of machines that produce presupposes the existence of the class subject. Theoretically, forms of social organisation whose structure is objective and impersonal preconfigure production such that profits arise from consuming the value of the cheapened labour inputs. Put in reference to waste accumulation, people in bondage to capital's frame of knowledge organise to produce by consuming other peoples; hence, people are subject and substance, respectively. The value outlays on labour, or necessary labour, principally fall by means of war, or less significantly by other coercion mechanisms that cheapen labour, as well as the natural resources owned by labour. With a declining clout of labour, the steadily rising rate at which capital metabolises man and nature in production transfers capital's long-term costs unto society and underwrites profits. While capital acts first to cement its rule – the primacy of politics, the 'economic', or the profit form of the surplus value symbolised in moneyed units is derivatively shaped by the horizon of that last moment. Accordingly, capitalists may compete for a higher moneyed share of profits, however, their organised dimension recognises that profits are rooted in a surplus value relation, which expands by the divided, emaciated, or the prematurely extinguished lives of the *Lazarus* classes (Marx 1867). The money form signification of value, its magnitude, varies by the law of the transformation of value into price. As a sub-division of the law of value, the transformation of value into price is a superstructure-mediated measure ensuring higher surplus labour, or conversely, lower necessary labour by the power capital and its fetishes exercise over market forces. The price to value ratio is a tendency in which the subject in the value relation, capital – to the degree

it commands power in the balance of class forces, including its technology as part of its historically amassed surplus value – establishes the groundworks such that the sum of prices it usurps as profits are based on the most value for the lowest cost. The principal form of power driving higher profit rates springs from imperialist aggression, or the purest waste, which demolishes labour as subject/owner of resources, peddles social nature as a waste product, and sets the power infrastructures of all commodity exchange.

Against the proposition that waste accumulation, the militarism and war economies, are value making processes creating value proper and conduits of value in the global market, war is posited as a sphere of production. It produces for profits, and it becomes an end in itself. As such, the war enterprise, as a sub-category of militarism, is broader than Mészáros' (1995) run of the mill wasteful production undertaken so long as its products can be profitably imposed on the market. The apples sprayed with toxins sell, but more importantly, the deaths in Africa and the Middle East sell as well. Militarism is a more wide-ranging concept than the accounting framework of the military-industrial complex, which is defined by Mészáros (1995) as that which 'appropriates and dissipates apparently limitless resources and over-produced capital funds.' Wasting human lives, potential and actual, is a domain of accumulation and a process of production in which depopulation is inherent in the motion of capital. The rationale for this proposition rests first upon the contradiction of use with exchange value, which predisposes the labourer to waste as a result of the violence exercised to expropriate him or because the death of labour sells, and secondly, competition replaces living labour with dead labour, leaving much of the reserve army of labour as the stock that lures commodification to be wasted. In both cases, the death of the labourer is both means and end.

Marx's characterisation of capital as a blood-soaked relation was not merely for metaphorical purposes. Crushing the East to launch Western capitalism was an industry and a repository to Western industry. With production relations turning capitalist, the sixteenth century waged labourers were soldiers assigned the task of decimating natives and/or their wages were part of the loot. The vanquishment of the East is the principal *historical subject* of early European cottage industry and later its industrial revolution. Theoretically, the justification for this point is to be found in a history governed by social relations as opposed to personified subjects. For Frank (1978), the roots of capitalist development lie in the development of a world 'mercantile capitalist system' resulting from the rise of a world 'commercial network.' Development of the world into a single mercantilist system was necessary to pave the way for 'surplus appropriation chain' which Frank (1978) identifies as the scaffolding of capitalist expansion.

At a more abstract level, the value relation is the genome of capital. Marx's discovery of labour power as the commodity whose exchange regulates the

reproduction of labour meant that for a small European market swamped with commodities, much superfluous labour in the South had to be eliminated. Too many people need to be fed and such necessary labour unnecessarily – for capital that is – rises. Crises of overproduction were inborn with capitalism prior to the classical (Malthusian) observation of the glut. Even bullion had been overproduced relative the stock of commodities and precipitated in inflation that lingered onto the seventeenth century. Colonial and other rents are concentrated in Northern markets. Relative to demand, competitive pressures flood Northern markets. Capital's dilemma is such it cannot redistribute to absorb excess inventory and it must reduce costs at source. The elimination of natives is an industry of waste led by cost reduction. Also, profits emerge as the costs of inputs from the colony fall by the expatriation of natives. Literally, the eliminated persons lower the costs to levels to below the cost of slavery. More to the point, the slaughter is a waged activity and, thusly, a value relation with its own attendant surplus value. The rents/wages of the slaughterers constitute a share of the colonial rents. The cultural expropriation of the colony re-energises the slaughter relationship shaping European development. To waste the aggressed people in the East first creates the employment opportunities for the soldiers of the West, and secondly, the objectification of the slaughtered is resurrected via its moneyed form as the dead labour of the West. Marx's (1867) metaphor of dead labour as 'the vampire that lives by sucking living labour' is the unspoken waste of capital.

Machines do not only displace people, their capital owner-and-subject eliminates the people that machines displace. Technological advance is not the product of a superior European race, which is in racist stance 'a garden in a barbaric milieu.' Yet, liberal Marxism never ceases to parrot that capitalism is progressive. The already established loss of species, the damage to man and nature so far, plus the forecasts that the planet is doomed, preclude any notion of progressive capital. Although the risk of nuclear conflagration computes into doomsday assessment, the already incurred social and ecological loss is sufficient proof of doomsday-ism. Under capital's rule, there will be less of sane nature to produce with in the future than the present. This rationing of commodified nature by the intoxication of resources making production costly reasserts the ongoing waste production as a value relation upon which profits, which spring from the sale of commodities marked up by future difficulties, will soar. Despite efforts such as Dorninger *et al* (2021) and Hornborg (2020) and many others to pin a price-cost on losses, the loss is immeasurable. The *post hoc* fallacy does not apply here. The waste is phenomenal, and all that preceded it, overdetermined it. The breadth of irreparable loss is social, with nature being a side show. More so, the dollar amount magnitude of the waste, cannot be rendered without presuming 'price as appearance' is the quotient of the class struggle, which in a

culture ensconced by capital implies that all estimates at this time are conservative. All one can say is the scale of the loss may be figuratively put as either being crushed by a 50- or 100-tonne train; little difference does it make.

In addition to the cost of natural depredation and the permanent loss of natural stock, the issue remains that capital devours the planet for the luxury of the few. It is not the physical limit of resource-use that may come to an end, it is rather the capital relationship, which reproduces man/social nature by the disproportional disposal of man and nature, which does not come to an end. The depletion of resources is constructed socially to foster scarcity, which acts as a repository for price differentials favouring the rich. Scarce commodities associated with constructed costly production become affordable by the rich and inaccessible to the poor. For example, the destruction of distributary waterpipes, the contamination of water, and the rise of plastic bottled water industries make safer water only available for those who could pay. Mind you the plasticisation and its carcinogenic spinoffs are a bonus for pharmaceutical and medical industries. Whether temporary or fabricated, scarcity underlain by waste marks up prices and boosts profits. No matter how difficult it becomes to mine for resources, such cannot convince capital to alter its trajectory.

Ecological imperialism biasedly sickens the masses of the South (Warlenius *et al.*, 2015, Hornborg & Martinez-Alier, 2016). ‘The richest one percent of the world’s population are responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the 3.1 billion people who made up the poorest half of humanity during a critical 25-year period of unprecedented emissions growth’ (oxfam 2020). Similarly to the use of nuclear weapons, and in their self-defence, peoples of the developing South could abuse nature to bring down the planet in an act of mutual destruction.

For the sake of argument let us posit that progress is relative to the *social* efficacy of resources available to a society in a specific historical phase; social in contrast to private efficacy based on the economism of capital’s price system. The sane social efficacy formula in any social system is as follows: despite the harm forced upon man and nature during production, the gains imparted upon society offset the harm. Such is not the case and that is why ‘progressive capitalism’ rings hollow. It resembles the hypothetical consumer surplus in neoclassical economics. People are happy with the price at which they bought their commodities because otherwise they could have been paying a much higher price. The difference between what they paid and what they could have paid is the neoclassical basis for the consumer surplus/welfare. In welfare terms, however, this surplus is nonsensical at least because it omits negative welfare, or the possibility that wretched people are not even in the game since they cannot afford to remain alive for long. Add these people to mainstream welfare calculation, and the absolute and relative welfare of global society sinks way below zero.

## 10 Imperialism and Dead Labour

The concepts of consumer surplus and progressive capitalism are rationalistic stopgaps that assuage the guilt of those who disproportionately benefit from the rent attendant upon imperialist exploitation. Historically, every socially inspired policy alternative, performed better than societies with uninhibited private capital at the helm. Socialised health and education demonstrate development. *Ex-post facto*, the social alternatives, judging by the formula of social efficacy defined above, delivered more benefits per unit of input, in social as well as economic dynamics, than private pursuits serving the select few. Keynesians, for instance, flaunt the superiority of the post-war golden age versus the leaden-age neoliberalism; still, they elide their imperialist wars and/or that efficient-demand policies were reforms that countered revolution. Keynesianism was capital's politics at work – paying parts of the working class to decimate another part. It later foregrounded the rise of neoliberalism and birthed the re-sprouting fascism in Europe.

Since capital struck its roots in colonialism, the cost of the anarchy that overproduces for minority-consumerism was realised in the lost opportunity to allocate resources to social ends, and in the losses to social nature. For that leisured minority, most working people can be curtained off by some anti working-class identity that is equal before the law but unequal socially (Lee-Boggs 2011; Balibar 1991). Examples of the outstanding labels for the others' inferiority are as follows. They do not deserve to share in the wealth because they are too primitive to use advanced machinery, or they are the 'others' by their national identity or colour, they can be poor because of constructed labels such as their culture, etc. All in all, the race of the chattel-slave is given a different brand name while keeping the same content insofar as accumulation is concerned. Identity differences are an automatically occurring cultural state entwined with social being; however, its political function is forcibly, or *de-jure* imposed and weaponised by capital against labour (Hobsbawm 1996).

Unlike humans, nature cannot be cordoned-off. Refugee boats can be sunk at high seas, but diseases cannot. In proportion with class position, the toxins in the environment implicate the physiological being appended to any social class. That nature self-avenges as it disgorges manmade adulterants is an expansion of an outstanding condition experienced by pre-capitalist formations.

Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different,

unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries ... Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly. (Engels 1876)

The blowback of nature in the Anthropocene is visible. To rearticulate the main assumption in order to discuss the thesis of waste from a different angle. With the advance of time, capital develops its essence, or law of value, into its appearance, the waste. The system is avowedly an overly entropic social-class system, which consumes social nature beyond a socially sane replacement level. It expands at a faster rate as it metabolises more units of man and nature per unit of output. For value-intrinsic reasons, output sells more by its waste content rather than non-waste products. All the same, these output units are the reified socially necessary labour time drawn from the stock of society's labour power to be waged, but only after the regulation of the labour-demographic process. Society, the store of labour power, deploys its labour in production subject to capital's minimum socially necessary labour time, or how capitalists meet average profits to remain afloat. How many people work without a wage, how many are employed for a wage, and how many capital weeds out to satisfy the perquisites for a minimum social cost of labour reproduction are questions related to the articulation of various working strata with the pyramidal structure of production. Capital incorporates relations of size and skill of the workforce, including its birth, fertility, and death rates in relation to its power standing within accumulation prior to determining its type of engagement. These demographic rates are historically predetermined moments as opposed to immediate policy variables. Their sluggish variations are co-defined by the rate of capital accumulation and the longer term policies of capital's institutions. The rate of capital accumulation is determined by the rate of abjection. The rate of capital accumulation is the surplus product transmuting into a form of capital to reproduce capital. The substance of which the surplus is constituted presupposes the subject or the social relation acting as subject.

For the classical political economists, higher wages, induce population growth, raise agricultural rents – people become more expensive to feed,

circuitously, population growth rates taper down. Ricardo (1817) shared that Malthusian position and shrewdly remarked that the rate of capital accumulation reconstitutes the grounds upon which the rate of demographic growth changes, albeit, with lengthy lags. Not much has changed with the neoclassicals, higher and stable income positively influences fertility until the negative price effect, or the cost of children, cancels the income effect (Becker 1975). Doubtless, to extend fewer resources on the reproduction of the labour force shortens longevity and weighs in on fecundity. Such mainstream observations from phenomena whose reason is psycho-behavioural make sense only under partial conditions and are chosen from a myriad of facts to exonerate capital. They basically posit that capital performs more efficiently for society with lower wages, while the contrivance of the trickle-down spills the efficiency gains over onto society as wellbeing gains.

Under capitalism, population growth varies with what the rate of capital accumulation encodes in reproductive behaviour relative to the development of the productive forces. The gap between rural and modern/urban traditions of fertility mirrors the differential modes of capital accumulation in these respective sectors. Formally, the systems-dynamic is co-founded by the rate of replacement of living by dead labour and the resulting relative surplus population that depresses living wages (Marx 1867). However, put only as such decontextualises Marx because what depresses the wage is not the too-many unemployed people; it is the clout of labour in the class struggle that nets the wage share predestined to reproduce labour. Although there would be too many people whose effective number of hours in capital's productivity-accounts is negligible, the sheer number of people as substance pressures wages down only when that substance is subject-less or when idle people are mere flesh and blood with a pro-systemic consciousness. Such reification is bliss for capital. Capital then reasserts the duality between a class, which earns enough to consume its upscale products but does not systemically oppose capital, and a class consumed in the production of capital's products. The latter are reduced to things that do not oppose capital. The former class only negotiates its share from the social product as opposed to overthrowing the exploitative production conditions of workers from the South.

Moreover, it is not the additivity/substitutability of the concrete replacement of man for machine that gels as the driver of labour disengagement: neither heterogeneous man nor dissimilar machines are summable. There cannot be an average of things composed of different qualities unless they are reduced to some universal quality. It is because of labour in its abstract form, after its mediation in exchange via the universal equivalent, money, which is common to all commodities that value becomes quantifiable as human labour in general. More important, it is *only after* commodities exchange and sell that the

total mass of labour power stored in them as socially necessary labour time, or value proper, assumes a money form of value, which *ex-post* signals the minimum social labour regime to be enforced upon the labour process. Just as each individual wage is the dividend from the wage share of its respective power of labour in the class struggle, a given commodity contains a share of the socially necessary labour time inferred *post facto* from its standing vis-a-vis the social product (Marx 1867).

Formally again, as the interaction of the parts, the many forms of concrete labour, transfigures into a universal whole, the abstract labour whose evolved characteristic differs from the sum of the parts, the whole or the system represented in the sum of values (social product) begins to reproduce society by the feedback loop generated via the mutual interaction of the part with the whole. Under the social system of capitalism, it is capital's institutions, principally its ideology and state, which lay down the rules of the game and fashion the feedback loops to its requirements. The signalling mechanism through the money form, the principal feedback mechanism, reinforces production conditions such that the surplus labour portion of the social product rises.

However, as the waste-side of the commodity prevails and addresses the wants of people coerced into accepting waste instead of what is useful to them, the above historical dynamic ought to be qualified. For Marx better mechanisation displacing workers, or the rising organic composition of capital with its associated lower surplus value rates, exerts downward pressure on the rate of profit. Marx notes several mitigating factors to the tendency of declining profit rates, among those lower costs of raw material and higher rates of exploitation (Marx 1894). There is an additional point to note with regards to changes under monopoly finance capital, especially that monopolies, by their power and size, obstruct free entry and rearrange/delay the replacement of old technology, making relative surplus value rise with the organic composition of capital (Sweezy 1942). No matter the method of measurement, Sweezy's argument appears to be empirically borne out. Obviously, profit rates did not decline to zero. To be sure, Marx did not predict that profit rates will decline. His approach is not formal and shuns such astrological casuistry. The *tendency* of declining profit rates was already an established empirical observation in classical political economy and, in fact, Marx argued why the profit rates were not decelerating as fast they otherwise should.

*Prima facie*, by letting the economic growth rate approximate the profit rate, it is safe to say that the rate of profit and beneath it the rate of surplus value have risen in tandem with better mechanisation and rising inequality. But correlation is not causation. It is not because of monopolistic innovation (Sweezy), or laterally the creative destruction of Joseph Schumpeter, that relative surplus value rises, it is because the destruction or the creativity developed

to waste social nature. Destruction is the primary enterprise of capital. More to the point, Marx's position that the rate of exploitation rises and mitigates falling rates of surplus value holds. Waste accumulation effected through more intense forms of commercial exploitation is the qualifying condition. The militarism of pure waste, the ransacked and de-sovereignised states with cheapened or wasted labour are the counter-tendencies behind buoyant profit rates.

A rising organic composition of capital is *inherent* to capital. Competition endogenises objective improvements in the productive forces. As the quality of capital per unit of labour grows, fewer people are employed to produce the same quantity of commodities. The ratio of constant to variable capital outlays, also rises. Less value on labour is outlaid relative to constant labour. And with fewer productive and living labour engaged, lesser rates of surplus value emerge. Whether by absolute value measures (longer workdays) or by cheapening the consumption bundle of labour, higher exploitation must kick-in to redress falling rates of profits. Formulaically, *capital* must lessen the value expended on the reproduction of labour or necessary labour time, which leaves more for surplus labour. *Capital* is the subject relation and not the things one names capital. All under the edifice of the superstructure, the surplus labour time residual is then cross-mediated by the competing forces of the market into profits.

To posit things from the spectrum of classical political economy, when values gravitate to natural prices or long-term average costs, then relative to the mass of fixed capital and as wages rise, there would be less and less left for profits (Ricardo 1817). Ricardo attributed the tendency of the rate of profit fall to rising wages corresponding to rising prices in agriculture, which supports a growing population. He adds that 'there can be no rise in the value of labour without a fall of profits ... If the corn is to be divided between the farmer and the labourer, the larger the proportion that is given to the latter, the less will remain for the former ... and suppose then, that owing to a rise of wages, profits fall from 10 to 9 per cent, instead of adding £550 to the common price of their goods (to £5,500) for the profits on their fixed capital, the manufacturers would add only 9 per cent on that sum, or £495, consequently the price would be £5,995 instead of £6,050. As the corn would continue to sell for £5,500, the manufactured goods in which more fixed capital was employed, would fall relatively to corn or to any other goods in which a less portion of fixed capital entered.' He then says that the 'tendency, this gravitation as it were of profits, is happily checked at repeated intervals by the improvements in machinery, connected with the production of necessities (sounds similar to relative surplus value in Marx), as well as by discoveries in the science of agriculture which enable us to relinquish a portion of labour before required, and therefore to lower the price of the prime necessary of the labourer' (Ricardo 1817).

At first sight, that is not so different from Marx's position that increasing relative surplus value mitigates the tendency of the profit rate to fall. Under the surface however, Ricardo approaches the issue from a quantitative angle. Concrete labour is the substance of value while the long-term cost prices (natural prices) equate value. Profits proportionate surplus value such that as the labourer retains a higher share of wages, the profit rate declines. Wages however for Marx are the prices of labour power that reproduce the labouring class and not the price of concrete or individual labour. He was not concerned with the empirically given observation of the falling rate of profit, most political economists noted average lower rates of return associated with higher capital costs over time. The context for the price of labour power is similar to the context for any other commodity, with the variant that society reproduces labour and labour power. Capital's power exercised constructs the scarcity or abundance that lurks behind price fluctuations and instantiations within a band whose historically articulated purpose is to keep value relations hidden from view.

In opposition to Ricardo who atomises labour and treats it by its concrete side, which then leads to the impossibility of adding up heterogeneous components of production, Marx does not attempt adding dissimilar things, and instead traces the development of the commodity in the *after the fact* market-transformed forms of value from concrete labour (the particular) to abstract labour (universal). Ricardo's one-sided empiricism, as in the truth resides in the gravitation of price around value, lends itself to be handled by mathematics – the dead labour in the machines can be calculated and dated backward (Sraffa 1960); however, the omission of history or social relations is an omission of time and space. A hypothetical and/or time-independent commodity may be considered in terms of the quantity of labour that went into its making, whereas a real commodity developing in real history is considered in terms of the effort that society mustered to produce the labourer who delivered his labour power into the commodity – that is what actually happens in real time. Although both Marx and Ricardo assign the same names to their theoretical concepts, they differ in the way they relate these concepts to concreteness. In today's illusory economics, Ricardo would still be real because he recognises a difference between value and price and/or that wages are the source profits; however, he does not recognise the exploitation attendant upon value and class relations that nurture the grounds upon which differential prices form. He does not relay why the same labour effort in the same job in Sri Lanka pays less than in England. Ricardo's prices are ahistorical symbols or abstracts that remain abstracts. Whereas for Marx (1867), exchange value assuming a money-value form in the price is the resolution of the contradiction between value and use value, which is the alienation that is commensurate with exploitation.

Apart from failing to follow the commodity in its development from concrete to abstract forms, Ricardo drops the role of value and class relations behind the formation of prices. That is still better than neoclassical utility theory, whose crude empirics sees true value in observed prices, decided by individual tastes, and a price system paralleling hedonistic volition.

In Ricardo, labour, capital and land as production factors are reduced to differing quantities with corresponding prices (the trinity formula), which provide a certain output and profits. The labourer is only responsible for his or her labour, but not the costs associated with land or capital. As profits originate from factors other than labour, labour as the source of value or the Ricardian labour theory of value flounders. However, the Marxian notion of social labour reproducing society by the use of social assets (land and capital) whose determinations are class wielded, let new profits rest in the social condition of exploitation in which new value emerges from the short-changing of living labour and or by the under-pricing of its labour power. Note that this is not a static arithmetic approach. Old value or dead labour residing in constant capital is passed to the commodity as it is, minus depreciation, while newly created value arises upon the surplus labour time (unpaid time) captured by capital – this is a dynamic system of flows.

Ricardo's average labour effort or heterogenous concrete labour cannot be measured, and ditto for differing productivity of physical capital components, which also cannot be averaged out. Contrariwise, Marx's labourer is thus not a hypothetical (metaphysical abstract), but a social being whose labour develops historically and is mediated in the more universal/abstract moneyed symbols, which are summable but not equivalent to value. These symbolic money forms reflect the grip of capital over labour and indicate whether the share of labour from the social product reproduces or de-reproduces society. Marx's labourer is a social/historical labourer, or a sub-category of class, as opposed to an individual who resides outside time/history. His surplus value concept is the class designated share of a capitalist class from the social product whose substantive value form is what it takes to 'feed and clothes' society (natural value), in contrast to the profits of a single capitalist. More appropriately, value is the relation that draws on the process of working class exploitation, while prices are the forms of capital whose purpose is the concealment of that exploitation. Marxian political economy is not about that capitalist paying less to that labourer to gain more, it is about the capitalist class exploiting the labouring class as a whole and the rate of exploitation or surplus value that sketches out its profit rate.

The conditions for immediate exploitation and for the realisation of that exploitation are not identical. Not only are they separate in time and space, they are also separate in theory. The former is restricted only by the

society's productive forces, the latter by the proportionality between the different branches of production and by the society's power of consumption. And this is determined neither by the absolute power of production nor by the absolute power of consumption but rather by the power of consumption within a given framework of antagonistic conditions of distribution, which reduce the consumption of the vast majority of society to a minimum level, only capable of varying within more or less narrow limits. It is further restricted by the drive for accumulation, the drive to expand capital and produce surplus-value on a larger scale. (Marx 1867)

The outlays on variable capital, will depend on the rate of the living wage and/or the wage share of the working class over its lifecycle. Workers are inescapably excluded by advanced mechanisation, while tech-advance combined with imperialist aggression capping peripheral progress undemine meaningful-waged engagement (labour saving technology shipped to the periphery). Imperialism depresses the value outlays on variable capital. The rising rate of exploitation will support the profit rate *only* as inequality rises or as some can buy while others cannot afford the stuff they produce. Plainly, exploitation necessitates uneven development under crises of overproduction. Conversationally, capital competes by lowering its input costs while overproducing for narrow market strips.

The market, therefore, must be continually extended [...] the more productivity develops, the more it comes into conflict with the narrow basis on which the relations of consumption rest. It is in no way a contradiction, on this contradictory basis, that excess capital coexists with a growing surplus population. (Marx 1867)

Unlike Ricardo, Marx sees no co-alignment between value and price. Capital profits only if it seizes labour by means of political oppression and with that the contribution of the working class to the social product. The case may be that under the free reign of capital the revenues with which society subsists, the equivalent of necessary labour, may reach extremely low levels. However, with waste accumulation, it is no longer a case in which necessary labour may or may not fall below zero, or that it asymptotically reaches zero, as discussed by Miller (1995). It is a case where one central class, the wasting class, extends itself by taxing the lives and future reproductive bases of another working class, the wasted class. The key form of exploitation here is not the self-evident point that lower wages waste working people, it is the process of wasting people itself as a key enterprise of capital in which exploitation is exercised to produce waste. What appears momentarily as very low prices for the waste products, the dead

Afghans, Africans and others, these are nonetheless marketed at some price level, which masks their seminal value contribution.

Miller's (1995) remark on the quantification of necessary labour is misplaced. Waste is produced as value and paid for not to harm society but in ways that are acceptable to society. The self-reinforcing cycle of harm is value self-expanding. Marxian labour is a social category, or a social relation which is subject, whose clout contracts or expands inversely to capital's hegemony. Because price obscures value and because there cannot be an identity between value and price to set quantitative limits on how value behaves, value in the form of waste may expand indefinitely. Surplus value only equals profits in a fantasy world (a world beyond experience), whereas surplus value as a subdivision of value and through its associated fetishism foregrounds the price system as the social form whose purpose is to recreate conditions for future surplus value.

Value is mediated in the money form and cannot be quantified in a similar manner to the utils of neoclassical subjective value theory whose values agree with prices. Neoclassical theory asks how much utility an individual may acquire from consuming a commodity when she spends her income on consumption, but never asks how the income of that individual came to be what it is. As such the theory may be reduced to the platitude that the rich are happy, and the poor are miserable. Isomorphic quantification, ordinal or cardinal, cannot apply to objective value relations because while their products are material, they as subject social relations are real but intangible. At any rate, capital only measures variables whose accounting basis it has *ex ante* fathomed. Over the horizon, wages as signification of minimum value required for sustenance can become negative because capital destroys labourers and expropriates their savings and resources, such that over their lifetime their wealth is negative. That does not mean that value is either negative or positive – it is obvious that waste is negative to society but relatively positive to the bourgeoisie. What is *a posteriori* recognised is a law of value predisposed to waste. In forms of waste-related to commercial exploitation, a worker earns less than minimum subsistence, because the wage package includes health and other benefits, which as austerity or war-cuts reduce the already minimal wage, the lifetime wage package turns into a negative amount.<sup>5</sup> The worker ends up paying capital with her

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<sup>5</sup> The wage rate, just as the interest rate, can be negative. For instance, using capital's optic, it is possible to construct a measure of the negative wage package by estimating the spread between the spot price of labour and its future moneyed value associated with the growth of an un-employable labour force. The working class dies off early and in debt. All in all, such units of measurement apply to prices but not to value.

shorter years of life because of deteriorating living conditions. Coincidentally, these cuts to labour impute as higher relative savings for capital. Capital pays less in money wages for more value extracted from labour. Subsequently, the rate of exploitation or the rate of surplus value rises, which down the line translates into growth in profits. Account taken of the different historical periods, such is unlike a slave who works for zero wages and is maximally reproduced by the slave owner to perform under low-tech productivity conditions. Contrariwise, modern forms of commercial exploitations de-reproduce the labourer and dispose of her as early as possible.

In processual terms, the phenomenal waste dissipates and rations social nature to de-reproduce current as well as future society relative to historically available capacity. For instance, the impact of global warming, war and austerity upon rural agriculture is no longer just to extricate/socialise farmers from the land, it is also to ruin the land such that it no longer supports as much life in the future. Sickened nature acted as if it is capital's dead labour and passed the waste-value stored in it to reduce the longevity and autonomy of the rural strata over the social turnover cycle. Considered upon the observed living conditions of the upper classes in relation to the observed dipping living conditions of the masses, necessary labour is dropping. The working class must borrow on top of its earnings to support itself, while the bondage to debt re-compromises livelihood. Over the social turnover cycle or the time in which a generation reproduces itself, the earlier than historically determined death of working people leaves more surplus labour for capital. Communicated to society via capital's moneyed system, surplus value keeps rising by working class dividedness and a *surplus product of waste*. In a nutshell, the damage to social nature and the costs paid by the working class for waste tip the social-natural energy balance responsible for social reproduction into the de-reproduction quadrant.

Although in the pre-capitalist phase, labour was scarce relative to low-tech resources and relatively immobile, labour under capitalism has grown more mobile and abundant relative to capital's used and spare capacity. Under imperialism, the rates of profit generated from the elimination of a proportion of persons minimally waged, especially via militarism, are more significant than the rates related to the production of salient civilian-end use commodity – although militarism predicates the whole system. The sum in trillions spent on mowing down Iraqis who subsisted at around 60 cents under the embargo is a case in point (Gordon 2010). Austerity and the migration of NATO soldiers to the South uproot labour and shape a more mobile global workforce. History-as-capital implies a rate of aggression from which a proportional rate of refugees/migrants emerges and positively influences central growth rates. The flux

in the populations of the ex/colonies responded more to the rate of repression, imperialistically suppressed modernisation, rather than the symptomatic wage rate.

Central to the waste thesis is the commodification of the idle labour force and the reduction of its numbers. The law of value ought to correspond to the phenomenon shaped by capital before us. Any social being that does not significantly reproduce capital in a run of the mill activity is commodified to be wasted which further reproduces capital. Capital disparages independent or semi-sufficient labour. 'Where the capitalist has at his back the power of the mother country, he tries to clear out of his way by force the modes of production and appropriation based on the independent labour of the producer' (Marx 1867); in waste the producer is literally cleared out. Thus, waste is both a *predicate* and an initial building block of the social reproduction cycle. Such is not to be inferred from the formal analytical framework, or the quarterly data reported by capital because these money-symbolic attributes are kneaded by capital to falsify reality. At a fundamental level, society produces and consumes commodities to reproduce or de-reproduce over a *periodised* time stretch. The laws of capital condense concrete labour in chronological time, which in turn tallies with minimum socially necessary labour time. In the main, socially necessary labour time or loosely, labour as value stored in the semi-useful or waste commodity may not only reproduce, but also de-reproduce society and, through the act of life-depletion.

## 11 Waste and Living Labour

Some social activities of labour in production may be abstracted one-sidedly such as productive labour and another unproductive labour, concrete and abstract labour, etc. (Marx 1867). These are apprehended in thought as two intermediating abstract and concrete conditions. Holistically, it is society with its social and/or living labour, which produces a social product. Since it is living labour, which creates new value, then by means of capital's putative repression as the mediatory relation, the categories of unproductive and productive labour actualise as living labour.

Seen from an angle of social reproduction, the notion that some activities are unproductive and do not contribute to social surplus may be true only when these activities, like whistling, play no part in the spiritual/material reproduction of labour, which is always possible but implausible. The cornerstone of production is about remaking labour to produce commodities, including the labour power commodity. Labourers also enclose within their physical being labour power, which is a commodity that sells but is meant to inadequately

reproduce the working class. Capital alienates labour power from the labourer and society. As a commodity idealised in the wage, labour power in the hands of capital acquires a fetish status and commands social life. The alienation is a real extraction process, which spins off into all sorts of real and psychological ailments. In a totality of capitalist production relations hierarchically structured by repression, abjection is the equivalent of social alienation from the social product. The hunger imposed upon the planet is one such case of food alienation.

Marx (1844) rebutted Hegel on the natural state of alienated, natural man to whom suffering was an *existential* condition. Later permutations of this Hegelian precept have sprung up in the existentialist yet metaphysical postulation, the *human condition*. Marx's alienated man 'is not merely a natural being: he is a human-natural being. That is to say, he is a being for himself. Therefore, he is a species-being, and has to confirm and manifest himself as such both in his being and in his knowing ... And as everything natural has to come into being, man too has his act of origin in history' (Marx 1844). The being and the becoming of Marx's man is history. Man as nature is man the thing and Marx continues to say that 'because this positing of thinghood (Hegel's man as nature) is itself only an illusion' – that man is only natural as opposed to being human or social (Marx 1844). The activity of social/human man realised in anti-systemic struggle immanently confronts the thinghood to re-establish man as de-alienated social being. Man is only a product of the thingification imposed by capital, while the anti-systemic activity of man confronts his thingification, otherwise, it de-alienates man.

Unproductive labour registers as unproductive because time is the time commanded by capital and the price system is the price system of capital. In a socially overdetermined situation, however, recursive changes in one social activity re-impact all social activities via the universal medium of the money form of value. The money form of value integrates and reflects the many prices for all the unregistered activities that have contributed to social reproduction. Prices encapsulate within them the implicit, negative, or future cost prices that society incurs. A singing activity, dubbed unproductive, through the pleasure it imparts to the wellbeing of a person, becomes a value relation mediated as abstract labour for the modicum of the price imputed in the symbol of wage by which the labourer reproduces.

In *production*, the one time activity, the stock of labour power is not the sum of the values realised in commodities. The labour power of idle or unproductive labour is counted as to not contribute to value at the time of reference. Matters are different in *social reproduction*, or the time of remaking society. Therein, every member of the community is socially productive. Society invests

its socially necessary labour time in remaking man and his labour power. However, when governed by capital, which necessarily grows by alienated social relations (Lukacs 1919), society labours to de-reproduce itself as happens when waste is in command. Apart from anti-systemic struggle, none of society's production activities could escape the alienating conditions of capital – capital's adjunct forms sprout everywhere.

In reproduction, the walls separating productive from unproductive labour are only logical but not real. They disappear under capital's coercion as it totalises social activities contributing to social reproduction in the universal moneyed form of value. Despite capital's effort to designate social products by nationality, the world's social product is one and a single measure, which is world income. Contingently upon time and space configurations, moneyed world income, refracts but not fully corresponds to the world's production effort. Unbeknown to capital, its efforts to commodify and monetise social activities disclose what capital hides: the global social product assuming the money form of value is the product of global social labour, as opposed to being the product of this or that nation.

In real time, capital's measures of immiseration fuse the one-sided category of concrete unproductive labour with abstract productive labour into their state of becoming as living/dead labour. Unproductive labour occurring as only unmediated concrete labour is a falsehood in a process of social reproduction. For instance, the work of unpaid housewives proves social/abstract as opposed to concrete or private, especially as the mother partakes in a share of the family's income, no matter how small. As each social activity of society must contribute to new value, the process of reproduction is carried out by living labour, which is now all of society. The divide between productive and unproductive labour is not some average of both rendered or an arbitrary demarcation line. Productive and unproductive labour are categories of dialectics, or the abstract and concrete sides of the same real living labour. In other words, it is specious to assign high or low productivity to any sort of labour by their shares of income from the social product. An unpaid mother is not unproductive because she earns zero income; she either earns a positive or a negative share of the family's income. More important, the juxtaposition of arithmetic formulae upon an organic process of production foregoes the determinacy of all the parts working together to ensure a social dynamic: without mothers, nothing exists.

In an analytical world in which commodities are useful, the rate of surplus value declines by the rate of replacement of living to dead labour – correspondingly, more value outlays on constant capital and a lesser rate of outlays on variable capital. However, in a world of waste-products, living labour employed to operate waste producing machinery, delivers a waste product in

which the living labourer himself serves as an input into his own death, which is parenthetically the product. Plainly put, machinery will keep improving; however, the machine operator and those implicated by it are input into the machine as well as a product of that machine.

Engrossed in capital's reason, society's living labour realises as the self-wasting living labourer. The preponderance of waste attendant upon militarism and sickened social nature, the latter also a surrogate of constant capital, imply that the numbers of living labourers involved in the production of their deaths as products must also rise. Since capital increases output by hiring labourers to self-decimate, surplus labour rises as the number of self-decimating living labourers rise. Concurrently, there are more workers being hired and expiring prematurely per given level of constant capital. Over the generational lifetime of society, the wage bill falls in relation to the value of labour consumed in production, leaving more for profits. The rate of self-wasting labour is commensurable with the rate of exploitation.

With social being determining social consciousness, the subject of the waste industry is not an idea in someone's head, it is history and its ideological stock – resolving in the historical surplus value. History lays down the foundation for more labourers hired to uncritically produce more of themselves as dead labourers. Capital-led production relations shift gears towards the propagation of a waste culture. Non-waged/non-revolutionary humans associated with social reproduction invite capital's commodification and decimation upon themselves just as subject-less nature does. Relative depopulation, materialised in the reduction of longevity, becomes a thing that satisfies a human want.

Meanwhile, the financial bourgeoisie quickens the waste of waged and non-waged working people. Their principal source of profits is not the better paid consumers of the North, it is rather the labour practiced in the self-depletion of people. The mitigation of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall is discernible in the rising global growth and profit rates. The single most mitigating factor is the waste industry, which employs more labourers engaged in prematurely wasting themselves or other labourers. As more living labour participates in waste production, the higher value outlays on variable capital assuming lower moneyed form associated with shorter lives relative to constant capital rise, which is no other than a higher rate of exploitation.

Waste spinoffs into new sub-industries, developing the productive forces and refining the social division of labour expand the scope – the spreading out – for the exploitation of living labour. Shipping German used car batteries to be smelted and recycled on the banks of rivers in the Third World, leaves many communities with serious illnesses. More people are employed in novel waste related activities. However, because trashed social nature sells,

especially trashed humans, the surplus value that arises from the very activity that demolishes a capital-designated superfluous population rises with the rate of saleable deaths and with the diminution of the largely the supposedly idle population. Under the onus of imperialism, the working classes that should socially reproduce with sane activities begin to de-reproduce at the behest of capital. Calculably, capital offsets the tendency of the rate of profit to fall by the rate at which waste generated surplus value rises as a result of its higher surplus waste-product. With that, the decline of the necessary labour compares with the decline of the surplus population. Such is a win-win situation for capital. The trashing of humans before their due time is the scale (in contrast to scope) effect in the intensification of surplus value.

As posited in the previous chapter, wasting people by reducing their longevity relative to the historically determined level resolves the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces and production relations. Capital abhors the positive fallout of scientific progress upon the population, which as it automatically lengthens longevity, it may also strengthen the class position of labour. To suppress the positive effects resulting from the objective development of the productive forces, wars, consumerism, and poison-laced consumerist wealth must rise.

## 12 Waste in Social Time

The Western environmentalism of 'save fauna and flora' neglects the *inbuilt* inclination of capital to expand by excessively metabolising social nature. Capital wars against man and nature to strip the working-class of autonomy and to de-subjectify man. Nature without subject is matter without subject. It is in the symbolic world of man that surplus value transmutes into moneyed profits, and it is the production of this symbolic world, which blends in with capital's repressive steps to constitute the forms of capital. The social activity of social man is value creating or the inertia that leads the system. In the making of surplus value, nature is consumed *only* to consume man and remould the mind of man. The former phenomenon, the consumption of man as borne out by the laws of capital, chiefly the absolute and/or relative extermination visited upon the Third World, remains less noticed in the mainstream than the natural calamity. There is a superficial US/European inclination to discipline the environmental pillage, but not imperialist wars. Although that inclination is not so much about self-preservation, since a polluted future marks up profits at present, the issue remains that a degraded environment quietly injures all humans. The case may be that fearing injury to himself, the thingified bourgeois then calls for some capping of emissions (Roberts & Parks 2009). However, little

is said about the structural genocide that derives from commercial exploitation. The silence surrounding premature deaths evinces the ideology of class to class cannibalism. Shortened lives and wars generate profits. For the ruling classes, the current situation is a trade-off between the slow self-inflicted damage from environmental toxins versus the wealth grab via imperialist wars; the source of both woes is the capital relation evolved into imperialism.

War and nature-inflicted harm, through the consumption of labourers and their labour power, are processes of exploitation. Their real and ideological products interlace with each step of production to transfer capital costs onto society. For five centuries, the colonial industry of waste has reduced the cost of consumables in the North making it possible for wealth to rise. Slavery, the genocides of the natives, and the mutilation of nature are not killing for sports, they are the persistent forms of commercial exploitation or the 'pedestal' of Northern wage slavery (Marx 1894). Man *and* nature are commodified, and as commodities, they are produced and consumed in coherence with the rate of accumulation over a social production cycle. As commodities, they are not realised before or after the sale of any run of the mill commodity, like cars or bombs. They are realised or absorbed by the market and priced in social time, or the time into which capital disciplines people to produce with least costs to itself or with costs transferred onto the shoulders of society. Past and future cost prices of waste commodities realised or to be realised, implicit or explicit, are either imputed in profits or will mature in some future economic gain.

Social or abstract time oppresses private or concrete time because it crams people's lives in shorter chronological times for profit making. It leaves people little time for leisure or little time to live. Lafargue's (1883) expression that 'the poor working thirteen hours a day had no time to think of their toilet,' captures the gist of social-time oppression – to date, Amazon workers still seek the right to toilet breaks.<sup>6</sup> Yet Lafargue's more poetic phrasing that capital's 'time kills us second by second' pertains more closely to the time of waste industry. Waste plays out in the background of all production or simultaneously as a precursor and an offshoot of production at the same time. Social time is not similar to chronological or sequentially ordered algebraic time. It is not that something happens in the past to influence the future with a given probability and a given lag. Social time is event time (Aristotelian-like), or the time that depends on the qualitatively changing nature of the social classes and its deflection in the money form of value that shapes real events. When time

6 Truthout, California Passes Bill to Ensure Amazon Workers Can Take Bathroom Breaks  
<https://truthout.org/articles/california-passes-bill-to-ensure-amazon-workers-can-take-bathroom-breaks/>

equates to capital's money, it determines the quality and length of life lived in chronological time. Social time cohering with the changing balance of class forces is the time of production. Since classes are indeterminate within the class struggle, and because history as the class struggle overdetermines events (Althusser 1971), social time is the actualisation of such historical overdetermination in social living conditions.

This overdetermination of the many contradictions of capital, which resolves in financial papers written against the future, also prices waste and organises social reproduction always in line with capital's tendencies. Markets for futures, options and derivatives are affected by waste and its impact on current and future resources. Submitting waste to its moneyed value form boosts its production. Waste emerges as a domain of accumulation that retains all peoples involved in social reproduction as productive labour. The waste outputs/events are recursively cross-determining throughout the path of time. The past value of waste as well as its future value are forms of capital to which chronological time is the unit of measure. These waste forms of capital, the activity itself and its moneyed form, redetermine developments in chronological time such that labour auto-destructs for a price.

To re-postulate, social time squeezes the lives of people in short chronological intervals. Obviously, under labour or as the working class frees itself from the time-constraints of capital, time leaps into the time in which what happens in a day equals what happens in generations (paraphrasing Lenin). Social time is the quality of life experienced as real time or the time in which the analytical breakdown of cause and effect assumes its dialectical indeterminateness:

[c]ause and effect are conceptions which only hold good in their application to individual cases; but as soon as we consider the individual cases in their general connection with the universe as a whole, they run into each other, and they become confounded when we contemplate that universal action and reaction in which causes and effects are eternally changing places, so that what is effect here and now will be cause there and then, and vice versa. (Engels 1925)

The phenomenon of waste has been birthed on account of many interrelated past and future causes and/or effects. However, the consumption of man and nature by capital, in the case of man way before her historically-established time, is an internality to capital, as opposed to the mainstream's externality. Negative externalities exemplified in the waste of man and the extinction of irreplaceable species, are the products that overwhelm all other products. Although Marx posited that humanity will not give itself more problems than it could solve, it

so seems that the opposite may be true. Externality also is logically or formally true, but realistically or operationally false. As a concept, it is an antiworking-class weapon, just as every other concept of the mainstream. It is somewhat comical because it asks the class in power whose profits are based on waste to pay for the waste. The conventional approach splits the un-splitable production process into waste and non-waste components, and then treats each apart. As such, it precludes the fact that capital has to cheapen inputs, and for that it has to flatten the mind of the working class – flatten bodies and then minds. The resources of a society bereft of labour's autonomy can be used irresponsibly for the cheapest costs. With production being objective to society, socially unaccountable measures pervade nearly all that is experienced under capital.

The waste as externality is not an externality or unwanted consequence; on the contrary, it is wanted and inherent to the value relation. Value, the socially necessary labour time, invested in the commodity auto-negates into use value, which in turn auto-negates into exchange value to finally resolve in the universal equivalent or money. The first contradiction, or moment, occurs as the capitalist invests in a commodity for which he has no use. The second contradiction, or moment, occurs as the capitalist resolves the first contradiction by transforming use into exchange value; he has to sell the commodity. The commodity is the object, while society expressed in social relations is the subject. To produce a commodity for profits, the labouring class must earn less than what it takes to acquire a decent standard of living relative to the wealth prevailing at the time – *not relative to pre-capitalist wealth*. The phrase an Afghan may live to fifty now, which is better than his life expectancy 500 years ago, is meaningless. Over the social reproduction cycle and in value terms, the socially necessary labour time deployed in production has to be minimal and has to leave more surplus product for the capitalist. The value outlays on labour, making up necessary labour, recede with falling consumption over the shorter lifespan of the average person. Wars, neoliberalism, and waste are domains of accumulation in their own right as well as means that also shorten lifespan to reduce the number of people that draw on resources and pensions. The necessity of waste for production exists in parallel to an accumulation process whose only purpose is exchange subsumed in waste. Unrestrained, the value contradictions imply that it is *theoretically* impossible under capital's ideological hegemony for the plight of man and nature to prevail. In *practice*, the law of value manifests in capital's historical trail of destruction.

Yet, in typical chauvinist cant, the prolocutors of Western civilisation never cease to remind the planet that without their discoveries, life expectancy would have been much lower than that which prevails. On average, Africans and Arabs live longer in the twentieth century, but that is not because capital

intended to extend their life expectancy to that of the North. In one of the World Health Organisation's oft-repeated phrases, the drugs for malaria were initially developed to treat bovine parasitic diseases in British dairy farms, which fortuitously treated many but not all of the disease's symptoms in Africa. Argumentatively, capital shortens life to earlier than that foreseen under available capacity. Capital's self-exculpation is that without European civilisation, people would have died at 20 years of age in the jungles or deserts. To compare someone dying from depleted uranium exposure in Fallujah at the age of 43, and at the same time, say she should be happy, because in Sumerian times, she would have at best lived to 23 is an empty platitude. Time is of fluctuating quality or conditioned by the set of social relations determining its structure within a given chronological period. Comparing the development of different historical periods along chronological time requires qualification and periodisation. In any case, irreversible time does not easily lend itself to measurement, not because of the stationarity or non-stationarity of statistics (time-series data that does or does not converge to a mean), but because of changes to its social content, which invariably call for a re-periodisation of history.

Missing in the chauvinist argument is not only that peripheral development must be capped to become a feeder to central development (Emmanuel 1972), but also the slaughter of the South, which has always been the primal industry of capital. This culture of capital, whose structure is Western and whose stock of knowledge grows by imperialist aggression, is so pervasive such that few venture beyond the *lifeboat ethic* to ask, how neoliberalism and bombardment of the Yemen, for instance, can bring its life expectancy to 30 or 40 years lower than Europe's.

It does not take much to know that Norway lives to 80 and the Congo to around 50, and that 80 is bigger than 50. Numbers as forms cannot inform social knowledge without examining their comparative progress over time, or their history. The defeatism of the developing world supports a reading of events without recourse to their history. In their effort to appease the conqueror out of fear, the vanquished masses may squash their memories to make do or merely survive a little longer under imperialism (Fanon 1967). Fanon goes further in his distrust of imperialism when he considers the liberal measures to modernise women in the colonies as a form of cultural rape whose purpose is to resituate the colony for further pillage. In response to this cultural rape conjoined with despondency, Cabral's (1970) fighting words assertively prioritised the cultural struggle.

A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from oppressor and other cultures,

they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture. Thus, it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture.

### 13 Waste and Technology

Under the weight of the reigning ideology, it is futile to pierce mainstream discussions with the point the North wastes humans. Even as the environmental problem caught the attention of the media, the encroachment wars that re-infuse waste production at every layer in the commodity cycle are not addressed as the West's industry of waste. It is still ethical for NATO to bomb for democracy using depleted uranium. Although, the environment could have been the Trojan Horse of the masses, it is being sidelined by an analytical positivism that relegates the cause of war and pollution to something unavoidable or intrinsically psychological, but never capital. By turning the imaginary into the real, waste becomes necessary despite the losses. Worst yet, waste may be assumed as a genetically inborn behavioural proclivity. The mainstream's behavioural-economics is hard at work to find some genetic reasons for the trail of destruction. The new discipline is capital's eugenicists and legerdemains. Nevertheless, resources are scarce only because they are constructed as scarce, while the trashing of nature adds to the scarcity. Even oil turned out to be abundant and a supposed Hubbard peak could be rescheduled until the twenty second century (peak oil production after which oil tapers down). Masses armed with socialist ideology, opposing and providing an alternative to capital is about the only thing that is scarce.

That a member of the Royal Academy insinuates depopulation as a solution to overpopulation does not inconvenience capital. Reworking the numbers of capital's victims by mathematical formulae is the acme of positive social science. Ruling class ideologies and their corresponding institutions serve the imperialist class often with recourse to the normative considerations of protestant-like self-flagellation: doing the work of capital is doing the work of God. It is also advantageous by capital's ideological optic for Madelaine Albright, the person who says it is worthwhile to kill 500,000 Iraqi children to get rid of Saddam Hussein, to author a 2018 book entitled 'Fascism: A Warning.' In this sort of work, capital arrogates to itself the right to mass murder by the pretence of crusading against fascism. Evidently, the fascism Albright targets is not real fascism, but the fascism of American war movies. The real fascism, the racial/cultural superiority of the West, its ironclad forms of organisation and the whole of the international trading and financial system corporatised by the

power of NATO, is omnipresent in imperialist practice. It assumes, as it must, novel ideological justifications for wars whose industrial pursuits combine the wreckage of man and environment as domains of accumulation.

In capital's class-based ethics, through its meliorism or technological determinism, all the past waste can be righted by new technology, and therefore, not be condemned as immoral. What occurs now, no matter how horrible, will at a future date when the tech-benefits spill over become progress. Mechanisation, the intrinsic development of science commandeered by capital to functionally abide its expansionary drive, is chiefly the arms industry. Competing capitalists must create the conditions for unlimited supplies of indigent labour to produce with the cheapest possible costs. Realistically, what had bettered the world in the past is not the thing 'technology'; it is the social policies of the working classes like land reforms and universal health care, etc. These are the anti-capital personified, or the antithesis of value. However, in current times where the membership of revolutionary socialist parties at the heart of empire would possibly fit into a bingo hall, not for a brief moment will the science or technology produced by 'illustrious' professors escape the clasp of dominant ideology.

At this juncture, there is also a marked absence of organic-intellectualism to section the synapses of capital, or the watershed at which capital's cultural hegemony resolves in social activity, perverting capital's own conceptual constructs against it (Gramsci 1971). The momentum for the re-embellishment of Western civilisation, otherwise, the spiritual and material forms of capital, appears unstoppable. The forms of socialist organisation and revolutionary consciousness that cradle progressive action in the North have been interwoven into capital's objectives by imperialist dividends. As if by rote-inculcation, capital has drilled the pro-forma phrase 'there is no alternative' (TINA) into the social mind (Mészáros 1995). However, popular culture foisted TINA as the justification for imperialist booty. In the face of rampant waste, the lacuna remains that working classes hold on to beliefs that reproduce capital. The position of Northern classes articulates their social being fused into imperialism with social consciousness. The tiers with revolutionary potential in the North have been beaten into submission, while capital has contained Marxism, by creating the Western Marxist strand, and deployed it to sow pro-systemic propaganda.

Gradational improvements or piecemeal reversal of natural decay carried out under bourgeois reformism are not feasible. Capital imposes the restrictions and the loopholes to avoid its own regulations. Mészáros (2001) imagined the thrust of capital's casuistry in the most extreme outcomes as follows.

For the extermination of humanity is the ultimate concomitant of capital's destructive course of development. And the world of that third possibility, beyond the alternatives of 'socialism or barbarism' would be

fit only for cockroaches, which are said to be able to endure lethally high levels of nuclear radiation. This is the only rational meaning of capital's third way.

Thus far, the penchant for the adage 'capitalism is progress' in Western Marxist or liberal discourse keeps making headways. Joan Robinson's line, 'it is worse not to be exploited than to be exploited by capitalists' is one such refrain. A natural end of this statement would be Ayn Rand's advice to the natives not to fight the civilising mission of white men, else they would continue to live a primitive existence. Under capitalism, little if anything or any corner escapes the guns of capital. Human and other resources are consumed or await consumption as if in a state of social hibernation until then. Because gunning down native people, or a similar activity of immiseration or a debasement of the environment, are forms of capital as well as production activities imbricated within capital's social relations, it (capital) cannot impart progress.

The difference between the potential of technology, what could be done with it, in relation to what is done with it, or its actual application, capitalism turns out to be the most retrogressive stage in human history. Although, remaking social life under capital must consume social nature, capital's over-consumption drives the system to implosion. Capital's creative destruction: used by Harvey in the Smith–Harvey debate (2018), is a vacuous or trans-historical justification for the imperialism of the current age. Since the dawn of time, any creation of a product meant for consumption requires destruction, as in the use of inputs like firewood, and then creation. Such is the ontology of subject (man) to object (nature). Under capital however, the rate of destruction relative to sane replacement rises. Machines are the intermediaries of class to consume another class. The value outlays on the reproduction of society involve expending labour to waste human lives, which are incidentally value as well. Creation in creative destruction *qua* progress cannot ensue from the replacement of living for literally dead labour/labourers. The factories of Western civilisation are not solely those stationed in Europe. They are also the waged-soldiers using war-machinery to destroy life in Africa and Middle East. These are the principal factories of capital, which undertake the initial and final stages of production. The death of labour at the hands of capital is a self-reinforcing production process that filtrates into all production processes in no sequential order, or only in satisfaction of capital's social time.

The argument for progress or the lack thereof is not only an empirical test of whether society has more destruction than creation relative to long gone conditions of stone-age populations. It is about the definition of the concept of waste one sets out to measure. Progress is not about the discovery of new technology, which scraps the stock of old machinery precipitating a crisis, all the

while improving the technological component in the productive forces (capital de-valorisation theory as in Perelman [1999]). It is also not some ingenious change in English social relations spilling over into better ploughs in the English countryside that launches capitalism by increased productivity (Wood 2002). Producing under competitive conditions for a growing global population and its rising demand for higher output would continuously resolve the contradiction between the moving parts of the machine and its energy source resulting in higher technology (reducing kinetic loss according to Marx's chapter on machinery [1867]). The progress of science is objective, while its application in technology is capital-instrumentalised. Machine advance under capitalism is not a sign of civilisational progress. Technical progress is socially funded and privately appropriated as means of waste production. Its subject social relation is the death of the developing world by the practice of colonialism-imperialism. In objective and immeasurable historical uncertainty, in contrast to subjective probability, machine advance is a *predicate* of capital as opposed to being a criterion of social progress. Bettering machinery is endogenous to capital and, by the objective progress of science. Capital appropriates and operationalises knowledge in production by pressures of competition. Machinery however cannot be sort of 90% progress and 10% unsatisfactory retrogression. Theoretically, it is either or because it depends on the social relation in command of machinery; it is capital reified.

Furthermore, the capitalism as progress proclamation is Eurocentric. It neglects the billions in the Third World whose labour and lives are excessive to an overproducing system. It overlooks the constant social crisis plaguing the planet, as distinct from a central crisis constituted by negative GDP growth over two successive quarters in the Western business cycle. In a globally integrated production process, the frequency of Western economic crises lays the groundwork for the constant social crises elsewhere, including its wars. On account of overproduction, capital already disengages much of the world's human resources, just as it scraps machinery, farmland and factories. Measurement of progress depends more on the class-value system espoused by the measurer.

In terms of first principles, what is theoretically and empirically established is that capital does not produce for the benefit of society, it produces for profits. These broader downward spirals correspond to the actual or objective development of the commodity as self-expanding value and its reproduction by the law of value. Capital metabolises through value destruction as well as value creation, not just by scrapping the value of old machines, but by an industry of violence that destroys without resurrecting the destructed in better form. It simply wastes it. Value is a social relationship presupposed (ontologically)

by objectified labour (substance) (presupposed as used by Rubin [1973]), but whose subject is social/political agency or the resultant of the class struggle. Capital's logical end is to scrap the subject in labour, or to objectify labour. From the exchange value moment of the value relationship, the law of value emerges as an allocator of resources. Nonetheless, disengaging old technology and renewing it enhances the technical composition of capital and the combined production of civilian-end use as well as the waste component in all commodities, or just waste on its own.

The real argument for progress is about the achievements of internationalism, as opposed to purely nationalist forms of working-class struggles. Any improvement in the quality and quantity of some detectable aspect of the commodities produced so far, is the result of labour's opposition to capital. Internationalism is in a race with time in which the working class must in the last moment see capital as a fiction of its own making and collapse the distance between its actual and potential power. Abdel-Malek (1977) proposes a united world front of working classes and national movements facing the constellation of comprador and imperialist forces to dethrone capital. As a rule, inter-working-class solidarity rising above nationalism, sectarianism or sectionalism is the benchmark for internationalism and progress.

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## Value and Space

Society produces waste. It has produced more waste than other useful goods. Waste reduces life expectancy by class gradation. The lowest classes reside in the space known as the Third World. These classes are subjected to the wrath of imperialism and eco-imperialism. Working people pay dearly to clean the waste and to treat themselves from the ills imparted by waste. With a poorly represented working class, waste doubles for capital. It shrinks the share of working-class wages by some proportion of the waste tax or by the extent it shortens average lives. It undermines the value of global necessary labour time to the benefit of surplus labour time and other forms of capital. Formulaically, as the rate of social natural replenishment falls below the rate of depletion, the rate of profits rises.

Although waste is an existential threat, it flourishes within the confines of the profit system because it is of relative benefit to the bourgeois class. All hurt by the ruination of nature, but the working class hurts more. War is a stark form of waste production. Restating the war as waste thesis, a nation literally takes its resources and chuck them away (Marx 1867). This chapter reconsiders the war and waste economies as value relations and as the new forms of capital peculiar to the age.

Before proceeding, I caveat that it is not for prevailing bourgeois ethical reasons that imperialist war and environmental wreckage will stop. Although the survival of the species is the precondition of all other ‘good’ and since we ought not to engage in self-defeating behaviour because the welfare of mankind is the source of authority for our moral rules, paraphrasing Dunham (1971), ethics are always class ethics. Bourgeois ethics are the ethics of the wasting class. Dunham (1971) exclaims that ‘the history of ruling classes tends to produce one kind of ethics, and the history of non-exploitative groups another.’ Save the struggle against capital, under the rule of capital, all is unethical and aesthetically ugly (Lukács 1952). Unless labour wins, not much will change. At this juncture, imperialism hands society the choice between death at its hands or an attritive form of mass suicide. It either kills by war or affords the grounds for people to kill themselves because on a value relation level, the victims of wars and toxins are commodified sold and consumed as waste by the victors.

## 1 Forms of Exploitation

Fast progressing productive forces, of which mechanisation is one component, also accelerate the speed at which production relations change. Imperialism, the leading process of production relations obliges by violently conquering nations to cheapen inputs. To raise profit rates, capital must reduce necessary labour, the share of the social product wrought by workers and their families, which in turn imposes upon capital the task of continuously altering the mode of production, such that production relations identify with the productive forces (Marx 1867). Capital must capture the resources and the labour of others down South to cheaply feed its workers up North, which within the confines of value leaves a bigger share for profits. Imperialist wars are its leading practice to rearticulate the less developed modes of production, restructure value relations and ew-decree the rule of capital.

The impact of war or the environmental waste upon the relative shortening of human lives is endogenous to the system. Unopposed by working class solidarity, commodity fetishism or the rule of commodities, insatiably consumes resources in production to satisfy capital's demand for cheaper inputs and profits. While individual capitalists pursue profits, capital's organised dimension, the institutions of finance-monopoly capital, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), representing the global ruling class whose wealth is dollarized, induce US-NATO military spending, aggression and reaffirm US-led financial capital as the central social relationship. They do so by imperialist rent redistribution that strikes a balance between the various capitals, including the capital-partnered Northern working class against the South. The payoff to the Northern working class is not so much hush money from the sphere of circulation, as it is a dividend for being organically tied to capital, which makes of it a class or capital circle that requires the exploitation of the South.

Forms of exploitation mutate. They went from the early manufacture or cottage-type industry and the entrapment of people into slavery by devastating the African continent, the early commercial exploitation, into the recent more generalised forms of commercial exploitation, exemplified in the wars and the premature deaths of the modern age. In a rather modern form of commercial exploitation, the destruction of security-weakened states, dislodges their resources leaving them up for grab. Imperialist wars evict vast populations to create slave or a coolie-like floating mass of refugees. Slavery *en masse* pops up to support capital accumulation as it experiences deeper crises. Commercial exploitation did not end with early primitive accumulation, and it should not have ended because social crises assuming phenomenal status are negated and preserved in the immediacy before us. In its novel content, it remains both a

'pedestal' for central capital, it works the slave-like labour, and it is an industry of waste. It de-subjectifies labour and squanders man and nature for a price. Its war-industry side is the domain of militarism at work; the worker consumes another worker using war machinery. Generalised commercial exploitation of the modern age is the practice of imperialism in wars and the biting austerity, which roundaboutly buoys the further practice of imperialism.

Unlike Harvey (2018 a,b), Lenin's imperialism of the finance-monopoly age cannot be reduced to its symptoms observed in a mass of wealth concentrated by geographic space, sites of super-exploitation and/or the phenomenon of capital flows. Theoretically, for capitalism to change and become a new category of monopoly-finance imperialism, its content (class type), essence or motivating laws must change. Lenin has a transformed historical agent in mind or a new subject with which he defines his imperialism. It is no longer the industrial class of the nineteenth century, which governs development, it is a *financial-monopoly class*. The monopoly-financial class militarily expanding, usurping value by means of war, re-transferring value to the centre by financial conduits, is the new imperialist class whose accumulation is finance triggered. Its growth trajectory engenders further militarisation *qua* waste. What to do with the amassed monopoly/finance moneyed-surplus reshapes the money owner into an imperialist yearning for the next war.

It is not the products of capital that have to change for capitalism to transmute into imperialism, it is the old class subject. However, the subject is not a corporeal person. It is also not the idea in some Western designated dictator's head whose heroic powers mould events, like Western media constructed villains such as Sankara or Qaddafi. More cogently, it is not the trans-historical ideas that instantiate in the present – not the virtues of Western civilisation dragging on from Hellenistic times applied to current conditions. The subject is the social relation or a class as a subset of capital as history. It evolves on the basis of the activity resulting from the interconnectedness between the unconscious side of capital as history and capital's conscious or organised dimension; respectively, the subject is the resolution measure of the dialectic of the base with the superstructure. The forms idealised by the dominant class as they are put into practice are the objectification of the subject class. For instance, the preponderant militarism and waste, which asphyxiate the planet, are the hypostatisation of the subject class, which is the monopoly finance class whose structure is the US-led centre. However, as more waste engulfs the planet, the increasing suffocation does not necessarily mean imperialism is transcendent capitalism. Without redefining the subject, more waste does not imply that the old capitalism with its old imperialism has changed into the monopoly-finance imperialism of the modern age. Variations by degree do not suffice to requalify sociological change. If the social type of subject stays unchanged, the grounds

to establish a new class category, like the monopoly-finance class, will be missing despite the increasing amount of waste. Capital wastes, but monopoly-finance must waste in a peculiar way to qualify as a novel class category.

Lenin recognises that 'the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy' is the new type of the dominant class subject (Lenin 1916). He also observes an intensification of capital governed by a subject-class relation whose material basis is finance. He notes that war is the chief activity resolving capital's contradiction. War was the means by which capital rearticulated the modes of production to cheapen the consumption bundle of workers in the North; war matures into a more objective process of capital whose independence is as remote from society as finance. Williams (1964) notes that wars are bigger and more frequent in the twentieth century, and 'competition has an inherent tendency to escalate into political tension and conflict.' However, Lenin looks beyond the economic interpretation of imperialism and adopts a sociological explanation. His theory of imperialism is principally a theory of war carried out to establish capital's primacy actuated by financial expansion.

Evidently, with imperialism comes imperialist rents (Amin 2011; Patnaik 2018). Value produced in the periphery assumes a money form, which bundles within it more than just the value extracted by super-exploitation, but also the value proper that was required to support the social reproduction of life in the periphery. Although the value relation is intrinsically dark value, the work of unpaid mothers in the developing world and the lost lives due to waste are also components of value transfer to the North. To raise profits, the living conditions of many developing nations must deteriorate relative to the prevailing historical standard. Conjointly, the violence of imperialism reproduces the waste-conditioned labour process and working-class acquiescence to waste. Monetisation and commodification under finance capital swiftly trans-mediate concrete labour, all the labour activities contributing to social reproduction, into a universal category of social or abstract labour gelled in the money form of value. In addition to monopolies preventing the rise of cheaply developed new technology that writes off their investments before recovery of their sunk costs, the rising surplus value gains momentum because monopoly power restructures the forms of exploitation. The nexus of militarism-dollar hegemony is the gyroscope to better regiment labour and foreground the rate of exploitation. More so than competitive processes, monopolies buoy monied profits on the surface by accentuating social crises below the surface.

For Smith (2012 and 2016), value transfer from the Third World has spiked over 'the last 40 years' with super-exploitation. However, as a source of wealth, super-exploitation trailing from colonial pillage and enmeshed with the commercial exploitation of the colonies, was as relevant then as it is now. As a rule, the transfers of value in money-form to the centre rise or fall by the balance

of power between capital and labour. The transfer itself is the expropriation *cum* contradiction resolved as a refraction of the contradiction nesting the heart of the value relation. Capital is the dispossession of labour. The stream of value exemplified in the money form is a social category whose quantification depends on the superstructural balance. What is dear or cheap in relation to value is symbolically pre-decided by the power of the social class subject and in line with the interest of that same class subject.

Capital's wealth, including the saleable waste, increases with the progress of time as labour wanes or as productivity and its fetishised signification increases. That a developing country is super-exploited and that its recent transfers of value to the centre have peaked may relay more information about the rate of subjugation of that country to imperialism than what its moneyed capital transfer to the centre does. Afghanistan, for instance, exports little or no capital to the US, while the US funnels capital and waged-soldiers into Afghanistan. That does not mean that Afghanistan's value transfer to empire is nil. On the contrary, the value created by its very destruction via militarism is a production activity priced in the trillions. The war mobilises much of US moneyed capital realise it in US-inflicted war-waste. Moreover, the power emanating from the incapacitation of Afghanistan underwrites the excess issuance of US dollars, or the financial asset that becomes the wealth of the US-financial class. Subject-wise, the power that the US gains from destruction lowers the outlays on necessary labour and increases relative surplus value far afield. The war on Afghanistan mimics a form of foreign direct investment (FDI) whose 'backward and forward linkages' strengthen the waste production cycle.

The rate of exploitation is discernible from the changing shares of capital and labour over the social turnover cycle. These shares reflect the rate of abjection and the respective class powers of capital and labour in the class struggle. Sweatshop manufacturing activity and proletarianisation in the South are ongoing, but to narrow value transfers to the North only to the putative product cycle as it relocates to the ex-colonies (the point in Smith [2016]) and not to militarism and waste is a partial take on history. It places the source of wealth upon the machine cycle (lower tech moving South) in contrast to the bludgeoned masses *cum* agents of history by their act of dying early. For capital, it is the crushed labour subject in the South, which translates into lowly priced products and resources. The act of crushing labour itself is the primal industry of waste. The wasted lives are the explicit products or the implicit value in every item displayed on the shelves of Northern markets.

For the symptoms of super-exploitation and fixed capital assets derived value to define imperialism as in Harvey (2018 a,b), these also must correspond to the reproduction of the global labour process. The Harvey (2018 a,b) scheme of fixed capital resolving the economic surplus or overproduction imbroglio, is not the

decisive relation underscoring the regimentation or reproduction of labour. Imperialism regulates the reproduction of labour via the combined impact of indigency and wars. The law of value materialised in the practice of US/European aggression takes its cue from market signals and operates through political measures that remould the labour process. The law of value cannot be partitioned into this or that country's law of value (Amin 1974). As the systemic allocator of labour, it manifests differently by the degree of oppression exercised to extricate, engage and dispose of working people. Only US-led capital with its military reach and institutions manages to impose these measures. Neither Russia nor China significantly extend via military incursions nor control the IFIs and their culture of neoliberalism. More important, all the symptoms of imperialism without the dynamic of wars of encroachment phenomena do not make imperialism.

Either by fortress America or manifest destiny, the US's underlying belief system operationalises value with sub-classes or comprador considered dispensable. The US exteriorises these beliefs in its war, which also serve to re-erect its power symbols. Whatever seemingly progressive agenda it flaunts, such as democracy, it does so as part of the charade on display in a commodified world promoting the exact opposite of the declared objective. Even its liberally touted issue of gender equality *others* the developing world and paves the grounds the criminalisation of the masses. Not only does it serve as justification for aggression, it also imposes gender repression in many aggressed countries as these suspiciously perceive the Western traditions. In Islamic societies, for instance, the modes of gender repression do not trail from the distant past. The homogenisation of women's dress code is a novel phenomenon linked to mass commodification. US sponsored transfigurations in mores and traditions turn into the false opposition reared by capital and funded by comprador petrodollars as the modern ritual to oppose the traditions of Western societies. The inter-intra wars of 'identities situated above classes' refashion the conditions for future imperialist wars. With its carefully reared identities, imperialism chooses an enemy that incites further wars. It develops the playgrounds for anti-imperialist war in ways that do not undermine capital's rock, its private property. Perhaps not so anecdotally, but all one has to do is take note of the many Western universities' workshops attributing developing world problems to culture or religion, as against the weight of history, in order to prove that the US is not an imperialist power.

## 2 Substance and Value

Imperialism concentrates the expression of the law of value. Its practice informs of the repression exercised to regiment labour. Its purpose is to deploy a stock of labour power from the total labour available into production, and

preferably, through imperialistically imposed forms of exploitation. As postulated in the previous chapter, unlike Ricardo's theory of value, which is determined by the concrete amounts of labour, embodied in the material substance, and measured in an average labour time, Marx's value is said to be assessed *after-market* deliberations by the relative magnitude of value given in its moneyed form. It is not concrete labour, which is measured, but labour mediated into its abstract form.

Ricardo's value is a tangible and unmediated concrete substance. His commodity undergoes exchange as a result of the one-sided functional needs of society; it is consumption-led, or the commodity's *raison d'être* is to serve a function for society rather than expand by its compelling contradictions from within. To illustrate, fossil fuels expand/transform into CO<sub>2</sub> and, while fossil fuels are necessary to sustain accumulation and consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions implicatively become necessary. To arrest emissions, society must part with the stupor of consumption, or break the habit (Malm 2016). Such is the standard Western refrain. Parochially, people must rid themselves of capital's subjectivity and adopt the asceticism of Protestantism. Marx's commodity, however, is an objective alienated social product with a momentum of its own, which makes it production as opposed to consumption-led. It is not because people need fossil fuels, with its unwanted CO<sub>2</sub> that the commodity self-expands, it is because labour is a form of capital, while the working class exercises no control over the production of commodities. It is because the masses of the South are beaten out of their oil, and so the solution is to stop beating the South. It is objective history *qua* capital that consciously produces the CO<sub>2</sub> and the willing consumer of the CO<sub>2</sub>. To break that cycle history must be broken, which is to say, US-led imperialism must be defeated in the ex/colonies by warring against it even in its home base.

Self-propelled production is predicate of consumption. Also, the Marxian defined commodity is a social object whose internal contradictions transform it into its universal equivalent, the money form. Socially necessary labour time, or value proper is only one moment in a value relationship. Value alienated from the social labourer for private ends and mediated in the money form sets the motion of the commodity. Labour as a concept assumes a different corresponding form with the different analytical stages of commodity making. It begins as private labour socialised by fire and steel, literally people deprived of means of self-reproduction and thrown into the market to survive, as social labour. The social labourer then performs the concrete labour whose mediation in the money form transforms it into abstract labour. Private and social, productive and unproductive, concrete and abstract are the subjective dialectics subdivisions of social labour, *ergo*, the working class. They exist as real but

partial conceptual descriptions to elucidate the evolution of the value relation. The abstract or the general is the state of becoming of the many concrete or particular concrete labours that acquire a measure in money form post-exchange on the market.

Ricardo's thingification of value, that value is palpable work, or the physical effort embodied in the object, deviously permits value to acquire a national identity. One may say British value or Sudanese value. It bestows upon the value category a provenance other than global society. Value whose substance is a thing could issue from a national space as a thing – not so however as a relation. From a Ricardian and other mainstream angles, the formation of fixed capital assets over a specific national territory can be independent of the universal stock of knowledge or the international financial and power relations that have fashioned developments in the productive forces. Value becomes only the materiel with which people work upon a specific space independent of its history. Such an approach warrants the point that English wealth, the stock of value flows, is the product of concrete English labour. Wealth is construed as the effort on a given space but not the interrelated or historically amassed power through imperialist wars. It simply is the outcome of the physical and intellectual effort of English workers. The history of the commodity reduces to the owners of the transformed material within it, as opposed, to the social relations reconstituting it. Such is an empiricist method of reasoning: the *concrete* amount of what is perceptible to the senses in a given place or span of time is value, whereas the *abstract* is an idea of the concrete that cannot be seen or touched; hence, a metaphysical abstract.

I emphasised *after-market* deliberation above for theoretical determinacy. In the overdetermined whole, where dialectical-logical categories, such as form and content, essence and appearance, etc., follow no sequential order, that is as form and content evolve as process, determinacy rests with the leading subject, not with any other signifiers of the object. Subject defines the object's dynamics. Nothing in the contradictions of the dialectical categories implies the primacy of form over content, essence over appearance, or *vice versa*. Within the totality in which form and content actualise, determinacy rests with the class-delegated historical subject, the market and its fetishisms. On account of its essence or the laws decreeing the rate of surplus value, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall could be endlessly mitigated by severe repression-exploitation. As a case in point, the rate of profit appears steady or rising as it actually does, since in capital's accounts, economic growth rises, and since profits are a residual of growth when distribution holds steady. Commodity deification or the fetishism, the surrogates or agents of capital, in turn, impose the intensity of the law of value or the historical agenda of

repression. The imaginary constructs of capital are theoretically the leading links in the expansion of capital.

Marxian value is *the state of becoming* of the ‘particular’ or ‘concrete’ labour mediated into a ‘general’ or abstract labour through the market for exchange. It theoretically derives from a reading of the historical facts reasoned by dialectical categories of thought. These categories are interrelated and in correspondence with objective reality. They explicate the development of labour as it ascends from concrete to abstract, or private to social, as opposed to a multifarious actuality organised by laws of thought grasping partitioned events unrelated to the whole. The eclectic selection of observations from a dynamic whole, not perceived as a totality governed by laws of development, leads to infinite theories or no theory at all. In such theoretical nihilism, there will be as many theories as there are observations. It is complacent to pick and choose facts from reality to satisfy the prevailing ideological bent. The rigour of such theories is either of the type ‘I like it therefore it is true,’ or ‘if I can put my ideas in mathematical symbols, then my theory is rigorous.’ Marxian rigour is about following the development of the object in real time, in relation to the social forces that shape it, and uncovering its law of development. Its truth is processual *contra* partial, in the sense that what is perceived as correct now will be corrected in the future, but not in relation to counting the things we do not know, which is impossible, rather by accounting for changes in the law of development. Such rigour is historical rigour, which employs the categories of dialectical logic to interpret the development of the object by its laws of development, and hence it is both historical and rational (Ilyenkov 1977).

To expand on a point made in the previous chapter, the ‘concrete’ labour in Marx is different from Ricardo’s average time estimated from diverse conditions of labouring delivered into production as effective units of labour. True, labour goes into making things, however that is the philosophical subject/object relation, which is cross-historical. In an early myth of creation, the *Atra-Hasis* (c. 2000 BC), man (the subject) was created to work the earth (the object), and then there were all the other similar creation stories in all sorts of religious myth, which facetiously did not attribute copyright to the Akkadians. The labourer under capitalism still works the earth, but also falls under the social relationship of capital. She is not the metaphysical abstraction of man to which real man relates as some perversion thereof. For Marx, the concrete is the development of the abstract, just as the abstract is the development of the concrete. Their joint development is historical-law fashioned and resolves as the development of the object under consideration, which is the alienated product of labour.

Under capitalism, nature and its subject, substance, is the state of becoming of labour under capital or the product of labour, the commodity. The substance

assumed in the commodity form is market alienated. Such process of estrangement by the fetish of the market distinguishes capitalism and is reflected in thought by the laws of subjective dialectics (Ilyenkov 1977). The actual labour socially allocated for commodity production would only be the material substance of value, or its state of physical being. It is the physical substratum of the commodity, which presupposes its subject the value relation or the tug of war between capital and labour for the repossession of the social product. Value, a relation appearing only under capital, *becomes* the avant-projet of activity in the class struggle. Logically, social production is a totality constituted by the intermediation of subject and object, or under capital, by how the balance of the class struggle affords society the space and time into which it allocates its labour resources. Alternatively, once the law of value becomes the substratum of the development of society, the class struggle steers its development.

In the forms it assumes historically, value proceeds from an abstract/concrete one-sided situation into concrete/abstract or novel historical conditions. Concrete and abstract are categories of thought reflecting the stages of development in the object. Capitalist society changes its forms of social organisation in relation to profit making and its related crises. To follow the development of the commodity-object is to follow the history of the developments in its value forms in different stages of capitalist development. The preponderant new form of value is waste, which is thrusted chiefly upon the developing world, and primarily by means of imperialist wars.

### 3      The Terms of Trade and Value

Harvey's (2018a) prism of imperialism as 'the differential geographical mobilities of capital, labour, money and finance and the rising power of rentiers and the shifting power balance between various factions of capital (e.g. between production and finance) as well as between capital and labour' is a *false concreteness*. It is a detailed reflection of facts as they exist, unrelated to the dynamic dominant financial class at the helm of the complex social order. Without regard to class subject to law, one captures the different observations or events without capturing their subject; thence, no law of development and no class analysis. Instead of what appears, appears as such necessarily not not exclusively, the history of facts will remain un-integrated with a power structure that systematises the appearance of poverty more often than not. Without classes, laws of development, and concepts construed according to the primacy of subject, science will resemble a Ricardian-type concrete analysis. When US imperialism bombs, starves and twists the minds of peoples while draining their resources, it cannot be reduced to an identity with the differential geographical mobilities

of finance, capital and money. Imperialist history is not the history of capital and money as things. It is to be sure the history of the laws of capital in the practice of war synergised with a compatible ideology of war.

In any case, it is not coincidental that militarism as a domain of accumulation along with its imperialist wars are absent from Eurocentric views. Coincidence is necessity actualised. It is necessary for imperialist ideological apparatuses, to exclude the springboard of capital, its expansion by war. The issue of militarism extends to the way Western society socially spends at home to war abroad. Moreover, the question whether militarism and its many deaths products are moneyed is rarely probed. The commodification of the war and austerity dead and their moneyed value form are thrown out. Being selective of the facts, and/or omitting developments in the militarism/war phenomena as production spheres and processes of labour regimentation, which undergird the production of commodities and the reproduction of labour, dissever the leading relation of war from the hierarchically structured totality.

In the same text (2018a), Harvey acknowledges 'the significance of Marx's theory of relative surplus value which makes it possible for the physical standard of living of 'Northern' labour to rise even as the rate of exploitation increases to dramatic levels impossible to achieve through the absolute surplus value gained in the global South.' Here is another thingified 'better Western machines, higher productivity and relative surplus value' argument. It is an example of 'I measured wealth by the dollar amount, and hey the West is wealthier because it produces more things.' Value and its surplus are relations of expropriations. The expropriation cannot be confined to national-Western borders. It is as interrelated as the global production chain. It can be *post facto* guesstimated from the money form of the global surplus product. In value relations it is not the share of this or that working stratum from the moneyed social product that defines its rate of exploitation, the price to value ratio is class-struggle benchmarked. A stronger working class keeps more of the moneyed-form of value designated in real incomes for itself, and *vice versa* – another way to argue for permanent war. Incomes under capitalism are all rents associated with class power. Price formation processes rest upon a power platform laid out by history and co-mapped by its superstructural apparatuses. In the developing world, the power stage sketching out the rapport of price formation in relation to value is at least backed by a NATO aircraft carrier.

Moreover, the classification of the surplus by its absolute and relative components is a demarcation line meant to elucidate the composites of surplus labour. At a rudimentary level, 'the increased production of surplus-value arises from the curtailment of the necessary labour-time, and from the

corresponding prolongation of the surplus-labour' (Marx 1967). Both absolute and relative surplus value materialise as constituents of the social product. Unless by some outlandish assumption the price becomes a multiple of value by some arbitrary coefficient, there can be no possibility to concretely divide surplus value and attribute one portion to relative and another to absolute value. After all, the productive forces are not just machines, they are a unity of labour as subject with means of production as object.

An equally relevant question is why the act of decimating the developing world to draw cheaper commodities and minimise necessary labour does not count as a production-realisation sphere whose impact is an increase in the relative surplus value across the global spectrum of production. Interrelatedly, the cost-of-living (a quantitative facet of necessary labour) declines by the war-machine product whose subject is the relation of crushed working classes. Furthermore, current and future exchange value embodied in the money form of the decimated resources, lives, and nature as products of capital realised, are both, significant and predicates of social production. Better Northern production/productivity techniques may reduce the costs of working-class reproduction; however, it is war derived technology as reified subject, which curbs human life across the board, which is impetus of relative surplus value. Over the social cycle, there are cheaper commodities to sustain a society that inevitably prematurely dies. The imperialist war lowers necessary labour by reducing the social costs of labour reproduction per unit of time as well as per working class longevity. War-derived technology abolishes the labourer, realises her death, and/or condenses her many hours of socially necessary labour time experienced during premature death as the value flows piling up in wealth.

Value's moneyed form is a transformation of value enacted by the superstructure – the sociological determinant of the transformation problem. For the detection of value contribution to profits by source, or by its relative/absolute surplus value components, the degree of oppression exercised to strip the masses of their wealth, culture and overall working-class subjectivity must be accounted for. The looted assets/profits represent a single indivisible bundle whose substance is stripped working-class autonomy reified in commodities. Quantifying the contribution of specific nations to the rate of surplus value is a question of gauging the rate of imperialist barbarity visited upon these nations. Accordingly, the most aggressed and wasted corners of the Global South contribute most as they experience the highest rates of de-autonomy or waste exploitation.

What Harvey proposes is that the surplus value is more Northern because of the scale effect of higher Northern productivity relative to the South. Indeed, there are more capital and scale-produced commodities commanded by the North. Disputing this analytical/logical proportioning of the stock of wealth

in ways that mirror the stock of value is just as flimsy as disputing the point that wages equal the marginal revenue product of labour in neoclassical economics. Productivity equal wages, or value is price, etc., are capital's fabricated identities. Nothing could go wrong when capital valorises the product of labour as well the money value of labour power. Indeed, the wealth is the stock of commodities and money *before us*. The West is rich, it has got many commodities and its wage rates are high. This formal statement is indisputably valid, while its indisputability is the source of its erroneousness. It may also hold in actuarial terms so long as capital valorises the flows of Third World inputs contributing to the build-up of wealth in the North. If Togo or Benin are poor and export no capital, then over time, their contribution to wealth is minimal; but how they stayed poor is the question.

The money value assigned to inputs or outputs, just as the money-denominated revenue productivity of labour, is a class-power constructed symbol. Since capital sets the conditions of exchange upon which the prices of its products instantiate, it is fallacious to suggest that the sources of the dollar-denominated wealth are more in the North since the North's scale produced commodities predicated by barbarity in the South lower its necessary labour time. The combination of value capture via imperialist financial channels and value usurpation via the unequal terms of trade channels, constitutes the flow that bolsters Northern wealth-stock. Both channels reduce Southern wealth and shorten the necessary labour time by the massively induced de-development in the South. Relative surplus value as a relationship is then the principal product of imperialist practice. To raise surplus value, the North must systemically devastate the South. It gets more value per unit price from the South when the masses die off by structural genocide, or a high value for a high price when it applies militarism to them. Value to price is a power derived relation orchestrated by the superstructure to the benefit of capital. Such are the machinations of the imperialistically imposed terms of trade. Imperialism formulates the incubating grounds upon which the money form of value given in the fire-sale prices of Southern resources, which also conceal the origins and mass of the socially necessary labour time, the drained Southern lives, behind the making of Western wealth.

In this organic process of production, the crucial link responsible for the reduction of necessary labour time is the imperialisation of the South. Accordingly, for a more adequate quantification of surplus value, the concept of the product/commodity must be apprehended as a given material-ness conditional upon the animating power of the subject/imperialism. The quantity must echo the power of labour at the heart of the value relation – the degree of alienation. Without imputing the dis-empowerment of Southern labour, it is possible to arbitrarily state that Southern contribution to Western wealth is only in small part ascribed to colonialism or imperialism. However, when the

degree of alienation is the commodification and estrangement of life from the labourer, the rate of exploitation rises by the rate at which surplus labour is condensed in the act of prematurely wasting life over lower value outlays on a shorter life. Such is over the lifetime of labour as distinct from the working day and as waste sells in asymmetric social/event time.

Doubtless, theory must be quantified, measured and tested; however, that depends on the adequacy of the concept that is to be measured. Adequacy in abstraction must be freed from dominant ideological diktat. A fuller definition of the object involves a recognition of the subject or the animating force of the system; one must ask which class relation sculpted the ideas and the terrain for commodities to be money-valued in high or low prices. To illustrate with an example from the time of writing: Australia bought US-made submarines to support the US's containment of China. China happens to be Australia's first trading partner. The avowed purpose of the purchase is to protect Australia's trade routes with China. At face value, this condition says that Australia aggresses China as it trades with it. Such is not nonsense. Australia's capital is aware that the terms of trade with China ensure higher wealth transfers are the result of power balances – versus *doux commerce* or equal playing fields. To just gauge value from the volume of trade without associating it with the power of the historical agent makes real the unreal. The material of trade, the things, or their significations in money form do not correspond in an isomorphic fashion (one-to-one basis) to their values. Such subject-less conceptualisation of commodities omits history and constructs their interrelation in trade as relations between things.

Since the subject in the social relation of value ought to be considered for a more adequate concept of the object-commodity, the measurement of value must include a quantitative assessment of the power of the masses or capital in production. Similarly, the rate of development or de-development in the South is indicative of the sovereignty/power the masses exercise in allocating the social product. For example, the comparatively better performance of the more autonomous post-independence developing world correlates with a lesser rate of usurpation and imperialist dominion. The comparison with their plight under neoliberalism highlights the weightiness of anti-imperialist solidarity in pricing Third World resources. Equally important, the autonomy of the masses decides whether the substance of value is more sane than waste.

#### 4 From Value to Waste

It is imprudent to draw a boundary between relative and absolute surplus value, especially as these are *a posteriori* amalgamated in the social product and its moneyed form. The money form of value is historically choreographed

by capital incarnate in imperialist practice. It grows principally by the production of war-technology including its realisation in wars. In our overdetermined and time incoherent process of social production, much of technological innovations derive from war-technology. The war-entrapped society either subsists on rations or dies earlier minimising its costs of social reproduction. Since the West improves its technology as a residual of its bomb-making, it draws strength from a bomb. The bomb explodes in the developing world, it realises both itself as well as a number of dead as its product. Such is a waste process with an attendant surplus product comprised of the destruction in which the relative and absolute surplus value components are as objective and indistinguishable. The high-tech arising upon Southern de-development lower the cost price of commodities destined to support labour, while the de-subjectification and shortening of lives by bombing also reduce the cost of social reproduction. As the subject rationalises the destructiuon, the analytics indicate that total surplus in its relative and absolute surplus value components rises by the war technology put to use.

Capital's bookkeeping methods identify the final realisation stage with the sale of the type of commodity that a Northern worker produces, such as cars, bombs, etc. It counts the bomb as a product realised but not the dead humans realised as its products in the South; neoliberal strategies also act like a slow bomb. However, all the moments of production/realisation are co-determining and historically prefigured in social time, or the time in which capital organises social production by the combined signals of its profit motive and, more important, the stability of its rule. It is also a time in which causality is time asymmetric and interdependent. The uncertainty of historical development comes into being because the unknown future informs the present. Although it is feasible for functional reasons to formalise future events with risk/probability models, which predict occurrences, forecasting whether a law of social development will materialise in this or that occurrence depends on the unpredictable nature of shifts in consciousness organised to be historically relevant. Historical uncertainty may be coaxed into a formal framework, however, for processual reasons, the changing quality of future time that causes conditions in current time makes a mockery of such efforts.

To predict whether the laws of capital will bear socialism or sustain capitalism, one must know how people think and organise in the future, which is unachievable. To be sure, the purpose of social theory is not to predict future prices in order to support business decisions. That is a business-actuarial domain. Social theory apprehends the laws of movement of social systems that transition society from one stage to the next. Still, it cannot predict the timing at which the Northern capital wars to decimate whole countries in the South.

It can say for sure that war is necessary to capital. More important, it can point out that snuffing the megalith of capital requires a broad front of anti-systemic forces whose armed struggle carried in self-defence may undo the transference between capital's military and ideological power – for instance, transference is witnessed when capital bombs to obliterate, and by implication, it is rational for aggressed/defeated societies to adopt the reason of capital as a way of adaptation to defeat.

Social science laws are necessary but not exclusive tendencies whose uncertain futures are defined by the varying states of class consciousness and their realisation in forms of social organisation. So long as capital is the dominant ideology, its laws will be its realisation. Although the emphasis on overturning the laws of capital or the appreciation of *necessity* in the transition to socialism, which epitomises the Marxian notion of freedom, the unopposed laws of capital imply that barbarism will be omnipresent. Apart from their awareness that prediction is about astrologically getting the future right, Hegel and Marx tackled the issue from the standpoint of the historical balance of forces. To both thinkers, the modes of dominant spirit and/or consciousness respectively are the principal forces that furnish the grounds for particular patterns of development to emerge.

Apropos the subject of history, Hegel 'exhibited consciousness in its movement onwards from the first immediate opposition of itself' (Hegel 1830), while Marx (1845) exhibited revolutionary consciousness in its movement as the practice of subject/class at the bosom of the class struggle. Contingently upon the state of consciousness, capital may auto-negate into oblivion (barbarism) or flourish into communism. What Marxism predicts is whether society learns from the conditions of its struggle, or whether it internalises capital's ideology to self-defeat, which is the obvious. The latter case transpires when the waste implicit in value reaches maturity. Having knowledge of future auto-differentiating qualities is impossible. Assuming the future is a steady progression of the past and of the same quality over time serves as the basis of an actuarial science that functionally works to inform the dominant class – like guessing economic performance. Then again, that is only actuarial science and not social science.

Social time is also the time of social reproduction. Once squeezed by capital, its surplus social time component rises and gels in a mass of profits symbolised in a money form that adheres to capital's historical imperatives. For the mainstream, the mass of profits presents itself as an inexplicable immediacy, from which an equation formalised accurately reflects reality, or a symbol, unrelated to any sub-classification of labour. Mainstream profits emerge as a residual after deducting the variable and fixed labour and capital costs of production respectively. However, immediacy, what is given to the senses, is without mediation

or an explanation of the social forces that raze to the ground the obstacles facing production for profits. Upon a closer examination, the very act of razing the obstacles, the aggression exercised upon labour, when considered as a moment of production appears as actuality mediated by its own state of being (ontology) or in adherence to the laws of capital. The value process becomes self-explanatory because the act of mediation or the aggression is itself a product of capital. Every act of exchange or distribution on the production and consumption side correspondingly occurs by some degree of coercion in which the costs of production are offloaded upon labour and/or unpaid by capital. A consumer pays the war tax as a price, the immediate consumption tax paid at the shop, the pollution tax, the health tax, the real years of life cut down by the poorer environment and war. The costs may be bequeathed to the offspring making negative the wealth of future generations. The real-time exchange is not an issue of going to the supermarket for inputs/outputs and buying them. It is the events across history gelled by a class power rapport exercised to strip labour of its products, foremost its labour power, and down the road, its life. These relations of suppression are value relations and value forms. They are the predicates and material circumstance of value from which consciousness deflects. They are antecedent conditions to lengthening the workday (absolute surplus value) or increasing productivity to cheapen commodities destined to support working class reproduction (relative surplus value).

The surplus labour acquires its physical form from the totality of labour that has contributed to social reproduction. The relations constituting the labour process are the totality of labour. These reformulate the conditions for surplus value making by regulating the effort of society in time. Social labour is the condition of being or the premise by which social production proceeds. The profit rate as appearance, along with its essence, the law of absolute surplus value, materialise by the conditions of the *labour process* – '[i]t must not be forgotten that formation of surplus value is the absolute law of the capitalist mode of production' (Marx 1867). Moreover, all labour is *forcibly* socialised labour, while social labour carries out social production. Lenin (1905) reaffirms Marx's position that all labour in social reproduction is productive and 'in capitalist society, it is impossible to abstain from taking part in the exchange of commodities or labour-power.'

In a production process segmented according to capital's time and accounts system, capital tailors consumption to income. Capital reduces the cost of the consumption bundle of affluent societies by reducing the costs of its inputs. A natural corollary follows. The biggest nations dictate the production conditions to minimise the cost of their consumption. For Emmanuel (1972) the condition of big consumerist nations in command production lock into place the activity of excluding others from engaging in autonomous development.

Profits are class income. They are rents attendant on class power and its institutional forms. Profits are processes of expropriation that strip direct producers from their income shares; the equation of profits as revenue minus cost is the chimera of capital. These dispossessory processes interlaced with every step of the commodity making process, as it turns over, determine the bands upon which the money form of value assumes its instantaneous appearance of price. In these mediatory processes, formal antinomies represent comparative yardsticks to flush out the dynamic of the system, but not the *a posteriori* dynamic of the system that ought to be measured. To measure productive labour or, for instance, relative surplus value on the basis of capital's economic and time constructs, amounts to a scholastic exercise that attempts to quantify an un-consummated one-sided abstraction whose biased purpose is to show that the more machine-rich Western world is rich without the imperialism.

The divergence of the exchange value of labour power from its value (socially necessary labour time) foreshadows the alienation of use value from the labourer and foregrounds the rate of exploitation. Put differently, the difference between the rate of earnings of the direct producer and the money form of value the commodity assumes as it realises in the market adumbrates the nature of oppression. It may be as well to note that value proper is the socially necessary labour time reified, and since the commodity of concern is labour power, its value becomes its social cost of reproduction or the value outlays on labour. Formally, the effort it has taken to reproduce the labourer is the value of labour power. To spend less on labour/labour power and draw more on its use value, its being put to work, results in more surplus labour. For illustration, if the value of human life is established on the basis of equal life-insurance per person across the globe, then it is the prematurely dead labourers of Congo and Iraq that represent the commodities on offer realised as waste products, which contribute the significant flow to surplus labour. Additionally, in terms of relative surplus value, it is the massacred masses, which lower the costs of sustaining labour and reproducing labour power across the globe.

With labour's autonomy fading, the rate of exploitation rises. The rise over a trend has been likened to the blades of an opening scissor. As the blades gape away from each other, the departure of value from commodity price increases. However, time here is purely capital's time or the time signalled *post facto* as result of competition to reduce socially necessary labour time. Kumar and Stiglitz (1983) and Boratav (2001) used the scissors method to mirror the decline of welfare in agriculture relative to industry or the metropolis vis-à-vis hinterland as a result of shifts in the terms of trade. However, the widening scissors blades' gap here should account for more than the shares of incomes as components of GDP – evaluated over chronological time, workers' wages fall and profit shares rise. The fact that profits rise while wages fall over a

designated period of the commodity turnover cycle hints at the deeper story of rising rates of surplus value. It is an issue avoided by these authors. Let us consider a run of the mill example: the price of a Maxwell House coffee jar does not rise from ten to twenty times over the price of a kilo of coffee beans earned by the direct producer in Africa, simply because over a secular trend, the ratio of the price of exports to imports from the developing world to the developed world dips as the technology gap widens. Such is reification. Once more, prices and technology are not historical subjects. Theoretically, or as one accounts for the social subject incarnate in the class relation, the discrepancy in the terms of trade arises, not because of tech-differences, but because capital reasserts itself as subject pitted against labour. This is a magnification of the value relation, which rips use value from the producer and privatises the social product, here writ large and practiced as the imperialism ravaging the Third World. The social costs of reproduction, the value invested in labour and its labour power, respond to capital's compression of time, including no less a lower longevity. Similarly, they respond to the imperialistically imposed power and culture of submission continuously reconstituted over centuries by military superiority. The permanent aggression is the materialisation of a subject, capital, whose reason is the historical surplus value. The accumulation of power by the gun, and the imposition of capital's thought patterns as the received dogma, recreate the conditions for the commodity to further mature into waste. When the anti-systemic subject is the powerless slave in the value relationship, the unfettered law of value decisively assigns socially necessary labour time to waste.

## 5      Imperialism Thingified and Actuated by Price Signals

Patnaik and Patnaik's (2016) notion that imperialism premises upon the rising supply cost price of semi-tropical or tropical commodities overlooks the historical surplus value. It theorises imperialism on the basis of signalling prices, low colonial prices lowering wage bills in the centre, and amounts of imperialist booty. As causes go, all class systems must war for tribute. Insofar as tropical goods under capital as causes, these are the symbols of things and the things recreated by class power balances, which leave out the historically specific forces that propel imperialist expansion. It discounts the reason inherent to value relations, which under a crisis of overproduction, becomes the reason of the expanding commodity that denies development in the Third World, presupposed by not only by tropical and subtropical commodities, but primarily by commodified humans. Unlike pre-capitalist empires, imperialism is expansive commodification *and* denial of development by destruction. Sure enough,

rising supply cost prices of tropical and semi-tropical commodities compel capital to imperialise the developing world – the Patnaik's thesis; however, it is the social relation of Third World exclusion from development, which predicates imperialism. Price movements actuate imperialism but do not present the historical weight, which engenders it.

Historical materialism is not about symbols prompting history. It is about the consciousness associated with class formation that crystallise upon the material circumstance of social reproduction, which bears into existence specific modes of production. With regards to shifts in the capitalist mode of production, while capital dons its financial garb, it switches into modern imperialism. Such intensification of capital not only raises the universal commodity money form to the status of the supreme fetish, it also ushers in a waste cycle that accelerates the thingification of humanity. As money turns into more money in the centre, waste as value remains hidden from view. The reason of the expanding waste commodity, absorbed by labour, becomes the consciousness that regenerates in unity with the forms of the imperialist class. And because imperialist wealth must have a surplus value tributary, imperialism revs up the rate of exploitation in the South by repression and premature death namely practiced as constituents of waste accumulation. The power to deny development in the South reflects capital's newfound imperialist ability to alienate the social product from a direct producer subjected to its waste industry.

Expansionary empires predate a twentieth-century imperialism of commodity expansion responding to finance. The transition to capitalism was an auto-transformation resulting from the wealth wrought by an already existing empire altering its dominant production relations, from direct expropriation of the surplus to market-dictated expropriation. In a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity, the past is not totally negated. To borrow a term from Hegel, it is sublated or preserved and negated at once. For Hegel, history, or the unfolding system of social relations, accumulates by indeterminate reason as subject. However, reason refashioned/recategorised by the implementation of real acts in real time, or the resultant praxis of class struggle, is the way Marx frames consciousness. History could self-negate gradually or in ruptures; with rupture representing the discontinuity. In both cases the ghosts of the past are retained. True, rising cost prices of tropical merchandise are evinced *ex-post* and they do inform capital on how to carry out the repression of labour to minimise socially necessary labour time; still, the price itself is an instantiation of capital's reason and power. That reason *qua* class exercised as imperialist expansion moulds the terrain for the relation between price-making and price-taking to come full circle.

There is a contrast between price triggering action and a motivational history laying out the playground of action. Under imperialism, the motivational force

of history is the reason of the commodity, its dynamic to self-expand under the onus of high velocity finance, which as it (commodity's reason) becomes received theory undermines social conditions in a way that makes surplus value *identify* with waste before it develops into its profit form. *Identification here means* capital devises a price to be equated to value. For instance, in addition to constructing the value of the life of the Afghan equal the low amount of Afghani income, capital turns the cheaply valued life into the wasted human whose premature death generates a stream of profits for empire. Imperialist denial of development by acts of militarism and perpetrated indigence, are imperialism's historical reason or class hypostatised. In the vertically ordered gradation of repression, it is imperialist ideology realised in aggression to develop the aggrieved South, which paves the grounds for the lower prices of tropical and sub-tropical commodities to emerge as epiphenomena. The aggressive acts are the actualised reason of the capital class signalled by its fetishes. In such a process, prices may signal the onset of imperialist activity, but it is historical surplus value realised in the weight of history that aligns actions construed as voluntary acts by social agents to the demands of capital. This automatic or coerced compliance defines the band width of prices with which value is veiled commensurably with the demands of capital.

At a further remove, the Keynesian terms of '*ex-ante* or *ex-post*' decisions by economic agents are not the same as history's decisions. They are the behavioural-personalised decisions that override social time. History for the mainstream is personalised. However, social time or the time of history is the time of the labour process whose matrix of power, which remoulds its price matrix, is governed by the law of value exercised as imperialism. To construct theory by the signals of the capital-erected price system without referring these signals to their social mediators, drops the continuity of time whose dynamic is a law shaped by the march of history and its associated state of consciousness. The price signals must be subsumed under the law, otherwise theory becomes as partitioned as the signals one draws from the changing prices. Prices are products of the competition between the many capitals of capital. However, competition is never free, and prices are endemically distorted by the setter of the rules of the game and the tug of war and/or reconciliation of various capitals. Competition is what capital does; however, it is not the essence of capital. The essence of capital is the value relation and its law of value whose function is to allocate resources for the purpose of profits. At a foundational level, countries with or without the commodities of the tropics will be imperialised. Imperialism arises because overproduction must deny peripheral development, while growth by the industry of life-extraction is the ontology of capital, or the remaking of surplus value by wasting man for waste's sake.

In the historical surplus value, imperialism and inter-imperialist rivalry are a must because of control over value formation processes, which include the de-subjectification and subjugation of labour far afield – the denial of development is a capital's imperative. The theoretical distinction becomes capital wastes by definition and so follows the usurpation of sub-tropical commodities as the by-product of waste. The maturity of finance, the evolution of cryptic finance into a universal commodity represented in the dollar and held as means of transaction and means of savings across the globe, may appear to smooth out inter-capitalist differences as they strengthen the ties of the financial/parasitic classes across nations, but at the same time, they deepen their rifts because productive capital bitterly loses control of its value chain vis-à-vis the US's hegemony backing its risk-free assets by militarism. Naturally, for US assets to be risk free and act as tributaries for its imperial booty, the US must inject risk in the assets of others. Tangentially, the point that instability abroad is the reason for dollar primacy does not appear to beg the question, does the US have a vested interest in introducing instability abroad. Galbraith (2022) says 'as recent crises make clear, today the dollar-based order is supported mainly by instability elsewhere,' but does not mention imperialism.' Few ask how the military bases of NATO and Western ideological apparatuses contribute to the US's vested interest in instability abroad. Considering social reproduction fewer question how the policy instigated instability itself, the war/neoliberalism as process, is intrinsically a value process.

Patnaik and Patnaik highlight the constraints that a progressively exhausted agricultural limit imposes upon production. Rents on land rise by declining marginal quality of soil for both Marx and Ricardo. This 'physicality' critiqued by David Harvey in his commentary on Patnaik and Patnaik's work of (2016), 'eliminates history, which distinguishes Marx's materialism from the physical materialism of natural sciences' [Harvey speaking here]. While Harvey suggests that capitalist imperatives modify nature, he also adds that 'Marx does not abide social theories that depend on nature because dialectics studies the relation between economy and nature.' Not that the Patnaiks' did not look into that relationship, however, it so happens that Harvey's use of terms like dialectics, class and production relations, which ought to describe human activity, to echo Perlman (1969), are raised to the status of external and even natural forces which determine the activity; 'they play the same role as original Sin in the theories of medieval mystifiers.' Aside from the obvious that the physicality is the reified social form of capital, which in its motion re-constitutes the grounds upon which social theory is reconceptualised, Harvey's concepts are *ahistorical* forms. Like so many Western Marxists, these permit him to shove Marx's name in a historical materialism at the service of imperialism. For instance, Harvey reverts to the Marxian 'annihilation of space through time' to peddle that the tropical landmass

has been absorbed within the capitalist process of time space compression, and that that 'the temperate regions have accumulated distinctive monopoly powers far beyond those claimed by the Patnaiks for the tropical landmass.' However, power is class represented in US bases and NGOs is the basis of monopoly power, and class evolves either by anti-systemic struggle or by imperialist sub-delegation. This discrepancy is crucial because otherwise once any sort of power accumulates in the South, it can generate development and, as such, capitalism, as opposed to socialism, becomes reformable and a force for progress. Whereas for instance developed Israel and Apartheid South-Africa derived their powers and wealth dividends from the West, they have stripped the broader African and Arab masses from the fallout of development in the productive forces. Militarism, through its many bases and small states serving as advanced strategic posts, is something Harvey brushes aside as another component in an equation rather than the nub of accumulation.

Harvey's demarcation lines between pro-systemic and anti-systemic class powers are not only omitted, they are also bundled up by national, and at times supernatural personal volition, as opposed to class boundary. He says: 'it was the genius of Lee Kuan Yew to create Singapore as the exception to this rule (with Brazil, China, and India lurking rather far behind)' for these countries 'cannot confront the monopoly power of metropolitan capital when it comes to advanced automotive or aero-spatial engineering, electronics, pharmaceutical technologies and products, and biomedical engineering' – lost here is the class perspective in his personalisation of history. His proposition that personal genius evades imperialism runs counter to the class centrality of historical materialism. Irrespective of its validity or invalidity as an observation, the genius of that king or that president do not pass as laws of historical materialism. General Park of South Korea achieved development only because the US marionetted the process to build a strong military base countering China. The same applies to the few states that leapt into first world rank like Israel and others. *Apropos intelligent leaders*, 'intelligence has never saved anyone' (Fanon 1952).

Unless theory frees itself of ideology, which only occurs fleetingly in a process of negation, experimentation or inter-social comparison, tech-advances are forms of capital, which when conceived as such, reproduce capital. To rationalise the continuity of imperialism by its substantive forms without reverting their changing nature to the changing nature of the totality or the class struggle is undialectical. By definition, dialectics was the *dialektike Techne* or the art of classifying concepts into genera (Aristotle's Categories), and with Marx and Engels it became the world represented as a process in constant motion as well the attempt-made to trace out its connections, which make a continuous whole in its movement and development (Engels 1878). Dialectics is both ontological as well as epistemological or it regards thought as a process

of change as much as the objective world and sees that they are in a state of becoming, which is the result of a tendency contained within them (Engels 1878). Harvey's approach, however, explains a dynamic process as emanation from a Marxian concept rendered as a constant metaphysical form, or that processual reality must fit into the unchanging form. That is not too different from explaining the world as the outcome of divine will; how so?

A definition of imperialism without law of development ceases to capture the facts as dynamic relations or the novel forms of capital, Harvey (2019 a,b) naturally wares down imperialism into many hegemonies. The growth of metropolitan centres in previously underdeveloped Eastern areas thins down the concentration of central capital, and for him it thins down imperialism. However, the dollar denominated wealth remains strongest and like time squashing space, the dollar dominates all spaces, while the East rises by default as a result of the anti-imperialist weight of China. The concentration of physical and moneyed asset-wealth that the US loses to the East should in no way imply that smaller replicas of US imperialism will be springing up in Asia. The loss of wealth to the East means for Harvey that imperialism is no longer an appropriate conception of Western practice, and there are many mini-imperialisms and hegemonies elsewhere. The definition Harvey had of imperialism does not change, it just splinters into many conceptual clones of itself to accompany the new morphology of capital. This approach is arithmetical. It divides the money symbols of the assets in thought on the basis of shifting physical wealth concentration observed empirically and then concludes that such diffusion of wealth writes off imperialism. Here, there is a mis-definition of imperialism as things outside thought, a marked absence of laws of development, and no dialectical unity between thought governed by laws changing in correspondence to changing realities – that is why Harvey arrives at his 'alternating hegemonies but no imperialism.' The theory corresponds to what is *selectively* perceived by experience, then that selection is not revised in thought, and later it is divided as if it is a quantity. There is more physical capital in the East, and it now represents a significant share of world capital, it so follows that the East exercises some monopoly over wealth making. The determinedness of class or imperialist class, the capital relation of social reproduction, behind wealth making is nowhere to be seen. China's specific national wealth character is omitted.

Insofar as making the case for the dissolution of imperialism by selective facts, it may be as well to recall that dialectics consistently refers the part to whole. Equally, it is about gauging the mediatory role of social relations as elements in a hierarchically ordered totality, the sphere of social production, which is itself (the totality) real and the crucible of social forms, or social relations. The dialectic of totality is about the unity of oppositions, or as Hegel (1831) puts it 'the positive in the negative,' or more concretely for Marx, the

unity of thought with practice. Such is a world dominated by the US's ideological hegemony interfaced with its militarism while gliding upon the dollar-dominated financial sphere. These constituents of imperialist class power intermediate one another, and increasingly sponge the global product through finance. Moneyed wealth seeks the hegemonic dollar, the zero-risk asset, which is so as a result of imperialist intervention. In social production, the Eastern fixed assets, including some of China's, have a dollar equivalent whose home is the US and its financial market. Thus, the selective fact of growing fixed assets in the East becomes a false alibi of moneyed wealth concentrating in the East. More so, wealth is waste, and the higher frequency of the financial turnover rate compels the planet to self-waste. The Eastern wealth hypothesis ought to be rethought as substance because its growth is immersed in waste. Save China, beneath the glitter there may lie the Asian values syndrome of dreadful poverty and long working hours. That wealth laden with waste is part of an auto-destructive process realised as the brainchild of a history led by a financial class whose structure is the Western hemisphere.

Harvey's half-empirical/half-metaphysical conception of imperialism also defies the dialectical law of unity between the rational and the historical. As history unrolls and no longer fits into the precepts devised to define imperialism, the logical no longer corresponds to the actual. Capital concentrates in the East and elsewhere (Harvey 2018 a,b), so in terms of physical assets by geography, the rule that capital concentrates/centralises in the US and Western Europe has been flouted. Ilyenkov (1961) observed that this law of subjective dialectics (unity of rational and historical) benchmarks the difficulty of dialectical logic because gathering evidence corroborating the rationale of an argument for history from unfolding events requires the continual establishment of adequacy and relevant historical causation. The observable facts inevitably include anomalies that defy the law; however, it is the *necessity* of the law, which must be proven obsolete, for the law to be revoked. For example, it is *necessary*, although not *exclusive*, for capital to aggress labour and expropriate it, or equally, for imperialists to aggress the Third World and strip its resources by commanding the financial means of value transfer – these actions consummate the law of value. However, there will always be marginal cases, anomalies, where such does not occur. Under the clout of the dominant ideology, dollar hegemony, sanctions on developing states and military aggressions become the US-European measures that expropriate and support their concentration/centralisation of wealth and power. The rise of China dented the imperialist process, but it is yet to overcome it.

Harvey (2016) observes that rivers and railroads in West Africa are configured to drain resources to the sea (Harvey 2016); however, instances of

extractivism represented in geography are not unchangeable. In areas where imperialism was confronted, its surplus usurpation channels have been physically and financially reversed. The social and physical geography by which value is retained may be reconfigured by an anti-imperialist subject. Physical assets in South Korea and China may look the same, but their commanding social relations are pro and anti-imperialist respectively. So much for the hype about the sameness of wealth in the East when China nurtures its agriculture, consistently raises wages and maintains a regulated capital account capping value drain despite being fully integrated in world trade, while South Korea is more a military base for empire than a factory of electronics. Physicality may alter or preserve its character, but what matters is its class content and command over value creation/transfer mechanisms.

As European powers inter-imperialistically competed early in the twentieth century, some resorted to buying off sections of colonised populations by the injection of token development projects (Abdel-Malek 1981; Hobsbawm 1987); however, waste-engrossed US imperialism unleashes disproportionate destruction upon the developing world. As things should, the practice of imperialism covaries with the class struggle rapport. Such is a historical process whose constitutive laws are the rational side of history; these laws are corroborative of the systemic extraction and drain of value via militarism and finance to the centre. These laws may have gained in impact but they also have not changed since the beginning of the twentieth century. The US, which is *differentia specifica* and heir to European imperialism, remains the centre that concentrates capital through the command of exchange value processes and its moneyed circulation. For Harvey to dismantle imperialism as the conceptual tool for analysing the current historical phase, he must show that the fixed Eastern assets, the emerging historical facts, have replaced the US as the receptacle of global financial flows. He also must prove that China has resorted to bombing for control as its principal industry. Neither have happened. While it is true that imperialism cannot change the world without being changed itself, the fact remains that much of world assets remain dollarized, while the class essence of imperialism still rests upon the European store of historical surplus value. The unity between the logic of imperialism, its displacement of the capital-labour relationship onto a US-European centre exploiting whole nations in the South, and the persistence of the US as the gutter of value in its money form, are reasons not to prematurely inter the Leninist concept of imperialism.

The cross-national class formation develops into a structure that governs international relations. The idolisation of state boundary, such as Harvey's position that Brazil cannot confront imperialism whereas Singapore can by the intelligence of its leader, neglects that there are few small states that have

joined first world league as imperialist military posts. The concept of imperialism ought to reference its dynamic as well as the physical boundary it tackles. What to include and not include in the definition of imperialism is ideologically denoted A state empty of working class and revolutionary content, such as the Indonesia described in the works of Andre Vltchek, without its compradors, is just a formality or faux historical force.

Imperialism assessed by the size of stocked physical assets is Harvey's biased abstraction. It allows him to hypothesise that progress departs from a 'Northern-commanded development' of the productive forces, while development in the South is gauged from its laggard starting point. However, the equation more commodities are more development implies race supremacy in the North. Developments in the South are relegated to the lost opportunities on offer from the North that lower Southern races have forfeited. They are all not as smart as Singapore. Some brown people have done well because of Europe, and so why did the great mass of the planet not do well. This stance counters a history of waste or the fact that starving and bombarding the South to curtail its indigenous growth is the key source of wealth for the North and a production sphere on its own.

The imperialist war trajectory restructures class formations to resolve the crises encountered by capital. As such, development, the resultant of the class struggle, has so far remained subordinate to capital's historical mandate. Colonised social formations not only initially reacted to colonial plunder, their strategies, class relations and development outcomes are steadily reformulated by imperialist aggression. It is un-historical to solely account for peripheral development by the initial imperialist shock or some spotty details and then drop the expanding value behind the unrelenting imperialist aggression, which recreates the social forms of capital. The colonial settler case best exemplifies a capital form recreated by continuous aggression. Settlers transform the landscape with unrelenting massacres not so much as measures of self-preservation, but as the delegated authority of the commodity as self-expanding value. All the while, they could just point out that they greened the desert as achievement; thence, the form of capital. Imperialist aggression instantiates social man and the social institutions in the image of capital. It redesigns the historical groundwork for waste production and consumption. While the planet resides under the threat of environmental and or nuclear annihilation, capital appears as if it has nothing to do with the waste; the islets of success are its doing, while the waste swamp is this culture or that person's fault.

To propose as I did that the value relation amplifies by the rule of commodity fetishism into imperialist expansion is inducible after the fact. In typical Marxian fashion, the present holds the clues to the past. I do not arrive at the phenomenon of waste/imperialism impelled by profits associated with waste-making through deduction. I do not build upon the axiom that value

self-expands, then stitch the facts with the initial logical building blocks. I begin with the phenomenon of waste and relegate it to its origin, the contradictions at the heart of commodity. These contradictions are mediated to reduce necessary labour time, or equally a process in which shortening longevity is central. Whenever capital encounters a crisis, it oppresses to raise surplus value. Oppression is the mediatory process that initially birthed capital and continues to build its forms. It is both, its being and state of becoming. It is also the product of an ideology, which is the *necessary* outcome of alienated social relations (Marx 1845). The commodity society creates and that command its life processes are the reason of the commodity applied. It is a reason that rules the social realm by its capacity to pervert the perception of reality. Consciousness is conscious existence, and although thinking is the direct efflux of material behaviour, through the prism of ideology 'men and their circumstances appear upside-down' (Marx 1845). Accordingly, to use dialectics in the examination of this state of efflux, or to set upright the ideologically distorted images by the tradition of historical materialism, one ought to aim at the explanation of not only the origin of the capitalist form, but also why this form, here summed up in the phenomenon of underdevelopment that persists, and how it reproduces capital. It is about how the colonial power leaves in place after its departure from the colony the ideological roadmap and the class articulation that bolster capital without having troops on the ground. Boal (1979) labelled such process 'cultural colonialism,' or the oppression that remains in the realm of culture even after the end of formal political colonialism; however, it is concretely about how the comprador becomes a sub-thing to the thingified capitalists of central formations. They become the institutionalised political forms of imperialism or the class content of the peripheral state, which does the bidding of imperialism during the physical absence of its US soldiers on the ground.

The idolised/idealised state of the mainstream is devoid of the comprador. Within the Western class-empty state, which owns the means of production on behalf of capital, especially the war machines, the historical subject disappears. With rhizomic mini-hegemonies allegedly sprouting everywhere, blame can no longer be apportioned to white civilisation. In contrast to Althusser's overdetermination, where the subject is referred to its genera, such as the masses or the class struggle, the formal subject is a symbol without reference to the immanent aggressions of imperialism – such as social movements whose jargon is imperialistic but which are romanticised as defeated noble men in search of NGO charity from the West. Without the class content of the state as its state of becoming as product of imperialism, the masses vanish as subjects. Still, at a methodological level and in a thought framework erected upon substance formalised, there can be no negation. Imperialism then can be said to have not existed at all, so it does not have to disappear into hegemonies. The

formal system subdivides into itself as if a numeric operation. It never divides into its opposite as reality would – external quantitative change does not bear upon the object to induce internal qualitative change (Thomson 1970). Moreover, with such mode of abstraction presented outside of real time and interrelatedness, the West becomes a subject of an imaginary history. It additionally becomes an ideal that is just as unrealistic as the metaphysical abstract with which it is denoted, and therefore unpalpable or without a geography or an address. The West becomes a fantasy or an undefeatable megalith that prohibits revolutionary change. Without a real target to aim at and wrest power, the masses can only discipline imperialism, however, they cannot change it.

## 6 The Physical Limits of Value

Patnaik and Patnaik (2016) made the point that famines arise out of the pressure that exportable cash crops press upon subsistence farming. Not only agriculture was commodified, all of social nature too. The commodification of the planet crowded society out of sane products and starved humanity of clean air and water. The same push for cash commodities in the South, for its agricultural produce, is an offshoot of life extraction. The push the scope of waste and famines. Commodification socialises and subsumes the labour of the planet to capital. Naturally, with waste being the principal activity and form of capital, working our way from the waste phenomenon by tracing its mediatory links, we arrive at the point that the motive of capital was waste from *day one*. The genocides were a commodification of natives that basically extracted their lives out of them for a price. Although Engels (1844) rebutted Malthus by suggesting that the earth was overpopulated from day one as a result of underproduction-underconsumption, under capital one may qualify, the earth is overpopulated on day one too but because of overproduction-underconsumption, the upshot of producing too much and forcing labour to consume little is the industry of wasting humans.

As capital's form evolves with its ideological ascendance from erosion of subsistence farming to erosion of the planetary basis for survival, the natural limits thesis of value comes to the fore. Society's time is social time. So said, social time is the time which is seized by the reason of the commodity, and which could be overcome by anti-systemic practice (Marx 1867). To begin a study of imperialism from the category of rising prices, limitation to agricultural space and declining productivity, or to put things on a proportionate basis between the instance of the price and the continuum of history evolving by imperialism, discloses the incongruity between social time and chronological

time. Prices are entered in the accounting books of capital as an observation listed at a point in chronological time to conceal the social time or the history of value making. The continuum is the real time that people experience at work, or the time wasted from their lives. Although the cost price moves up and hastens imperialist aggression, the groundworks for price-making are themselves developed by imperialism's power play. The rising price trend of tropical commodities denoted as cross-sectional symbols of reality captured in chronological time does not correspond to/or disclose the historical forces and/or the dynamics of the system. These one time prices at the till leave undected the hidden capital. Capital or its representative social forces at work are beyond the visible world (Althusser and Balibar 1965).

To situate price before class or to assume that the motion of class is price motivated rather than social relation determined is inapposite. Politics is structure to content of and logically and historically antecedent to economics. Imperialist aggression may take a hint from price movement; however, its *raison d'être* is aggression *per se* by the weight of a history inclined to waste. Imperialist war regulates a price-making platform that imperialism had already influenced in the past. The reinforcement of price at the service of class permits the moneyed form of value to act as a conveyor belt of value transfer. The proposition that the price, which imperialism carves out is the price that ignites imperialism, is tautological.

Furthermore, because there cannot be full correspondence between material circumstances and ideological development, and because theory cannot emerge as a spin-off upon the empirical observation without a categorisation by subject, the signalling system of prices cannot replace class struggle as compass of history. Price movement may be instantiations of class to supplement theory, but it cannot stand for the laws of development. To be sure, it is the social relation of capital that disembowels labour's forms of social organisation, its institutions, its ideologies and rights, and which then sets the stage for all of capital's symbols, including its price system, to be its surrogate agencies. Conjointly, the rise of commodity production was concurrent with imperialist expansion. These reinforced each other. The accumulated booty of war was commodity production whose wealth supported the run of the mill commodity production. History's theory is neither modellable nor inferred reflexively from the historiography of selected events. Snapshots of trade events projected on a wall against their corresponding prices are not antecedent nor subsequent to imperialist aggression. What comes before in *thought* may be the abstract budding into the concrete or *the reverse*. The social form of capital given in the commodity and its rule precede its language manifest in price signals. The commodity must exist before it trades for a price. However, in social

history, capital's social forms interrelate in an overdetermined totality whose leading relation is the capital relation. Capital's history, the auto-transforming social relation is then read in terms of the dialectic of the ascent abstract to the concrete, or in how the abstract but real capital relation concretises in the relations *become* activities that reproduce society. For this, capital creates social time, its own time or the time in which minimum social labour is performed. To do so, it liquidates the time of life in short intervals of concrete labour. The price form is then nothing more than an instance of capital's mediatory measures manifest in chronological or hypothetical time. The appearance of the price form, appearance as one-sided abstraction, observed as an entry in the conventional accounts of capital, is one of many outer shapes of capital's essence or its law of value.

## 7 War as Social Production

From the point of social reproduction, all the inputs into the globally integrated production process, including all idle assets are legal or de facto property and, as such, are commodities meant for exchange or economic categories. Commodities bestowed with mystical powers are independent of labour and rule labour (Marx 1867). In particular, the labour-power commodity and com-modified nature insofar as they impact the reproduction of labour influence production and exchange whether they are being consumed, set aside or destroyed. It may be as well to recall that the commodity commodifies man or under capitalism, 'the worker produces capital, capital produces him – hence he produces himself, and man as worker, as a commodity, is the product of this entire cycle' (Marx 1844). All that is natural comes under the rule of capital and the nature, which reproduces man, becomes social nature. Commanded by capital, the unity of man with nature is then metabolised in production at excessive rates to sustain higher rates of profit. Surplus value requires that the system exponentially uses more units of natural and human inputs per unit of output. For such explosive system, the surplus value at the origin of profits lies in the consumed people in production as well as the socially reworked nature that consumes people.

The costs of capital shifted onto society undermine the social reproduction of labour. The assault on nature corrodes the basis of natural reproduction and turns nature into a machine (a dead labour) which uses living labour as input to produce himself as dead man or output. And just like the run of the mill machine, which is 'the most powerful instrument for shortening labour time', and which 'becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of

the labourer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital' (Marx 1867), so does polluted nature on a macroscopic scale. Polluted earth becomes one big machine. In this metabolic social reproduction system, while the value outlays on variable capital expand as labour auto-consumes in waste production to offset declining surplus value, capital, capital egged on by quick turning finance raises its rate of exploitation by hiring and consuming more living labour in shorter time spans to undergird a higher rate of surplus value.

While the consumption of man by man proceeds by the reigning ideology dulling the masses, the process of resource allocation, inclusive of auto-destruction as production, remains guided by the now unfettered law of value. Just like the environment, which is not tribal, there is a holistic law of value, which is not bound by national borders. Its gradated impact upon the world is similar to the Covid-19 virus, with un-socialised underdeveloped countries with weak public defences bearing the brunt of the disease. The law mobilises, demobilises, and terminates resources to meet the requirements of the metabolic rate of social reproduction. For instance, the massacre of Iraqis and Congolese, or others around the world are connected to any other production/consumption activity in the advanced imperialist countries. Synced with ideology, the guns and waste industries of capital reach labour wherever it is and incorporate it in production. The interconnectedness or accumulation on a global scale makes variable capital the equivalent of the value outlays on global labour.

The neoclassical heuristic assumption that capital is mobile, but labour is immobile, shared by Eurocentric Marxism, is faulty for two reasons. First, because the flow of refugees is rather steady across history or varies to the demands of capital and its imperialism. So labour flows are regulated by the intensities of war and austerity in the periphery. Secondly, because value, the socially necessary labour time, transpires as an abstract labour whose value form is the money form and whose time is social time, then the space and time of labour are reciprocally moved by the demands of value's moneyed form. Money as a social convention has a fictional existence with real powers, which transcends conventional space and time. Its determination has nothing to do with its paper or metal substances or the real markets and commodities it denotes, and more to do with power rapport of capital as a social relationship whose laws shape the terrain for the movement of resources.

Imperialistically decapitated societies, whose workers engage in the production of commodities or whether their death is the commodity on offer, these are value and relations of value. They produce something of value that sells on the market inclusive of their premature demise, which is simultaneously required as input and output in waste accumulation. For the mainstream,

the greater mass of global labour, the humans associated with low wage tags, are insignificant to production on account of capital-constructed statistical or cultural/institutional irrelevance. However, the mainstream begins with a price tag refashioned by imperialism and its wars, which projects anything but itself as significant. The history of colonial and imperialist conquests is written off as something that occurred too far in the past to matter in the present. In the chauvinist vernacular, Arabs and Africans have had time since colonial soldiers left their territories, yet they could not lift themselves out of misery. The usual reasons attribute underdevelopment to some 'essentialist' tribal or religious trait inherent to the other. The pejorative peaks with the adage, 'the Muslims or Africans are not ready for democracy'. Since its inception, Western democracy, which is means of class power exercise, could still be reduced to 'English workers who gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies and think of colonial policy in exactly the same way as the bourgeois think' (Engels 1888). In hindsight, when universal suffrage appeared on the scene, it did so in a superiorly armed colonial structure that embellished empires and cemented the Western working class partnership with imperialism.

The real events, the 'our women vote to bomb Muslim women', and the voyages of European discoveries, more appropriately the butcheries, exemplifying the workings of the law of value, are said to be shocks with un-sustainable after-effects. Like a flu, they sicken for a brief stretch of time and disappear. Wealth however is reconstituted by the rate of exploitation, which is proportionate to wasting lives and nature, principally in the ex-colonies. The West democratically votes to implement global policies of value usurpation, the latest façade of which is neoliberalism. Under the guise of modernisation or as an effort to police unruly savages, it votes to consistently war against the under-developed world. Foreign aid, war spending, propaganda expenditure and, in particular, social spending to rear healthier more skilled lackeys of empire, are investments that boost imperialist rents. The working class of the aristocratic nations, whose wages are subtended with imperialist rents, has a vested interest in higher imperialist booty with least costs in taxes.

From a systemic perspective, every spending item on Western social reproduction is an investment in imperialism. These real and ideological assaults reconstitute the commodity and its price system as conceptual constructs of capital deployed against the masses. Of the many commodities, the waste commodity is recreated by the dictatorship of capital as either beneficial or indispensable to society and fit for consumption. Conversationally, whether compelled to, or by political persuasion, the consumption of waste proves that the homogenisation of individual tastes allows the 'impossible' to happen – in

relation to the impossibility theorem of welfare (Arrow 1958). The dictator *qua* capital levels taste differences between people and because individuals decide to consume waste, just as capital wants them to, it is then possible to aggregate their similar 'personal preferences' to derive a social welfare function based on personal choice. It does not require a General Impossibility Theorem (Arrow 1958) to show that for things to add up, they must be reduced to a single quality and be assessed as quantity by some measurement unit.

In relation to Arrow above, the notion that things are different or auto-differentiate is already an intuited condition innate to being. In Aristotle's ontological approach, secondary substances admit primary substances of different qualities (Aristotle's *Organon*), while for Hegel (1831), 'the universal should not be confused with what is merely held in common,' and in both cases categorisation rendered possible by mediation stands for the aggregate condition, the general, or the universal – used interchangeably. These metaphysicians assert the common-sense position that differences in types must be traced back to some origin in thought or practice by following their developments in time. Rational choice theory in the tradition of Arrow, however, mathematises or annuls the historical conditions that hand down choices to powerless people as binaries. Historical alternatives are refashioned by the social relations of capital into either-or options. To do so, capital must fashion un-historical people, deprived of the sovereignty combined with revolutionary consciousness to realise the grounds upon which more of their class-favouring alternatives may gel. To postulate that a social welfare function could be formally arrived at from a discipline of mainstream social science and that would still vaguely resemble real welfare is beyond credulity. For concordance between micro (personal choice) and macroeconomics (social choice) to occur, or for the undoable to formally become doable, the repression visited upon labour to shrink humans into automata or waste-consumers must continuously rise.

Just like any other industry, imperialist wars are multi-layered commodity realisation platforms. Every past and future stage of production consumes and consummates (realises) in and into a quantity of input and outputs for an implicit, observable or a future price. Wars are enacted by and reenact the historically countercyclical measures required to readjust the US-European business cycle. They emanate from the waste predisposition of value relations. The statistical lags/leads between wars and economic recovery may guide us on how many years before or after a crisis wars occur, but statistical causality is false causality. Wars are the foundation of an imperialist economy, which self-propagates by more wars. In statistical jargon, war becomes the dependent variable explained by itself, or in terms of an economic crisis compelling nations into war by some chronological time lag. At any rate, a more apposite

assessment would price the war economy and its ramifications as a future stream of revenues to capital. It would gauge how all on its own the tapering down of wars in chronological time puts downward pressure on profit rates and compels the next war. War derives from the violence necessary to expropriate labour and may be triggered by the constrained profit rates of the whole economy or only the war economy, given its significance. As a subset of militarism, war as the purest waste self-propels. In an interdependent history, war becomes the dying peoples and nature, wherein the wasted nature acts as a capital owned machine that wastes people. The price tag associated with the war dead is more than just the cost of the war machine that registers as revenues for the war industry. It is the continued flow of financial resources from war repercussions, which also registers as future credit flows servicing current debts and social/environmental liabilities. War is the being of capital as well as the measure that resolves the building contradictions reflected in its business cycle. Its signification in the money form of value, embedded in the various macro concepts of the utilitarian-devised price system, the investment, the savings, etc., purposefully conceals its contribution to value.

And although the rate of profit associated with the exchange of commodities signals to capital the atrocities to commit, it is the class relations and their attendant forms, which are history and historical subjects, *contra* the reification of things that do things. It is neither the technology of scalping natives nor the price per scalp that count for much when assessing profits from warring against natives. It is rather the class relationship that actualises as the activity of scalping that is subject and value making activity at once. The subject's reason is the dynamic of the commodity as self-expanding value, and it is most efficacious when it co-aligns with the historical surplus value. A restocked historical surplus value effortlessly does the bidding of capital since, more and more, the masses willingly engage in capital's waste activity.

Co-equally, just as capital is a cross-national relationship, its better machines of the North (the things) are also the objects of a cross-national class subject. They are the products of a history, which prohibited the masses from exercising their right to development. Lower quality technology may move to the South and across borders to corners where necessary labour – its value equivalent in wage and environmental-use rates is minimal, but it does so in ways where the tech-know-how will not transmute into a weapon that may empower the subject of the South against empire. To attenuate its overproduction, capital crushes the cross-national working-class subjects, especially, the internationalist solidarity of labour. The alienation of substance from subject, the manmade machine from man, is the private property which premises capitalism and, conversely, whose negation ruptures it. The alienation or the social relation that excludes the masses from social property, from owning the means

of production, is exactly the historical subject or maker of technology. It is the historical impetus that recontextualises the social forces responsible for the development of the productive forces. The rupture of the system *only* occurs by working class ideology transformed into a materialist force or anti-imperialist armed struggle in contrast to union-demands for higher wages from central capital. These latter demands target the sphere of circulation without addressing the levelling of wages to production conditions in the periphery. Without the homogenisation of labour, capital redeploy its constructed income differences or its bolstered wage system to further split the working class.

The less-developed and less-labour-saving technology relocation to the South cushions the tendency of the falling profit rate. Capital hires more labour per constant capital than it does in the North and, accordingly, the rate of exploitation and the realised surplus value rise. As discussed in the previous chapter, the falling rate of profit is a tendency for both Ricardo (1817) and Marx (1967). The difference is however significant because Marx approaches man as social being and value as market mediated concrete labour, in contrast to Ricardo's abstract man and value as concrete labour gravitating to natural prices. Observably so, resources move in search of higher profits and in doing so, the rate of return per fixed assets equalises across sectors, all the while with the rising organic composition of capital pressing down on the rate of profit.

Commercial or super exploitation, principally the imperialisation of the South, mitigate the falling profit rate, including no less by the cheaper raw material – the dead labourers of the South become the dead labour of the North. Over time and on account mechanisation rising in relation to the number of workers employed, productivity or the technical composition of capital rises – a concept similar to the capital to labour ratio. Less value goes into commodities, which are made available at cheap costs to labour, lowering necessary labour.

Just as capital has the tendency to reduce the direct employment of living labour to no more than the necessary labour, and always to cut down the labour required to produce a commodity by exploiting the social productiveness of labour and thus to save a maximum of directly applied living labour, so it has also the tendency to employ this labour, reduced to a minimum, under the most economical conditions, i.e., to reduce to its minimum the value of the employed constant capital. If it is the necessary labour-time which determines the value of commodities, instead of all the labour-time contained in them, so it is the capital which realises this determination and, at the same time, continually reduces the labour-time socially necessary to produce a given commodity. The price of the commodity is thereby lowered to its minimum since every portion of the labour required for its production is reduced to its minimum. (Marx 1894)

However, the relative higher ratio of constant to variable capital implies lower future surplus value rates writing off capital's gains from the current squeeze on necessary labour. These opposing forces, the imperialism-induced rising rate of exploitation/surplus value against the downward pressure imposed upon surplus value by the rising organic composition of capital pushes capital into waste production, which is to squeeze society, especially the weaker South, into shorter life intervals.

Just as the capitalist mode of production promotes the development of the productive powers of social labour, on the one hand, so does it whip on to economy in the employment of constant capital on the other. However, it is not only the alienation and indifference that arise between the labourer, the bearer of living labour, and the economical, i.e., rational and thrifty, use of the material conditions of his labour. In line with its contradictory and antagonistic nature, *the capitalist mode of production proceeds to count the prodigious dissipation of the labourer's life and health, and the lowering of his living conditions*, as an economy in the use of constant capital and thereby as a means of raising the rate of profit. (Marx 1894) (my emphasis)

As a matter of course, let us follow the ascension of capital in history since Marx wrote that 'the more developed the capital, therefore, the more extensive the market over which it circulates, which forms the spatial orbit of its circulation, the more does it strive simultaneously for an even greater extension of the market and for greater annihilation of space by time' (Marx 1863). Capital in the current phase of imperialism condenses socially necessary labour time in the shortest intervals of chronological time by reducing humans to 'workhorses' and shortening lives. That is so in relation to time. Regarding space, it does not only 'absorb the tropical landmass – Harvey' to deploy it in more efficient commodity making, it additionally annihilates or wastes space. It does so of space which is inclusive of the human and his corporeal being; the actual physiological body of man is also space. The 'space saving' turned into a space crushing momentum matures in the waste of social nature. Capital's rampant commodification of everything existing makes an industry out of the waste of space, which restrengthens the objectification and the waste of man.

The transformation of the labourer into a workhorse, is a means of increasing capital, or speeding up the production of surplus-value. Such economy extends to overcrowding close and unsanitary premises with labourers, or, as capitalists put it, to *space saving*; to crowding dangerous machinery into close quarters without using safety devices; to neglecting

safety rules in production processes pernicious to health, or, as in mining, bound up with danger. (Marx 1894)

In waste, the labourer produces himself as a dead labourer by using his own body as the raw material and the final marketed waste-commodity at the same time. The labourer's time is society's time, 'the indefinite working day of an indefinite number of workers, then all *relations of population* come in here' (Marx 1863). The emphasis is in the original, and Marx here refers to the contradiction between population growth and capital, which is the concreteness of capital-labour contradiction. The population-capital contradiction had progressively resolved by industrialising the waste of 'excess' people by their engagement in self-waste. In its modern form, waste responds to the high frequency exchange revving up the turnover time of production in all markets. Its optimal time is to produce a commodity *now*, sell it *now* and destroy its inputs, including the human input, whose premature death is an output. The closest situation that corresponds to such a state is when the social labourers of society produce their own deaths. By doing so capital collapses living into dead labour. No longer dead labour passes only the value stored in it, it becomes the living labour to which necessary labour time is of no use. Such is the ultimate form of slavery with which capital gets the most out of labour and then disposes of her to rid itself from the burden of feeding her in the future. That is the ultimate exploitation because cadavers do not consume, and capital withholds future wages and pensions as part of its profits. It pays one time in wages for a lifetime of work expended in a short while or in seconds. As such, capital acquires all the value invested to reproduce society in the continual death of society: the dead labourer of the South transmutes into the dead labour of the North. Such is the logical end of the 'compression of space by time' realised in waste, which under the tutelage of a Western Marxism hired as an apparatus of capital, also became phenomenal.

## 8      Waste and the Global Division of Labour

Resources across the planet are differentially cheapened to the requirement of production. Their trajectories submit to the imperialistically etched-out contours of global labour divisions. Third World owners of resources, the masses, are subjected to the imperialist version of the law of value –the waste version. Class power *cum* market power springing from imperialist aggression reformulate the conditions for commodity prices to gel in ways that redistribute imperialist rents commensurably with class power. For a US empire, which is the product of two wars, imperial rents as of the last century accrue to the *US-led*

financial class. Whether immediately reworked by class or by its political forms, the nation state is historically a class form instrumentalised by the capital class. It matters little if one says the wealth is American or un-American. Financial rents acquire a nationalistic or a cosmopolitan branding not because of some common characteristic devising a nationality, but because the function of the state does so in proportion to how it consolidates imperialist/financial class rule.

The bombings or neoliberalism that cheapen the commodities consumed in the North add to the colonial-wealth derived rent component of Northern wages. The cheaper commodities consumed by the North are products of machines and industrial cultures whose subjects are principally the historically devastated masses of the South. In the alienation of Southern wealth posited above, the Arabs, Africans and other natives wasted by colonialism are the subjects-agents of Western technology by the historical relation that *necessitates* their elimination from the cycle of capitalist production. It is *necessary* by the law of value to waste them and to mediate the concrete labour that produces their wasted corpses into an abstract and moneyed form of value. The consumption of products whose machines are imperialist owned, like cars or laptops, is not the final realisation stage in the commodity's lifecycle. Although they are in part useful, these commodities are also wasteful because the profits arising therefrom are built upon a series of value relations that have worked/wasted the lives and nature of their direct producers. At no point in these commodities' lifecycles and their interim input/output realisations was the necessary labour associated with their production not historically pre-choreographed to fall. Their unpaid costs repaid by society in prices dished out as the service of the indebtedness of past and future generations, and at no point was their production not seeding militarism. The waste taxes both past and future societies at every step of production, while the accumulated planetary trash stunts life expectancy, albeit, gradationally with wealth-class profiles.

The point to be carried forth here: profits do not *emerge* on the basis of an *accounting equation* in which the moneyed costs to the firms fall below its revenues. Profits are rooted in the social relationships that coerce society to bear the costs of production of all inputs, as well as the intermediate and future waste outputs at the expense of its livelihood. Over a labour-devoid social reproduction cycle, capital appropriates more of the social product for itself. Just like a Geiger-counter calculates nuclear radiation, symbolic prices gelling in the profit rates portend the intensity of exploitation. As society transmutes by imperialist coercion into an autophagic state, selling and buying its own flesh, the social costs of waste will be willingly borne by society because its own flesh becomes the principal constituent of its consumption bundle in the

social product signified in the moneyed form of value. Society accedes to de-reproducing itself for profits. The negative dialectic that turns surplus value into surplus waste and, down the line, into profits peaks with militarism.

Hypothetically, surplus value tapers down as all people become things – dead labour only transfers the value within it to the commodity. Put differently, if all humans are machines that work on other machines, no surplus labour time emerges. Surplus time is decided by the balance of class-negotiation between capital and labour or the extent to which '[w]orkers become aware of themselves as commodities;' conversely, for labour to become conscious of its existence and powerful is to recognise that capital had turned people into things (Lukács 1919). Un-hypothetically, value is the value relation, which reconstitutes its subjects as well as the physical conditions for production. It expands into more commodities and by the worker who relinquishes these commodities to capital as he adheres to capital's forms. With free workers signing on to work contracts as their only available choice for survival, the surplus labour time they leave to capital increases when capital weakens them. If capital enslaves labour, it obviously expropriates a bigger share of the social product. However, it takes labour's recognition and increasing submission to the significations of dominant power for the substance of capital's power to grow (Engels 1884). Only then does the surplus product seized by capital transfigures into its increasing moneyed profit-form. It is not only the lower prices of raw materials that boost the rate of profits; these are mere representations. It is antecedently the beating the developing world is subjected to in order to internalise capital, which lowers the negotiating power that sets the price.

People's recognition of capital's forms as the signification of its social class power implies that the consent offered to its institutions and forms of social organisation is the de-subjectification of labour (Lukacs 1919; Engels 1884). So much is the consent such that capital produces dead humans and/or consumes a product for which premature human death is a requirement. Capital's share of the social product will include the surplus time of the dead labourers wasted in wars and work-drudgery whose value the centre captures. Yet, the collusion between the central working class and capital, the workers who support the US or the UK administrations to bomb somewhere for imperialist rents, makes of central capital and its working class a single subject. The Northern living standard is then based on class cannibalism. Structurally, the capital contradiction is transplanted from capital and labour to financial capital with labour in the South (Lenin 1916). Capital builds surplus labour in material stock and turns it into money principally as it crushes the anti-systemic working class. Just like it cannot permit itself not to produce more commodities or to curtail its blind competition leading to overproduction, it cannot allow

its superstructural symbols of power to languish. To resolve the contradiction between the rate of exploitation, which depends on the commodification of the worker, with the excessive commodification of workers that pressures surplus value down, capital sharpens the wasting of Southern masses. Capital only exists by its negating other, or as it clobbers anti-systemic labour. It requires a working class to fight for its rights, and at the same time a proletariat it could decimate to re-erect its power, while surplus value restrengthens by the historical flux of the these two conditions.

From a social time of production theorised as a system of flows and stocks, one may select a method of national accounts, which picks and chooses from many commodities while leaving others out of picture to quantify the social product. The laptop or, a similar commodity, in Europe with its intertwined inputs and outputs may be reduced to an alleged 'final' consumption stage or to represent the only item realised from a stream of commodities of which it is composed. It registers as sold-consumed (realised) at one point in chronological time and for such and such a price. However, matters are different from a waste angle. Aside from the hidden stream of social costs of inputs/outputs, the realisations of the bomb-commodity and its war-dead products are rarely considered. The ghastly markets or the victims of bombs and similar waste commodities in the Third World are not recorded as final consumption/realisation stage commodities against a price in capital's accounts systems.

Regarding the bomb's recent marketing ingenuity, a drone now shops for its human targets. The Pentagon has loosened the regulations to inflict more collateral damage by lowering its target recognition criterion (Hudson *et al* 2011). It engages its victims as living/productive labour and kills more people, for the same cost price. The social-time defined, and waste-laden turnover cycle, is the lifetime of the worker or *indefinite time* (Marx 1894). Yet, time is circumscribed to what capital enters on its records. From social time or the time of production by which society reproduces, capital chooses a timeframe and an accounting system starting from a point in the cycle where the production of its chosen commodity comes full circle with its consumption. It does not regard the totality of inputs/outputs and their waste implications as realised commodities, including the commodified labour, which reproduces the labourer over her lifetime. It only regards as 'final' stage commodities the items that reproduce capital in its chronological reference-time.

However, society is not capital or the capitalist class. It is the working class. Its accounts would capture more of social production when tailored by the commodity cycle that supports society from birth to death. As a rule of thumb, man is the subject and object of capitalist accumulation mediated by labour. In waste, a working class commodified and submitted to the wage system as a form of capital, reproduces itself by consuming more of itself. The

mainstream's literature is aware of the waste, and it camouflages its impact on the wealth of society with its genuine savings concept: 'the companion to total or comprehensive wealth is adjusted net saving (ANS), also called genuine saving, defined as national net saving adjusted for the value of resource depletion and environmental degradation and credited for education expenditures (a proxy for investment in human capital)' (Word Bank - The changing Wealth of Nations 2011). Facetiously, since capital is holistically self-reinforcing, the education mentioned here must have been the education sponsored by the World Bank, which has already promoted the environmental devastation experienced to date.

In received theory, the irreversible costs to the environment are assumed manageable by capital. Every negative externality can count on the benevolence of every capitalist to compensate society for its harm. The very power that damages to achieve higher profits could be re-educated into an ethic of sound symbiosis of man with nature. However, every negative externality is a value relation and a source of profit. It is also a form of capital that reconditions labour to submit to capital. When labour surrenders, the overly entropic system uses the resultant of externalities evidenced in the irreversible costs or the death of social nature as a machine that grinds down the life of labourers pitched as commodities.

It is also the purview of the World Bank to show that although nature has been harmed, the harm was inescapable. What is not covered by taxing externalities, the wealth effect or fallout of free markets more than covers the loss to social nature. Although the consumption of social nature is required to impart welfare to labour, the case cannot be so under capital. In value, profits and wages are diametrical opposites. The rate of surplus value is the rate of exploitation, which grows by the abuse of social nature. Similarly, the rate of surplus value is proportionate to the additional harm sustained by labour and nature. It is formally impossible for capital's inflicted damage upon social nature to be offset by the welfare it delivers to labour. Looking at this from the 'outside in' may clarify the point. When the planet is said to have reached the point of no repair, the welfare benefits of Northern labour will altogether dip with the declining trend. The system cannot be reformed because reform disciplines the rate of consumption of social nature and, comparably, profits.

In its 2018 report, the World Bank blamed poorer countries for their social-natural woes. It says: 'in contrast with renewable resources, non-renewable natural capital – such as fossil fuels and minerals – offer a one-time chance to finance development by investing resource rents. Nearly two-thirds of countries that have remained low income since 1995 are classified as resource-rich, or fragile and conflict states, or both. This shows that resources alone cannot guarantee development: *strong institutions and good governance* are needed

to ensure that rents are invested and not used entirely for consumption' (my emphasis). Governance and institutions are naturally key to the practice of development, but which governance and which institutions. The World Bank does not demand the withdrawal of US troops fighting the masses around the world. This institution dictates the governance agenda of the US through its comprador classes. The World Bank does not advocate the institutions of labour that lock-in national resources, mobilise dormant assets and mediate to realise working class ambitions. The World Bank is governed by rich nations to which curtailing the value transfers from the South is anathema. No matter the procedural steps it recommends, it will not oppose the transfers that beef up imperialist rents. When external debts, resource outflows, and damage to their environments are factored into the incomes of the poorest nations, their future incomes tend to the negative zone. In relation to current historical standards, they owe in damage reparation much more than they produce. In comparison to achievable sane standards, least-developed societies appear to reproduce to grow by means of war, the liquidation of physical and human-life assets or self-emaciation. Their proletariat is either a war proletariat employed in quick self-destruction, or the salient daily waste workers fading away at a slightly lower speed. They provision their future resources and labour as inputs/products to empire. In the trade-off between wasting man and wasting nature for profits, capital will waste nature to waste man or will waste man at a higher rate when regulations prohibit the abuse of nature, since it needs to steady the profit rates.

Unlike the determinidness attendant upon deductive reasoning or the banality of unintended consequences, such is the immanence of value as waste to capital. There is much in the historical surplus value carried by received ideas to legitimate the production of death. While there is nothing to fear but capital itself, capital is complacent because of its ideological achievements. It could even publicise the climatic disaster it had brought about knowing that in an already commodity-totalised world, the damage now holds the prospects of future earnings. Although time is indivisible and interdependent, capital instils a fear of the future whose purpose to ration resources at present and make the current insecurity tolerable. Capital, however, will not relay the message that beating nature for profits could throw the natural balance way off course leading to an unmanageable world (Lewontin 1966; Gould 1977). Such message ruffles up its white constituency, the imperialist troops donned in the latest fashion garb, which form the rank and file of its militarised and NGO's armies.

In addition to its role as a machine or dead labour owned by capital, a sickened nature enhances capital's monopolistic power. The price of any

commodity at present embeds within it the risk premium associated with its forthcoming harsher conditions of extraction. Phobia of future shortage in unadulterated resources made scarce by injecting poison into the environment permit capital to employ the higher futures to mark up its current prices. To rephrase, capital flaunts the dismal future of nature because it profits now rise by the impact that pollution imposes upon the mining of unpolluted resources in the future. For instance, envisioned lesser quality water, or any resource of the future, hikes current or spot prices on account of future resource-penuries, riskier futures, and/or higher future prices. As such, capital not only shifts pollution costs onto society, and taxes the globe for the pollution now, it also sells the impact of future climate change through the risk premiums imputed in its prices. Recent figures speak of more than \$30 trillion now flowing into environment, social and governance arena investments.<sup>1</sup> Warring against nature and reinvesting to repair nature resemble post-war reconstruction after the American civil war or in post-invasion Iraq: they are meant to absorb idle cash in wasteful investment, deplete the internal resources of the masses, and escalate the dispossession of African Americans or Iraqis (Bassford 1994; Kadri 2017).

For the mainstream, the market that had allegedly ‘saved the world’ so far will also save it again: ‘derivative markets, which help the global economy manage risk, play a vital role in discovering prices for everything from a barrel of crude oil to a megawatt of solar energy to a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, helping businesses while helping policymakers understand the true costs of climate change (Futures Industry Association [FIA] 2020). Furthermore, the FIA says ‘there is clearly demand for these types of products’, the derivatives that hedge against the risk of climate change. The costs of climate change ‘in everything from power markets to agricultural commodities’ represent a collateral against which financial capital earns real returns churned by the real waste economy. The future risks, which ‘include disorderly price adjustments in various asset classes,’ call on the financial system to ‘be a catalyst for investments that accelerate economic resilience and the transition to a net-zero emissions economy’ (US-Government 2020 - U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission). Through rising prices of basic commodities, the real share of labour from global income will fall leaving

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<sup>1</sup> US Commodity Futures Trading Commission sets eyes on climate risk with new unit, IHS Markit says: ‘The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) announced 17 March the creation of a Climate Risk Unit that would play a vital role in developing new financial products and solutions that will build a financial system that is resilient to shocks caused by climate-fuelled impacts.’ <https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/us-commodity-futures-trading-commission-sets-eyes-on-climate-r.html>

more for imperialist rents. Through financial innovations, in the form of green financial products, which will supposedly hedge the very risks of the bleak future, capital undertakes further monetary expansion while underwriting the fictitious debts against the labour of generations to come. To accelerate the activity of waste via the demand for waste is to ensure exponential growth without physical limits.

The workings of the derivative, option and other modern financial instruments, collapse the future into present time. To revert to Marx (1885) on the subject, just like the money form of value initially mediated the contradiction between value and use value, finance mediates the contradictions of real accumulation while deepening social crisis at the same time. So as time annihilates not only space but also the time of life, various financial instruments are concocted to quicken the speed of the rising turnover rate of social reproduction dominated by waste.

Although the spot (now) prices of resources include the risks of the future, the case is not so for the current US interest rate. Loosely, the interest rate is the cost of borrowing or the rent on money in the future. Additionally, there is a short term and a long term interest rate. In a very 'time and money' liquid world, the future cost of borrowing/lending money and the spread between short and long-term US interest rates, the latter suggestive of the future risk, stays within a reasonable range despite the fact that the future holds climatic risks in store. Capital designates short spreads of time such that it omits the impact of the scary longer time future upon current rates. It does so to reassert the stability of the US dollar as the global risk-free asset no matter the environmental degradation. The price of water may rise on account of future scarcity of potable water, but the cost of money (the interest rate) rises or falls to ration redistribution to the working class. The interest rate is one of three macro prices, along the exchange and the wage rate, used to channel moneyed resources to the working class, such that capital strikes a balance between the stability of its rule and the share of labour from the social product. In a world conscious of the contingent disequilibrating forces at play against nature, the true long term risk reflected in prices and interest rates would be astronomical.

The high risk of the future does not factor into the long-term interest rates; that is so because the world's long-term rate falls squarely under the US's mandate, which also prices the future time of society. The long-term rate will not rise to reflect a condition in which the planet approaches a minute *past* midnight. Formulaically, the rate of return and the price of an asset rise with the market risk premium, which is roughly the difference between expected returns on investment and the risk-free interest rate of the US. However, if the immanence of the bleakness of the future seriously enters the

mainstream debate, then the costs that capital had dumped onto society will become apparent in an high tax upon the present generation and either cause the system to stand still, or despair may fuel revolt. Apart from some capitalists buying up Patagonia to hedge global warming, the capital-biased efficiency of the US controlled financial market reaches its zenith when higher future pollution influences all future risks and current prices except the US's long term interest rate. The empire that controls the spread of the rent on money across time as well as the rate of emissions can pollute to its heart's content because the rate of 'emissions' raises the rate of profit. No matter the amount of credit/debt the US issues, its imperialist clout, its hegemony of space and time, and its power to poison the future reaffirm the dollar as a conveyor belt of value transfer to empire. The damage that imperialism visits upon the planet now or at a future date, its control of strategic commodities made scarce by its real and propaganda activities, underwrites the issuance of US debts of today. A sickened environment is a bonus that absorbs and ensures cash to finance just like war does. In every commodity today, the associated mark-up in prevalent prices, and the higher rates of return are by-products of capital-induced waste accumulation.

In addition to the salient characteristics of imperialism, its novelty is its ability to lay the grounds for the allocation of resources across time, whether to realise resources now or in the future – it produces for profits. Beneath the above characterisation, the basics are: first, capital destroys nature to undermine the transformation of the working class into revolutionary proletariat by deepening global rifts; secondly, capital has a profit motive founded on surplus value, which stems from living labour not dead labour; and thirdly and relatively, nature is wasted to waste man because man is the living labour whose demise is a product of capital. Whereas the point is to destroy capital as the source of fear and not to choose the lesser fear, divided masses 'rationally' choose only from the alternatives imposed by hegemonic capital, either a grim or a gimmer world.

## 9      Excess Population and Carrying Capacity

Another of capital's manufactures to justify the production of death is overpopulation. There are too many people on board to be sustained vis-à-vis resources; incidentally, these views are lubricants to the resolution of unemployment/excess population with ethnic genocide or cleansing exercised by fascism or settler colonialism – demographers suggesting genocide to fascism or Zionists suggesting the ethnical cleansing of Palestinians (Van der Hoeven-Leonhard 1960; Kanafani 1982). This, in addition to other sectarian momentums, shift the

accent in the dominant discourse from ‘save the trees’ to reduce the population. Surplus value would then be made directly from the source, the industry of wasting labour, rather than the roundabout way by destroying nature to destroy man. In relation to existing misery alongside excess capacity and green havens, or by the *absolute general law of capitalist accumulation* (AGLCA), society’s surplus product incarnate in waste, the premature death of man as a commodity realised for a price, *absolutely* reduces the cost of social reproduction by reducing peoples’ numbers over the social turnover cycle. Marx poses the issue as follows.

First, he states the definition of the AGLCA: ‘[t]he same causes which develop the accumulation of capital with the productive power of labor lead to the setting free of labor-power, the industrial reserve army must increase with the development of the material instrumentalities of wealth. But the more the reserve army grows in proportion to the active army of labor, the greater also is the growth of official pauperism.’

Then, he concludes that ‘[i]n the environment of the capitalist system, where the labourer does not make use of the means of production, but the means of production make use of the labourer, all methods for multiplying the resources and the power of collective labour are brought into use at the expense of the individual labourer; all means for developing production transform themselves into means for dominating and exploiting the producer; *they mutilate him till he is nothing but a fragment of a man, an appendage of a machine*’ (my emphasis. Marx 1867).

The laws of capital that discipline or decimate labour are concrete subdivisions of the more general law, the AGLCA (Marx 1867). This law, prefigured by capital to smash the historical agency of labour, immiserates labourers in inverse proportion to the wealth they create. It musters the machinations of the laws of capital to solidify in uneven development. Motivated by objective improvements in science, the rising organic composition of capital or the mechanisation that dislocates labour, the AGLCA aligns production relations with the imperatives of capital’s productive forces by expropriating the weakest strata of global labour. It further reinforces an accumulation regime that calibrates the rate of value destruction to value creation in ways that consume more and more cheapened living labour to generate more surplus labour. While the reserve army of labour disproportionately grows, capital squeezes labour’s time and, more precisely, the *lifetime* in social reproduction to the demands of lower necessary labour time. It burns more inputs and wastes more per commodity, then shoves that commodity, which is full of harm, down the throat of consumers or persuades society to gulp it. On balance and after the fact, the modern commodity more de-reproduces than reproduces society. Evoking

these previously elaborated points sheds light on an under-disclosed research area: since capital carries forth by blind accumulation and disproportionately devastates to produce with most production costs borne by society, it turns the wasting of man into a marketable product. It makes of the industry of the destruction of man a value relation in which the life of man is the commodity that circulates to be realised in death. With so much of wealth composed of waste, the rising misery *cum* waste attendant upon the AGLCA become the commodities *cum* fetishes that govern the social reproduction cycle. As the ostentatious consumption of death and its display in social status is competitively emulated, the wretched dead who had erected the edifices of capital will come into view. In a culture that glorifies the death of the other, the dead others become the addiction of the West; in master slave dialectic, dependency on dead slaves rises. Their death is paraded in response to the social jealousy that undergirds the production of waste, which steers society to waste consumerism. The beauty of the death commodity or, Western architectural beauty taken to be art, becomes appreciated for the imperialistically spilt blood in its making. In the novel form of the AGLCA, the more prematurely dead people it takes to produce a commodity or the more dead people as commodities are offered for sale, the more that commodity is celebrated. In this new *spirit of the age*, a society acculturated to the consumption of death glamourises the glitter of the macabre side of capital.

To place an accent on relative surplus value because of the better machinery, cheaper products to feed labour and down the line more 'wealth', is to conceal the international range from which labourers hail, otherwise, the laws of the formation of international value and the hidden transfers of wealth beneath the structure of this value (Emmanuel 1972). Rather than machinery, labourers from around the world are the subjects/makers of wealth. The owners of superior quality machines, including the military gadgets, are capital and its working-class allies. These white working classes whose unions seek higher pay from the proceeds of war booty are the same sociological type of rentier as capital. Although they might wave Marxist banners, they are not subjects opposing imperialists in the class contradiction. Specifically, they do not oppose the expropriation of the lives of Southern labour from labour by violent means.

That wealth is allegedly Northern is a position, which elides the social origins of labour. As a matter of course, in an organic production sphere, labour is social, productivity is social, the wage system is social, the wage is labour's share from the social product, while imperialism dictates that less and less income in relation to rising wealth goes to labour. As posited in the previous chapter, man, the labourer, is social as opposed to abstract man, which means that she

is borne out by history and, indifferentiable from society, her labour power is the product of her society. She is the product of society delivering the labour invested in her by society. It is society that produces with its given capacity/knowhow and earns a share of the social product by the power/solidarity of labour represented in the class struggle. That share is heterogenized and redistributed to the members of the working by the symbolism constructed and assigned to different identities and skills. The value outlays on labour, the sum of the shares of each labouring class in the money form of value from the social product, is a single share from the global social product. Labourers in the South not engaged in super-exploitation happen to be engaged by capital through waste and its exploitation. In other words, much of the South is either a pollution dump or a potential war zone. The share of income with which each working class subsists is gradated according to the real and symbolic power of that labouring stratum in the international division of labour.

The surplus labour time captured by capital from global labour, is not divisible by geographic area nor positively correlated with the number of commodities produced in a given national zone. Surplus value is detected in the repression or the degree of the compression of lifetimes in social production relayed to us. To further estrange use value from the labourer, evidently by some brutality, is to further exploit labour – that is global labour, not English or German labour. Save the anti-imperialist nationalism, for the working class to be cast into the identity that capital tailors for it, is to inhibit its transformation into a historical subject or proletariat. Furthermore, to beat labour into a state of defeatism such that it perceives the waste capital produces as use value, when in actuality the waste consumes society, is an unprecedented case of *alienation*. Whereas Marx (1894) mentioned that ‘it is not merely the products of labourers turned into independent powers, products as rulers and buyers of their producers, but rather also the social forces and the ... form of this labour, which confront the labourers as properties of their product’, he was then speaking of social forms/products whose use values reproduce the labourer relative to the provisions of the productive forces, not products that de-reproduce the labourer relative to his time. In a world turned upside-down by working-class defeatism, capital strips labour not of something useful to society, but also of lives and the moneyed form of the waste-commodity it produces.

These waste processes are the new value forms whose mystique elevates dead humans to the status of independent powers that confront labour. In other words, capital parades the death, which is the fetish that governs social life. As society and nature are further commodified, nearly everything, from kidneys to the prospective massacre of Iranians under B51 US-bombers, becomes a commodity saleable for an equivalent money form. The waste-*become-fetish*,

which organises social life, is the commodity whose drive for self-expansion accords with more intense surplus value. To keep the train of thought in context, let us recall that the masses and, subordinately the nature they reside upon, are wasted by the gradation of class. Unlike resisting masses, man acclimatised to waste obsequiously offers himself both as living and dead labourer to capital. His self-consumption in waste production indistinguishably raises both the relative and absolute surplus values by the expenditure of his potential lifetime in the shorter chronological time of his concrete labour. His labour as well as his death, which is also use value in demand, underlie the *cheapened* commodities for consumption to the more affluent societies. The thingified-class's premature death in the industries of capital brings us full circle to re-categorise the principal contradiction of capital. Its new cultural forms are the consumed Southern labourer versus the aristocratic nations and their working-class allies consuming the death of labourers. The carnages of capital are its phenomenological state. The difference with past empires is instead of the few dying for the emperor in Roman times, those who proclaimed, '*Ave Imperator, morituri te salutant'* (as per the anecdote, those who are about to die salute Caesar), we now have the real billions of commodified working-class members who perish early while slaving away for capital.

The cannibalistic and cannibalised classes are forms of capital. They reproduce capital so long as the working classes of the consumerist nations recognise waste as use value. More important, because the rate of wasting people is proportionable to the rate of exploitation and, by superstructural mediation, to the rate of profit, the capitalist system grows by the historically preconfigured re-creation of commodified people. The deeper crisis over time further fuses capital with its adjunct cannibalistic class. The subject capital in the value relation collapses into its adjunct classes and through open support for capital or by pro-systemic opposition to capital, the cannibalistic classes valorise the present with a view to the exponential growth of future waste. The death of man and nature, traded in current and future markets, turns into an entrepreneurial opportunity. Recalling the premise that the costs to repair the damage to nature and finance future wars absorb excess moneyed expansion: Just as there was credit created to waste in the past, there will be credit lodged against the waste turnover cycle of the future. As capital and its cannibalistic class overvalue the prospects of future returns on militarism or from the supposed valorisation or clean-up of its environmental disaster, they fulfil their own prophecies as they inject more credit into the waste domain of accumulation. Greening the planet and green technology become the wars to enclose the sickened masses of the South barring them from the global commons. The prospects of nocuous weather alongside wars and austerity extirpating labour

from the land also reduce the social costs of reproduction and the autonomy of labour. These are the magnified operations of the law of value allocating resources as finance tells the real economy to make its real production cycle follow its fictional money cycle.

Phantasmagorical capital erected by the industry and relation of winnowing of the population fully corresponds to its ideal labour process once it weaves into the imagination of the working class the falsehood that makes it real. It passes itself as tangible in persons and physical assets, or it hypostatises itself. Against the impact of the environmental crisis, which may pique labour to rethink itself, capital heightens its war of ideas. For instance, it donates food to starving people it had bombed and funds hordes of Western Marxists to abort the necessity of anti-systemic struggles in the centre.

However, like every system, the withering of capitalism is inbuilt into its very reproductive organs. Either reawakened labour downs capital or, as capital realises its logical end, the waste process in which living labour must replace the living labour wasted in production, the process leads to a steady state in which the commodification of people turns all living labour into dead labour. In the latter case, exploitation is not merely the expenditure of muscle and intellect in the drudgery of work, it is also the spiritual disarmament of the working classes, which transmutes living labourers into automata. A system also sinks by being too successful or by its capacity to replicate itself in labour. The feedback loops that readjust the capital-system's performance from opposing labour cease to function to reform social production and, with it, capital also ceases. While the objective reasons for revolution may always grow, revolutionary eruption or triggers are contingent upon labour recognising a crisis of rule in capital (Lenin 1917). By the dialectic of too much of a good thing that breeds its opposite, such crisis of rule also sets in when capital overly succeeds in moulding people to its desire.

## 10      The Not So Innocent Omissions

The cliché ‘capitalism unleashes wealth’ plays out in the truth-muffled class war as ‘capital is progress.’ In the ideological war, or the war of working-class symbols against the dominant symbols of the bourgeoisie the expression becomes a weapon of capital.

Why does philosophy fight over words? The realities of the class struggle are ‘represented’ by ‘ideas’ which are ‘represented’ by words. In scientific and philosophical reasoning, the words (concepts, categories) are

'instruments' of knowledge. But in political, ideological and philosophical struggle, the words are also weapons, explosives or tranquillizers and poisons. Occasionally, the whole class struggle may be summed up in the struggle for one word against another word. Certain words struggle amongst themselves as enemies. Other words are the site of an ambiguity: the stake in a decisive but undecided battle. (Althusser 1968)

However, the substance of the wealth, whether useful or waste, is the materialisation of the value relation. The inner bent of the commodity is to self-expands as waste. To speak of the bourgeois as creator of wealth without prioritising the waste is to bury within the semblance of wealth the carcasses of labour. The argument for progress advanced by capital underemphasises at least four major points that would otherwise characterise it as a degenerative process.

First, there is the exclusionary capital. Imperialism, the subject that stunts the productive forces in the South, violently reconstructs the power foundations upon which a price camouflages value. The palpable form of such exclusion is the degree to which the incomes of direct producers sink below the prevailing minimum standard of living. The products of capital, including its technology, are *a priori* the products of the relation that snuffs the will of the masses in the South, and that so as argued above whether they produce tropical/subtropical commodities or not, since man's life has to be extracted while the power mesh of imperialism must be continuously rebuilt. The Northern states, especially the welfare states of Scandinavia, cleave to a culture of chauvinism and a Northern military arrangement (NATO), which auto-reinforces by the further devastation of the Third World (Lauesen 2021). In particular, the imposition of lopsided terms of exchange, which draw more in value per unit of imperial money from the developing formation, restrengthens the exclusionary process by moving back the starting post for catching up (Emmanuel 1972; Baran 1957; Amin 2018; Patnaik and Patnaik 2021). The unequal exchange argument may be traced to Bauer (1905) drawing on Marx (1894) who posited that in trade the country with the higher organic composition of capital appropriates part of the surplus of the country with the lower organic composition of capital. Through a multi-layered extraction of value in the value-added process culminating in the North, the higher prices of the Northern commodity under equal average profits would contain more units of value from the South unpaid by the North. Baran and others objected to the notion that trade alone could cause value transfers and exclude the South, because trade alone without capital movement does not equalise the rate of profit. Emmanuel (1972) argued that without under-pricing the wages of the developing world, trade

alone does not suffice for value extraction. Bettelheim and Sweezy (1971) rebutted that it was the underdevelopment of the productive forces as opposed to wages which blocked the development of the Third World. There are disagreements on the roles of the forms of capital in the exclusion of the developing world, but agreement that there is an imperialism that targets the Third World for exclusion. Holistically, the form which most rejuvenates capital is subjugated labour, while capital cannot exist without the sphere of circulation/trade – a commodity must be created and traded at the same time – capital accomplishes itself in exchange. More important, the process of wasting the developing world is both a process of value creation and circulation through trade, which over the social reproduction cycle relegates the share of wages in the South to minimal levels.

Secondly, the production of waste, including no less the wasting of labour, is the furnace that fires up intense surplus value. From a working-class perspective, the wasted life of man is the final realisation stage. Man is the starting point of capital as well as the commodity whose realisation in premature death consummates the cycle of capital. Such is a turnover cycle over the life of the worker or society. The value and use value of labour power, its cost of reproduction and productivity in the act of auto-destruction respectively, are concluded simultaneously in waste or as man labours to produce his own death. The earlier than historically determined elimination of life reduces the time available for the working class to re-possess the fruits of its labour or de-alienate itself. For instance, people may expire prior to retirement age forfeiting their pensions in affluent societies, while excessive waste and, in particular militarism, thins down the population of the South way before it could reclaim anything. In relation to the latter case, militarism, the domain of accumulation whose chief industry is war, is a value making and circulatory process that culminates in a commodity, which is the swift death of man.

Thirdly, in drawing boundaries between the contribution of different circles of labour to absolute and relative surplus value, the dialectically mounted concepts, there will be arbitrariness. Wherever there is discretion in deciding who has done the work and their adequate shares, the central bias holds sway. US-Europe produces the knowledge and the universal units of measures from which people around the world draw upon to assign shares of income. Europe, including its progenies in Anglo-colonial settler formations produce commodities of high moneyed value. These formations receive higher shares of the global social product on account of their alleged productivity. Such does not mean that Western workers are more exploited or that they produce more value than Southern workers, especially so, from the optic of waste. In any event, this view is not too different from incomes equated to factor

productivities in neoclassical economics. In terms of wealth, Europe appears to harbour the productive labour and its higher productivity cheapens commodities and to increase the relative surplus value.

In dialectical categories, however, the concrete and the abstract sides of absolute and relative surplus value, are intermediates of one another. Their unity is their state of becoming given in immediacy, or the thingscommodities before us that require an explication of how they appeared by pointing out their historical mediations (Ilyenkov 1977) – to find the *necessity* of their coming into being, the actuality, in a world brewing with chance. At any rate, the separate activities of labour, which contribute to absolute and relative surplus value, become one in the final product of labour. The final product is also an indifferentiable amalgam of substances actualised by the relations of productive and unproductive labour, or rather, social labour gauged from the standpoint of social reproduction. *Ex-post facto*, it is impossible, though one is not necessarily certain of any impossibility, to eligibly distinguish between this or that type of labour or this or that type of value without a bias in judgment. Prejudices are also made worse by the influence of Eurocentrism.

The point that the North is more productive than the South has more to do with whether the class-stance is pro-capital or anti-systemic. Productivity is the undividable outcome of social labour engaged in social reproduction. To designate productivity by the moneyed form of value when it (the moneyed form) is a construct of capital is rather *specious*. To elucidate with a hypothetical case. The developing world can be said to have contributed 25 billion US\$ in value transfers to the centre in a given year. However, any assessment of that sort draws from capital's constructed accounts and is inherently laden with bias. Such begs the question, could Northern labour appear more productive because it is understood solely on the basis of the expensive Northern commodity it produces and realises in its home economy? The productive forces of the North, including their technological components, are the products of the waste in the South (the capital class relation as such), while the variations in the prices of commodities finalised in the North are also held up by the continued practice of imperialism in the South, which is coterminously waste production. *Prima facie*, the wasted labour of the South never disappears from the stage of production that accounts for the productivity of the North. Thence, the moneyed measure of productivity is misleading on account of the disproportionate wealth profiles and the conservative bent in capital's accounting schemes.

No matter how one compares productivities, based on the value-added in successive stages to primary commodities raising its final price, Europe becomes the productive continent. However, when one considers that value-added

activities and the development of European productive forces are products of the initial as well as the continuous clobbering of the South, then is it not the clobbering act itself, which is not only subject but also predicate to the development of the productive forces and their associated productivities. In ascribing a degree of productivity to different parts of an organic process, whether it is the clobbering activity or the production of 'high value-added' commodities, subjective bias weighs in. In relation to higher stages of value added activities, these are mostly by-products of weapons, which makes the deployment and use of high-tech armaments in the South the leading value-added process. Conversationally, the banality 'the part I see is true and what you see is not true,' captures the gist of such discussions. Europeans see the merchandise in their stores, while the Third World sees the blood spilt to make those commodities by either the use of high tech-weapons or their presence in military bases nearby. Europeans do not recognise the mediation, the clobbering act as a production activity, which sets in motion the appearance of the commodity on their shelves, or what were the production relations underlying their wealth. They do not recognise that their social development is the power base upon which military machines, soldiers and NGO's are manoeuvred to banish the autonomy of the Southern formations.

It is facile to suggest that the items stocked in European stores are worth much more since their final stages of production were in Europe and entailed value-added along the way, and thusly, European productivity is high. However, such is a tautology or a self-fulfilling prophecy. It would say more however to acknowledge that the militarism of the West, with its migrant soldiers and machinery down South is an ongoing industrial activity associated with significant moneyed amounts and, more so, without such activities the high value-added in the North would not be. Militarism begins, finalises and is synchronic with capital's turnover cycle. In point of fact, militarism encompasses investment in many spheres of social development both in the South and North to which the labour of the South is both subject and object. For instance, the whole of the social structure in Iraq, as well as that of its US-led aggressors, during the first and second Gulf wars, were hitched up to be deployed in the death and starvation the Iraqi population. Gauged in terms of the trillions in war revenues generated by the death of Iraqis, theirs (the Iraqis) was a high productivity effort.

Adherence to positivism, or that things out there are perceived by the mind as they are, without their history, interrelatedness, and without the inherent prejudices inbuilt in class, blurs the facts. Accordingly, the perimeter of concepts such as relative or absolute surplus value, what they delimit and exclude, will be confined to only European time and geographic space, unrelated to the

rest of the world. Apart from the fact that central-capital bias convolutes space and time to its inclination, these concepts (space and time) are intuitional to reason and *a priori* conditions which alter the perception of objective reality all on their own (at least by the Kantian tradition). Things are already difficult to understand without the skewed optic of Eurocentrism – ditto for the concept of productivity.

The above is not to say that an *adequate* measure of productivity, productive labour, necessary or surplus labour, or any related concept cannot be put together and measured. Anything can be measured. One must define what is being measured in its interrelatedness and history. The issue of adequacy rests in the definition of the concept before measurement. Although naturally, neither profits nor the moneyed amount of the final product represented in the commodity allow for an impartial quantification of different productivities by spatial origins, the Marxian definition of profits as a history of class monetised production activities stands on firmer grounds. The issue resolves not by considering the quantitative side or how many productive labourers from hither and yon contributed to the finalisation of the commodity; it resolves by considering the value relation, which is at rock bottom how much imperialist power was exercised to strip the South of its resources, lives, and in return receive so little for their social efforts. This position may be equally expressed as how many wasted lives in the South it takes to produce a commodity that ends up in the North.

Fourthly, the law of value is social, and therefore it is historical and it derives its systemicity from class-power relationships. Its work encompasses not only the economic signals that cue up capitalists in search of wealth making, but also the culture necessary to justify the exaction behind wealth. The weight of history is such that without saying a word, the vassals queue to service empire using the received theory as the roadmap for development. To prod memory, the roadmap is based on the reason of the commodity to self-expand at any cost. The Western Marxist assessment of the historical moment or the balance of forces of the class struggle neglects that dominant science is a weapon of imperialist war. It posits that the recipes for development must mimic liberal capitalism. Critiquing national liberation movements for alleged human rights violation or failure to enact a Western-like voting system are examples of parochial positions that disclose the Western Marxist infatuation with Western democracy. Engels (1884) attributed the besottedness of the European working class with bourgeois democracy to its immaturity. Marcuse (1964) elaborated the state of the Western working class with the adage one-dimensional man. That was in the 1960's. Back then, Marcuse's man was complex and more human than the current state where the fictional automaton of neoclassical

economics, the *homo economicus* inclined to *self-destruction*, has become ubiquitous. Marcuse's man escapes the alienation by indulging in the leisure time gained from capital only to be reproduced as a hardened but defeated worker on the next day to tolerate the monotony of work. Contemporary neoclassical man, however, begins as an ahistorical being unrelated to his social environment, actualised in terms of unexplained incomes and consumption bundles, and one whose time and subjectivity are wholly those of capital. It is a man who loves the company he works for.

Capital's purpose was not only to deprive the working classes of the social product, reduce its purpose to the pursuit of necessities and, most significantly, erase their symbols, culture and memories, its ultimate objective is to supplant labour's mode of understanding with the reason of the commodity. It has lobotomised the mind of labour in correlation to how many it needs to be an organic part of its structure relative to how many it needs to waste. Evidence of the mental evisceration emerges in the Western voting system paradigm as a democracy. In addition to being an effective form of power exercise, as discussed in chapter one, Western democracy has been the demonstration effect that builds capital's cultural wealth, which masks the spoils of imperialist wars. The recent swerve toward fascism, however, may make it no longer necessary to conceal the wasted humans with which the system accumulates.

## 11      The Negativity of Capital

The social product, determined by social productivity, produced to the demands of the law of value transmutes into a fetish, which mobilises some of labour, underutilises, sets aside and destroys resources. Furthermore, to theorise that the better bourgeois-owned machines of the North establish the rate of relative 'surplus value' implies that Euro-American workers, more of whom share imperialist rents, are more exploited than the war-austerity-dying Africans and Arabs. The machine as subject is just like asking someone you meet for the first time: how much do you weigh instead of who are you. Machines as physical matter presuppose value relations and are products of the amassed culture of capital or its historical surplus value.

In reproducing the global order by expended muscle, blood and lives, the South has already given much more since the onset of colonial and ongoing structural genocides. The production and realisation of war, its war machinery, and commodities, the wasted nature and humans, scaffold capital's metabolic order. Colonial genocides are the pronounced peaks of the capitalist cycle of reproduction by waste. With the power of hindsight, accumulation, the social process whose dialectical resolution is surplus value, grows incrementally as

social nature goes from bad to worse. For that to happen, the social division of labour must materialise in the further dividedness of global labour. The power balance of the class struggle, especially the counter-revolutionary ideology sown by Western Marxism, inordinately tips the scales against the working class and in favour of waste. Instead of the global trade unionism that bridges the gaps within labour, Western trade unionism bolstered the rents of the aristocratic nations (Mészáros 1986). In a somewhat despondent tone, Mészáros also follows by saying that 'Marx also made it clear that the collapse of bourgeois society in the foreseeable future was only a hope, and by no means a certainty.' He then quotes Marx: 'one cannot deny, bourgeois society lives its second 16th Century which, *I hope*, will take it into the grave, just as the first one brought it into life' (Marx 1858), my emphasis. In between the necessity of socialism for ideological Marx, and the possibility of barbarism for the theoretical Marx, as when he says *he hopes*, it so happens that the latter path of negativity has been borne out.

The fetish incarnate in the moneyed form adumbrates the social conditions by the pressures of the profit rate – the ultimate form of the fetish is  $M-M_1$  (money makes money), without the all-important mediation of  $C$  (the industry making the real commodity) in the  $M-C-M_1$ . Finance is a money to money relation without concern for the real industry of the commodity and with a labour process taken for granted such that it responds to whatever capital desires (Marx 1894). The money-form of the rate of profit, underlaid by surplus value, obtains from the indifferentiable waste and non-waste production sides of the same commodity. There are possibly very few commodities that do not pollute, but as seen so far, the ruling social relation or value is all about pollution. Waste is also not negative value or negative surplus value (as in Moore 2015). It is also not a negative externality that occurs on the side of the system (according to the slew of neoclassical literature). Waste is not trash reified. Colloquially, US-led capital and its social progeny witness the killing of nature, so something must be done, all while the structural genocide occurs by the desire of a stratum that votes social-democrats into power. Just like value, waste's essence is the law of value. Just like value as well, the production of waste requires the production of the wasteful subject. From a social angle, waste is not the negative impact of the commodity upon society, which could be turned positive by recycling. It is not theory to restate the need to recycle the trash, it is truism. Theory instead defines the ideological means that arrest the recycling of the imperialist class. Waste is the now phenomenal form of value, or it is value as such. To define value as positive and negative is more of a quantitative assessment of how much of the object/commodity is useful or harmful. It quantifies what is beneficial or harmful to society in the use-value of the commodity proper but does not qualify the relation of value

as inherently waste. It does not propose that the harmfulness of waste is useful to the dominant class and its social clones. At a distance, it does not propound the waste relation as the historical subject that reproduces the capital class.

Substance-wise, value switches to anti-value when capital stands still or as the commodity fails to be realised, as in not sold and consumed (Marx 1867). Over-production is a permanent condition and, inferentially, anti-value is permanent. Anti-value, the unutilised commodities are partial waste, which has through the growth of the industry of wasting man transpired into the *phenomenal* form of value. Waste has become the logic of and the historical end of value. Value and anti-value are the relations and realisations of the capital class system. At a basic level, communism is the elimination of the value relation altogether, which is also anti-value at the same time, because value/anti-value materialises out of a single class and organising principle, capital and its production relations.

Value expansion could stall because demand or purchasing power fall. However, capital expands as some classes acquire the wherewithal to consume the unpaid classes. Funding militarism, polluting and austerity economics are also effective demand for waste. It is true that capital creates credit and spatial fixes to undo the bottlenecks of expanding value (Harvey 2018 a,b); however, building roads and infrastructure exhibits low returns and crowds out the private sector, while militarism overcomes steady states and adds to profits (Kalecki 1955). When militaristic demand is considered, the spatial fix of capitalism will not be the demand-limit to the cement poured by China to build infrastructure at home or abroad, it will be the limitless US bombs, the EU and its NGOs, and the plastics dumped whose costs are revenues to financial capital.

The space controlled by capital today is no longer the Portuguese and Belgian colonies *per se*. Space has been annihilated by time, yet with annihilation becoming the principal business of capital. Space is the commodity which doubles for money multiplying through finance. Wherever the dollar circulates to feed fictitious capital, the space over which it commands control also multiplies. Virtual and real space mediated by finance collided into the measure of a world overpriced by moneyed bubbles. Harvey speaks of the annihilation of space yet fails to see the reification he employs when he says China's use of huge amounts of cement rescues capital. China pours cement in infrastructure to circumvent its bondage to the US-dollar, while as opposed to spending on cement, the US principally pours dollars, weapons and war propaganda, and just that. The dollar is carrier of value that rides on the currents of US aggression. The dollar issued in the US, circulates over the planet gathering rents, and returns to the US. The guns-backed capital and its Western Marxist ideology, which turn the dollar into 'the risk-free asset,' delineate the ability of finance to determine the spatial structures. Imperialism is capital condensed and so is the space under imperialism, it is space condensed.

The dialectic of the value relation is not about an undulation between the good and the bad side of commodities. Sometimes roads and hospitals are built, and in other times bombs are dropped. In such false dichotomy that resembles the neoclassical either 'guns or butter,' it is forgotten that it takes guns to make butter. Value's dynamic, the expropriation of labour resulting in a crisis of overproduction and unrealised commodities or anti-value, resolves in the measure of waste. Value is thus negativity in the making. At its core, production still holds primacy over consumption. Production resolves the demand-side debacle by producing first its cannibalistic consumers. The primary activity atop the totality of social production is the production of a man to be consumed by the orders of the fetish/commodity he produces. The resolution of the value contradiction has never been about how many useful or unuseful commodities capital produces, or to recycle trash. In quantity, it is about the exemplification of value in the activity of battering labour, and always in relation to safeguarding the rule of capital.

Harvey's point that China has saved capitalism by building roads, and pouring cement and similar endeavours around the world since 2008 is banal compared to the decisive interactivity of militarism with finance and its trillions of US\$ in value added/central income generated by the inbuilt component of waste. By the yardstick of Mészáros (2007), Harvey embodies capital, especially as he ignores the economy of waste and destruction.

At the same time, on the other side, no partial 'correctives' can be transferred from the operational framework of capital into a genuinely socialist order ... For also in that respect we would always be confronted by the radical incompatibility of value determinations, even if in that case the value involved is destructive counter value, corresponding to the ultimate – necessarily ignored – limits of the capital system itself. The systemic limits of capital are thoroughly compatible with waste and destruction. For such normative considerations can only be secondary to capital. More fundamental determinations must take the precedence over such concerns. This is why capital's original indifference to waste and destruction (never a more positive posture than indifference) is turned into their most active promotion when conditions require that shift. *In fact, waste and destruction must be relentlessly pursued in this system in direct subordination to the imperative of capital expansion, the overwhelming systemic determinant.* (my emphasis)

To re-emphasise, US-led imperialism and its destruction of man and the environment absorbs trillions and underwrites the fictitious debt against more future destruction. It has always been the reconstitution of social reproduction

by waste, specifically the wasting of humans in colonial and imperialist wars, which propped up the system. The rate of capitalist induced depopulation is the countervailing force that redresses a laggard business cycle. In the final chapter, the point depopulation carried out by structural genocide is indicative of the rate of surplus value will be further explored.

## 12 Revisiting the Elusive Measures of Value

By definition, value, the relation upheld by the machination of the law of value, is *categorically* unethical. Without dwelling much on this, by categorical I mean that it is immoral in working-class standards, and since the working class is society, value is universally immoral. The practice of capital whose private property excludes the masses from their means of production and products, violates the *a priori* equation for sane reproduction: the effort or the product of labour must identify with the wellbeing of labour. To reinterpret Lukács (1952), there is nothing ethical or beautiful about value or capital. If we were to invent the category 'ugly' in aesthetics, it would be renamed value.

Waste, with militarism holding centre stage therein, is a system whose associated auto-degenerative consumption has taken hold of the social imagination. Formulaically, the rule of capital, through a combination of wage system and imperialist intercessions, reduces the cost of the reproduction of labour by wasting millions of labourers from an already large stock of excessive labour. One ought to reassert that there are certainly not too many people loafing about being useless in the social sense as discoursed by the mainstream. Capital fabricates its own private criteria for efficiency, scarcity and excesses. The waste relation or the 'living becoming dying labour' becomes the nexus that overcomes the obstacles to wealth making confronting the cross-national bourgeoisie. *Manifestly*, the history of wealth making is the value contradiction resolved in the phenomenon of waste.

A hierarchically structured society whose upper echelons consume a significant part of global labour is autophagic in the way Jappe (2017) puts it, albeit with a twist, the powerful organised in imperialist nations consume the powerless. The imperialism as such is mis-theorised in much of waste and the necropolitical stance. Apropos necropolitics, Tyner (2019) argues:

[w]e are presently witness to a new political economy of premature death, an *emergent* necrocapitalism in which the valuation and vulnerability of life itself is centered on two overlapping criteria: productivity and responsibility. Capital values those bodies deemed both productive

(e.g., in a position to generate wealth) and responsible, with responsibility conceived of as the ability to participate fully as producers and consumers in the capitalist system while, simultaneously, not incurring a net loss to the system ... Necrocapitalism is thus marked by a distorted morality in which mortality constitutes individual failure. Increasingly, those who are subjected to both direct and structural violence are judged by society to be responsible for their own suffering and demise – a perverted variant of blaming the victim. By extension, there is a corresponding indifference to the death of the other, a detachment from and disinterest in those persons who are perceived as mis-fitting into society and seemingly lacking the wherewithal to survive. (my emphasis)

Aside from the fact that premature deaths are not emergent, and they are inborn with capital since its birth, such argument is inconsistent with the motion of value. To revert to basics, capital is not an individual with morals and responsibility. It is an impersonal process of reproduction and, as an objective process, it exists outside consciousness but moulds consciousness. Whereas capital is the totality of social relations given by history, in such necrocapitalism, history is theorised as an individualist philosophy. The notion that some capitalists are responsible, and others are not, which is key to philosophical individualism, is misplaced agency. Responsibility is in the purview of political forms and institutions, not individuals. Individuals may experience the interpellation that evokes in them certain affinities; however, individual capitalists are carriers of capital. Be they responsible or barbaric is of no concern to the real but logical relations that are innate to capital. Capital concerns itself with its rule vis-à-vis the growing mass of negating workers, so that it can extract surplus value. By way of observation, amoral capital is the growing immiseration whose institutions, as opposed to individuals, promote more immiserating values. Indeed, capital itself is the historical surplus value. As capital pursues profits, it also grows correlated with the historical surplus value.

Impersonal capital is a process of class struggle. Unlike feudalism, it is *intrinsically* sociopathic and necro-pathic. Although people live longer under capitalism, the comparison with feudalism is unwarranted on account of dynamics. Anyhow, in relation to the socially achievable life expectancy, people live way shorter now than under a feudalism whose death rates are caused by more natural than social reasons. The case may be that in capital's search for social control, deaths are simply consequences of capital and not a systemic product of it. Though such is not the case, as consequences of capital they also become forms of capital that regenerate capital. As argued in chapter one, dead labourers become the constant capital of the North and its dead labour. Dead labour,

the social effort objectified in the private means of production is mediated by the death of Southern labour. Dead bodies are products and forms of capital produced by living labour involved in the act of self-consumption. The dominion of dead labour over living labour is not so by the absolutism of bio or necropolitics, which obviates the concept of class struggle. The ratio of dead to living labour is recreated as a resultant of the class struggle. True, a labourer engrossed in capital's wage system may suck the life out of himself and others as machines do, but vampirism a la Marx only happens because the working class has been beaten into submission by a nexus of capital-ideology and weaponry.

Instead of focusing on capital as a necessary class relation of waste reproduced by imperialism, Tyner calls 'attention to humanity's shared mortality'. Surplus value in this discourse is latched to the psychological fear of death. Like Karl Jasper's 'fear of death' which organises lives, Tyner also says because 'awareness of death, of our finite existence as mortal beings, significantly shapes our social organisation and how we ensure the (re)production of life itself.' Such false agency displaces capital and imperialism as subjects of history. People in white nations do not organise their lives by their fear of death, for the death they inflict upon the South is the source of their surplus value. The issue remains that morality and the freedom to act are class positions given historically. Marx's 'free development of each is a condition for the free development of all' is not a static rule. It is in a state of flux that rises when the class of workers suppress capital, alternatively, labour as a form of capital in the main remains a conduit of capital. Capital is incapable of fully decimating the potential of labour. Thence, in a dialectic of labour and capital, or by the relationships that reproduce capital, capital may be reversed by overturning the balance of power within the class struggle.

Although teleologically capital is set to fail because it ejects workers as the organic composition of capital rises, the auto-consumption of workers will meanwhile rejuvenate capital. The waste acquiring a moneyed form of value or, as it spins into forms of financialised capital, tilts the class balance in capital's favour. It cements the organic ties between a western working-class reaping 'dividends of imperialism' with its bourgeoisie. It does so by the duality of a North-South divide that shadows the capital labour contradiction and becomes capital's resilience re-founded by militarism. Likewise, Marx devoid of imperialism becomes the theoretical compromise by which the consumption of living labourers rendered prematurely dead in the South by the living labourers of the North proceeds indefinitely.

Labour is wasted as it dies prematurely, and as its potential as subject is wasted. The value that wasted labour assumes in a money form this or that amount, or whatever magnitude, because capital imputes in its measures of

value the lost potential and the constructed dis-usefulness of labour. In other words, the less the potential of labour, the less its clout, or the furthest the emancipation of labour becomes, the cheaper labour becomes. Capital captures value by destroying the actual and potential of labour by prefiguring the grounds of the class struggle to its demands. Capital may waste the concreteness of labour, but what it aims at is to waste the potential of labour, which is ultimately labour's contribution to emancipation, and which is labour realising itself as historical subject. Waste is both the dead body (the thing) and the death of potential, which is the socially necessary labour time undeployed in contributions that unshackle labour – what the working class keeps for itself. While the crushing of labour is the value making activity, waste as value also becomes the theft of usefulness by fabricating as useful that which is not useful. Although capital reifies people, and people as things imply that wasted labour is merely the dead bodies of labour, the twist remains that Marx did not treat humans as things or animals that just eat and die. Wasted potential arises because man for Marx is a social being that relies on a network of social relations of production. People are concrete beings but completely dependent on the social abstract. Capital becomes the social abstract under capitalism to which the process of how man lives or dies is only relevant in its contribution to surplus value. The only reality is that under that social abstract of capital man cannot live normally to reproduce sane life.

A working class that personifies capital is labour without potential. An example of such is when the aristocratic working classes watch their drones consume the flesh of others far afield, which is parenthetically a value making activity proper, and a realisation of the flesh of the victims. However, by the ethic 'to protect our American way of life' or by the Nozick (1974) 'train-trolley' benchmark, the death of innocent people abroad is justified. The trolley test, which is about saving more lives by sacrificing fewer lives, translates into how to minimise the others' loss of life abroad while keeping the US safe. The historically de-contextualised 'trolley' setting is presented as a Boolean (either-or) choice between others' lives and European-US lives. This particular either-or mode of thought inculcated as the optic with which the masses value social activities is drilled by rote learning methods; however, it is never innocent. It is the logic that surfaces to corroborate class cannibalism. It basically reflects a class position that says mass murder is justified in a world of scarcity, otherwise 'my people' perish.

From a decaying social system perspective, as Parenti (2009) had put it '[t]he empire feeds off the republic', and it is the republic, which is in decline and like any parasite, it overfeeds on its host. Moreover, it so happens that as capital commodifies social nature, it runs into people it must eliminate. The natives

are on land whose resources are vital. The agencies of capital carry out the depopulation in the most 'ethical' way, by eliminating reasonable numbers. As ludicrous as this may seem, the entwined trolley and lifeboat moralities are received theories of just war. Capital's ethic is class-utilitarian and power relations contingent. The exclusion of history, or that alternatives develop in real time and do not appear as multiple-choice exams, is the putative white class position. The intrinsic drive of capital, its accumulation by more waste, coincides with the white class position.

Western standards of living fluctuate in proportion to human and other resource utilisation in waste production. The loot arising from imperialist wars and the payoff of the central welfare state to its labour in wage premia are connected. The wages of central classes vary in relation to imperialist dividends, any moral component holding wages at subsistence is moribund.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of principle, divided labour, especially the North-South divide, is the cause behind the sinking of labour's global share of income adjusted for the waste. The dividedness of labour is the nub of capital's labour process; it is what capital prioritises such that although the Northern wage share may rise, overall, the global wage bill must decline – relative to the accumulated wealth and with waste imputed therein.

As argued in the previous chapter, the notion that the South begins to matter in terms of value only when it is superexploited with hand-me down Northern machines, reduces value to its material substance, or the Ricardian concrete labour. The value relation, which is a subject/object relation objectified in a commodity presumed in a money form of value, whose value proper is the socially necessary labour time, does not unbiasedly lend itself to measurement. The commodity as an object represents a moment within the totality of social production whose measure depends on the resultant of the class struggle. The fetish of the money form of value camouflages value. It under-prices

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<sup>2</sup> The stagnation in US working class standards of living since 1980 may have shown that it was not a moral component that upheld the rents in US average wages, but rather when the US's ideological victory was complete against the Soviet Union, capital had decided to partition less of the booty with its white working class. At this juncture, as the US senses the dangers of a rising China, it may raise the living standards of the lower strata as happened when the US competed with the Soviet model. With its promotion of Democratic Party socialism, it could even momentarily lift token Natives and Hispanics out of poverty as the US's war for 'democracy' entails showing itself as non-racist. In this repartition of shares between capital and its cloned working class, not much will be said about arresting US military bullying abroad. US-led capital may take a cut in income to weather the China effect (the antecedence of power to rent acquisition); however, it will restrict distributional arrangements in ways that abort demands for equalisation of global production conditions with wages in the South and anti-systemic organisation.

the labour power engaged in waste, specifically, it under-valorises the wasted humans. The masses of the South whose labour of the trenches counts for so little in US-dollars in their home countries, are the bearers of the of value whose dollar image in profits in the imperialist country is significant – the example of the million dollar missile that targets a puny hut in the Sahara may suffice.

In addressing a similar issue, Niebyl (no date) mentioned that designing a system of accounts in still-time to capture value in terms of dollar prices ‘poorly describes what is rarely analysed.’ In the totality of social production, labour in its productive and unproductive sides, the living and dead labour, including no less the waste-labour, are subsumed by capital. To illustrate the subsumption, one may point out that as free labour becomes a form of capital, value outlays on labour are dubbed variable capital, not variable labour. The wording is relevant. Equally, the relations of production in their totality constitute the social class relations, which in their turn constitute society. Although totality for Lukacs (1919) meant interdependent social relations, earlier and not so differently for Marx, a totality was a whole composed of various aspects, differing limbs of an organic system, a structure in which all relations coexist simultaneously and support one another [Lebowitz (2003) restating Marx’s concept of totality]. The same applies to Lenin’s concept of totality with the pre-envisaged extension to the colonies: it is the interconnected whole, *the production relations of the globe*, in which there are no ‘obstacles separating the civilised slaves of imperialism from the uncivilised slaves,’ [Minh (1974) paraphrasing Lenin]. Ho Chi Minh also notes that for Lenin the victory of the national liberation movement is a precondition for emancipation; my emphasis in the italic highlights Lenin’s break with the retrograde tradition of restricting the concept of totality to the European space.

More to the point, it is not the act of revolutionising of machines or the productive forces that foreruns socialism; it is revolutionary class consciousness. The material bases for forms of autonomous or revolutionary working-class organisations are not *immanently* dependent on technological advance. The attainment of a certain level of development in the productive forces upon a certain territory does not necessarily translate into anti-systemic revolutions. Judged by their participation in imperialist wars, the Western working classes are more pro-systemic. Space for capital is wherever it extends by conjoined militarism and finance. The lowest developed ranks of the developing world with lesser rates of industrial workforces are not less or more capitalist than Northern welfare states. They are not bad capitalists for reasons innate to them, while the North is a good capitalist. In the totality of social relations, the capitalism of the North defines the capitalism of the South by the power it exercises over it. If only on account of production relations un-conforming

to the imperialist commandeered development of the productive forces, the class contradictions of the South are more acute. Faced with the task of seizing power in a less developed Russia, Lenin experienced first-hand with Kautsky's war credits how advanced technology, or a more industrial workforce are not precursors for revolution. He recognised that the sources of revolutionary consciousness spring more from the cultural development sown by the revolutionary left, the cohesiveness of a working class forcibly socialised, and its metamorphosis into a proletariat or a class with anti-systemic organisation and consciousness, rather than the high numbers of industrial workers. At any rate, revolutionary readiness of the less developed formations arises on account of their sharp class contradictions enclosed within a resource-robed state incapable of brokering class differences; hence, the more pronounced crisis of rule.

Although Marx in (1858) posited that as capitalism expands to engulf the world market, the revolution on the Continent (Europe) will be socialist and it may be crushed because 'on a much larger terrain the development of bourgeois society is still in its ascendancy' which implies that the capitalists of the colonies will save capitalism. However, after the defeat of the Paris commune in 1871, he had turned his attention to the revolutionary potential of less developed formations, especially Russia, (Hobsbawm 1964; Emmanuel 1972). Apropos, as early as 1858 as well, Engels could already spot the English working class succumb to the bribery of imperialist plunder: '[t]he fact that the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, alongside the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat.' By 1882, Engels had a firm view on the issue: '[y]ou ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think. There is no workers' party here, you see, there are only Conservatives and Liberal Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies.'

Insofar as revolutionary potential is concerned, analysing 'in' the West or analysing 'away' the East by a level of development in the productive forces matching a level of revolutionary consciousness is perfect correlatedness. As such, progress in history solely becomes the mandate of the West since social agency reduces to an advanced machine with a positively correlated advanced consciousness. However, in the North where 'tech-machines' are more developed, these have conjointly developed with a bourgeois consciousness and served as weapons against the masses. Still, the division of capital by level of development in the productive forces grounds the social division of labour.

'The more the division of labour develops, and accumulation grows, the further fragmentation develops. Labour itself can only exist on the premise of this fragmentation' (Marx 1845). Marx proposes that the task of the proletariat is to abolish the state and to abolish itself (Mészáros [1986] interpreting Marx). Regarding the difficulty of bridging labour's differences, Emmanuel (1970) finds that capital's voids the opportunity for global working-class alliance by sensing the crisis and bribing sections off the aristocratic working classes against much of the developing South.

Theoretically, the proletariat as maker of historical ruptures cannot be fixed in time or a set of rules to which reality must comply. It cannot be conceptualised only as a form of the many forms of capital, which cloaks capital. The reification of Marxian concepts like class, class struggle or dialectics, etc., not only de-revolutionises Marx, it reduces the study of Marxism itself into a form of capital. One such example comes from Bordoni (2016) for whom proletarians are strictly industrial workers. However, as the ratio of industrial workers falls, which it does by the law of the rising organic composition of capital, the proletariat defined as such dwindles in numbers. Accordingly, the proletariat fades away as fewer and fewer workers fail to fit into to the club of industrial workers. This false construction of the concept proletariat as a guild with conditions of entry turns it into a subset of capital and leads to the vanishing of revolutionary class altogether (Kadri 2017).

Typically, Bordoni arrives at the conclusion that massification, increased products and consumerism abolished classes. However, the distinction between working class and proletariat is whether it is a form of capital, the subsumed labour in-fighting to reproduce capital, or the solidarity of labour anathema to capital, respectively. The class for Marx is ontologically defined as the relation social organisation and reproduction or the state of being of labour. Marxism's class is not to count the industrial workers. It is to gauge how the working class internalises revolutionary consciousness and actualises its symbols and forms into labour organisations and a corresponding 'material' force. Its task is not to assess how comparatively productive the American worker is in terms of dollars that the US emits as global currency. Dollar productivity is misleading, the ILO [KILM 2015] falsely ascribes high productivity to Qatari labour (citizens only) because of its high GDP per capita arising upon gas rents – Qatari citizens do not operate high-tech machinery. However, in terms of actual sacrifice in production, the slave-like migrants of Qatar who perish early reproduce a Qatari citizen class whose longevity matches the white classes of the North – Productivity is another name for class rent. Not only Marx, even neoclassical economics, the vulgar science, knew that capital's market powers level the terrain upon which prices and their sums proxying productivity are

devised. Prices of Northern commodities are imperialist-power symbols worth more relative to other commodities produced in the South. The task is then to test the revolutionary pulse of the South, which reproduces under severe crises and by remnants of its anachronistic forms of solidarity that may be invoked to oppose imperialism. Such proletarianism with peasants dawning the garb of their ancestors is more revolutionary than Scandinavian working classes flying fighter jets to bomb Libya.

The partition of labour by dollar-productiveness fitted upon skill differences, while the state brokers a lower share of wages from a social product, is a function of capital. The more labour lives by the falsehood turned real, the more it transforms capital from fiction into a real force. One such contrivance is the productivity-wage nexus, or wages follow productivity. That Northern workers deserve more in wages in relation to their dollar-denominated productivity, misses the point that the wealth upon which productivity springs is the imperialist rent. These rents also exclude the South from cultural development – culture being the store of knowledge. Typically, the share of the living wage rises or falls by labour's solidarity, or especially, support for armed struggle against imperialism. To hypothesise that Northern wages grow by better machinery or gas rents agrees more with national socialism than communist internationalism.

### 13 Class and Space

In the debate with Smith (2018), Harvey (2018a) presumes that violence is an accessory to accumulation. He says, 'neither of us (meaning Smith) deny that value produced in one place ends up being appropriated somewhere else and there is a degree of *viciousness* in all of this that is appalling' (Harvey 2018a) – my emphasis. Viciousness is not an incidental brawl in a school yard. It certainly is not an accessory to the capital system or a sideshow. It is the system actualised. In addition to militarism being a subdomain of waste accumulation, I call attention to this additional issue regarding its class nature and space.

It may be worthwhile to expand upon the propositions of chapter one in light of the preceding point. The expropriators of the surplus are not atomistic individuals residing upon spaces detached from history, structures and/or social forms of organisation or states. They are the financial class. The planet, that is the spatial dimension, is expendable and subjected to class power relationships. 'Leaner and meaner' capital disposes of industrial plants and other fixed capital assets in relation to future gains. More important, manifestations upon space such as real estate or industrial building structures are instruments

as well as forms capital. The real but abstract social relation, which is capital, may dump these physical structures as it jostles for more power.

Relatedly, violence is capital's state of becoming. Fanon's (1967) 'violence is man re-creating himself' is sound had he equated violence to capital. Ripping away the social product from social labour is value's inner logic and outer manifestation in waste. The value relationship, the war between use value and exchange value at the heart of the commodity, externalises in violence. Imperialism accelerates the expansion of value through increased wars, the purest forms of waste. A sociological understanding of capitalist violence implies a comprehension of the class motives realised in waste and its monetised forms. Aside from anti-systemic struggles, what is given in phenomenon is a logical and material form that capital foists upon social processes.

The sociological nature of imperialism is about the class content of international relations subtended by the undercurrents of the AGLCA. This internationally manifest law is nearly forgotten in the Western Marxist corpus. What is peculiarly lost is not the obvious circumstance that at one end there is wealth while on the other there is poverty – even the Economist magazine reports some of these income inequalities but avoids the exploiting class and exploitation as a waste activity behind the inequality. What is overlooked is the dynamic of the absolute law of surplus value, which stems from the weight of capital in the class struggle. Since imperialist wealth is shared with its cannibalistic central classes, central regime security of Western states associates with more civil liberties. In the manner by which Locke justified slavery on the basis of tyranny in the colonies, which threatens the centre (as explained in the previous chapter), these European rights and colonial wealth expanding civil liberties, by-products of the historical surplus value, must reciprocally impede the liberty of the South. Northern wealth generated liberties impose the slavery that produces the wealth. Locke is not alone in this. His point was if the colonial subjects reside in tyranny, then the West has the right to enslave them is similar to Hegel's (1857) position that slavery civilises Africa. For example, while the US embassies raise the pride flag, their purpose is not to advance gender rights, quite the contrary, it is to splinter labour.<sup>3</sup> The rights bundle is one indivisible whole. One cannot be for gender equality while bombing the South and oppressing African Americans. Regarding how the US treats its minorities, Mao (1959) remarked that the practice of US imperialism abroad is a reflection of its repressive domestic policy at home. The flag flown by the enemy of the masses associates the identity of the group whose flag is loved

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<sup>3</sup> State Department authorizes U.S. embassies to fly the Pride Flag. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/23/us/us-embassy-pride-flag.html>

by the US as an enemy of the masses. In the absence of anti-systemic alternatives, society may fabricate the worst gender-suppressive measures based on a fictional past to counter imperialism. Muslim girls do not attend schools under Taliban because there was no schooling of girls under the Caliph. In medieval Islam, the masses altogether were not schooled, aside from the fact that discrimination against women is a Western hallmark. Circularly, the increasing repression and cultural stigmatisation of the South serves as an alibi for sanctions, austerity or bombardment by the much superior fire power of the North. Lenin (1916) remarked regarding Western democracy, ‘it does not abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct ... The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their domestic slavery is capitalism, not lack of rights.’ Although Lenin recognised that the semblance of rights will make clearer farcical civil liberties, he could not foresee the extent to which Western Marxism has come to adopt this piece by piece approach to rights. Thence, the AGLCA is not only about the obvious or that there is more wealth here and the poverty there, it is about the political and cultural dynamic of the class struggle, which sways accumulation into violence and waste.

In a holistic social production system, the AGLCA is the ascent of the laws of capital from their particular or concrete state into their more general or abstract state. The particular laws are interdependent, and the efficiency of their mediatory role is contingent upon the resultant of the class struggle. They coalesce into the AGLCA actualised as general austerity or war-like conditions. The laws of capital remould the labour process, thin down, and regiment the working class, to produce commodities with the lowest share of necessary labour – the absolute law of surplus value at work. Under financialisation, crises of overproduction and its accompanying underutilisation of resources, the laws of capital pauperise at higher frequency to meet the higher turnover rate of finance. As such, they depopulate relative to the life expectancy determined by objective scientific progress.

Overpopulation and overproduction are socially constructed realities. There are too many commodities destined to tight markets unable to buy the surplus inventory, which in turn imposes the underutilisation of resources under steady population growth. Since the onset of globalisation (circa 1970), the crisis became yet more structural (Mészáros 1995). The rate of demand for labour actually involved in production, in contradistinction from labour hired for reasons of political stabilisation, fell. With the advent of neoliberalism, capital ditched the more expensive central labour for labour from the South – a redistribution of rent between circles of capital while the white working class is a circle of capital – resulting from changing power balances. Meanwhile, the outstanding auto-consumption of labour by means of destruction

reasserted itself as the mainstay of capital. Neoliberalism's free trade and free capital flows opened the labour transfer channels from the South. This allowed some more costly final stages of production to be relocated to the South where capital can use and dispose of cheaper labour within shorter intervals. While the workers from the South engaged in sweatshop and war industries, sections of the Northern workers moved into communications, services and finance, whose wages were further buttressed by the neolibetally catalysed financial rents. However, the internationally cross-cutting white class is organically tied to capital because it self-reproduces via militarism. In other words, without the war wasting additional humans, the formal inconsistencies building up within the system would stall the progress of central economies.

The current model of the social class divisions assumes three broad layers, the masses of poverty workers that eek a below-subsistence living, the masses of proletarians engaged/consumed by militarism and its wars, and a lump of white workers and aristocratic tertiary sector workers disproportionately present in the North with tail-ends in the South. Such model draws its resilience from the historically stacked victories of capital. It also gains momentum from the way capitalist crises of overproduction reinforce socially imposed under-consumption. In analogy, with the rising inflation in the US at the time of writing, the major concern remains for '[s]lower wage growth, which could help bring down prices and ultimately mean less sting for the average worker' (Guida 2022). The white class, a social being engrossed in the subjectivity of imperialism, will starve itself to sustain capital.

Aside from the genocides of 'mission civilisatrice,' US-Europe's aggressions steadily stymie the industrialisation of the South. With urbanisation alongside, rural urban migration and an underfunded rural sector, the fertility rates of the South stay high. The lag between deeply encoded high-fertility rural traditions and the pressures of modern living requiring smaller families means that reserve labour rises relative to spare capacity leaving more labour as raw material for structural genocide and waste. The below-population replacement level rates of fertility in longer-term urbanised society can either be construed as a subliminal revolt against austerity namely in the South or a mode of self-sterilisation that obliges the fascist measures for resolving the unemployment question in the North. The past genocidal process of the natives and the ongoing structural genocidal process in the Third World logically and, only logically for now, forerun Western wealth. The approach that reduces complex historical time to 'before and after' or to the requirements of capital's time, presumes that past genocides were crimes that occurred in the distant past, with only a psychological aftersmell lingering today – before and after respectively. However, in the shadow of the same iron laws of capital, modern imperialism intensifies its assaults. Although direct colonialism may have ended,

the colonialism of its dominant ideology, or what it left behind in the comprador, their colonially configured national maps and constitutions, and a whole structure of education and social reproduction dictated by imperialism, these are more efficient at waste than immediate colonial presence. Their returns per unit of investment in value usurpation attendant upon waste are significant to capital.

#### 14 Overproduction and Space

Imperialist war or the threat thereof is a social industrial process undergirded by cross-border class ties. Causing damage away from the centre boomerangs to the centre in more imperialist rents. In discussing the contribution of wars to the rise of the US, Petras (2011) sees that most investments at home in the US relate to imperialist war and war preparedness, resulting from the symbiosis between republic and empire mentioned above. In value extraction terms, empire holds sway over republic, and its principal role is to suppresses Third World development.

Such is the capital-labour contradiction, or the first contradiction of capital transposed onto a North-South plane. Imperialism also rearranges the conditions for exploitation by inter-warring between imperialists. This second moment is the inter-capitalist rivalry or the second contradiction of capital. Inter-capitalist war is necessary but incomplete without the labour-capital war. With the nineteenth century drawing to a close, Engels (1893) was asked if he thought that there would be inter-imperialist war in Europe. He answered affirmatively and commented that with smokeless gunpowder 'the armies confronting each other in the future will be so immense as to make all previous wars mere child's play in comparison with the next war.' Not long after, Lenin's (1916) hypothesis that war is the principal means of resolving capital's contradiction in the imperialist age sprung as an assertion of war's preeminent role in the international class struggle.

The dominance of financial capital is a prerequisite for capitalism to qualify as monopoly-finance imperialism. The threshold for imperialist aggression is contingent upon the rate of financial capital expansion, which accelerates the metabolic rate of social reproduction by pushing capital to transcend the national boundary and lay claim to the future of the South. Naturally, inter-imperialist rivalry flares up over the division of colonial territories. The excess imperial credit without collateral pressures capital to produce faster with cheaper inputs. Since the frequency of the turnover cycle under financialisation picks up speed, it also compels capital to further commodify social nature and to

rapidly offload the products of labour. Capital may turn to short-term gestating projects, but these are constrained by consumption or the demand side, which in turn impels capital to move into the waste domains. The industries of waste, foremost war, monetise and realise commodities, which are 'in waiting to be realised,' such as nature and human lives. Insofar as demand is concerned, the only significant item that was bought and sold in wars was the life of man, for which demand continuously grew. Patnaik (2022) notes that '[c]apital abhors state intervention that could possibly stimulate aggregate demand, so that the crisis of overproduction relative to shrinking demand, could be overcome because it wants neither taxes on the rich nor larger fiscal deficits.' Militarism is, however, a self-fuelling demand activity whose deficits cut down to size the working class.

While war addresses the bottlenecks of higher production in shorter periods, militarism's funded by the state, the consumption of death, redresses the demand shortfall. Moreover, war, a subcomponent of militarism, which is in turn a subdomain of the broader waste domain of accumulation, restructures value relations by restructuring class power balances. It refashions a mass psychology prone to the consumption of waste, or a society that auto-consumes proportionally with its gradation of class – the poor expire earlier. Instead of social spending and public works, which may strengthen the autonomy of labour to become capital's nemesis, capital boosts demand in areas of waste where cannibalistic consumption becomes its mainstay.

Financialisation, particularly the spread of the dollar as the world reserve currency and savings medium, further welds together classes whose wealth is of varying national origins. It fuses together bourgeois relations in a hierarchically structured order with the US-led financial class sitting atop the pyramid. Connectedly, the US-induced laws of capital with their neoliberalism, hitch more Third World assets through the free and dollarized open capital accounts, rent for right to dollar-use, or simply by the seigniorage of the US-fiat system as it issues the universal money form. Through money flows, currency speculation in emerging-market, instigated wars, and other neoliberal medicines, the financial class carries the planet onto a higher waste-production platform. The real production process, which includes waste, submits to the higher frequency of the financial cycle. The industrial cycle not only obeys the rule and time of financial capital, but industry also financialises itself. For instance, it delegates production to the backburner and prioritises bond issuance and stock buy-back (Fine 2014). The money-making process of destroy 'security and sovereignty-lacking states' will not spare the US-friendly comprador. Imperialists whose reason is the reason of the commodity, engage in fratricide and sacrifice weaker partners downstream for quick gain. It is not

enough for an obedient comprador to idle the national resources by following the neoliberal recipes, it must waste them. No matter the concessions a comprador makes to imperialism, the fragmentation of subservient states finalises the waste process.

In a globally integrated production process, everything is commodified and of value subject to capital's *social-time-determined turnover cycle*. To put things differently, that is to state that capital is a totalising relation that commodifies, and then to presume that the industry of war and destruction of countries in the South is not a value relation and it is just means to an end, morphs Marxism into utilitarian economics. Neoclassical subjective value theory proposes that the price that capital brokers for the alleged last process of commodity realisation is proportionate the value of the commodity. For the neoclassicals, the price may be tainted with market imperfections, but there is a price and a market for every contaminant such that the system reverts to equilibrium. The casuistry of mainstream economics aside, if through war and austerity people in the South are being reduced in numbers over a given time interval to make a commodity profitable in the North, their premature death counts not only as an intermediary to the value realised in the North, but also as a final stage predicated by the overproduction crisis of the North and as an end in itself. Death in the South is of use-value to the white classes. When the death of Iraqi children was 'worth it' to Madeline Albright, or the death of Libyans that triggered Hillary Clinton's Euphoria, and when Southern deaths are acquiesced to in the white continents, death becomes of use value. Death as a commodity replicates the steps of a value relation. It requires social labour to be produced, it has use value and it exchanges on the market for the universal equivalent money form. Yet despite the obvious, the 'noble savages' of the South and their territories were for Western Marxists just things whose destruction is neither price nor value-wise significant. To be sure, what is historically or value significant differs from what appears significant in quantity or price. Big prices cannot *formally* translate into big values because the former symbol is not of the same category or the social activity of the latter. The former is an instantiation of the latter brokered by social powers. The quantification of value in prices is decided by the historical subject or by how the superstructure of capital lays the groundwork for production prices, which already embed within them the surplus robbed from workers. The contradiction between value and price remains the irreconcilable contradiction between the base and the superstructure. However, what is historically significant in value is how it re-establishes the pre-eminence of capital in future value relations. War as a value process is best at that. Its activity creates more death for consumption, while the moneyed form of the dead serves as a form of capital that re-establishes the dominion of the capital relation.

To re-conceptualise, prices summed up in Northern output are the quantitative form of value that the subject, dominant capital, has constructed to aggress the working class. Identity-wise, the money form of value is a form of capital, whose making falls under the hammer of capital to reproduce capital.

The monopoly-finance governed business cycle exhibits a higher frequency and amplitude than an industrial cycle. Its peaks and troughs are booms and busts. Against the belief that the market functions in the best interest of society, the social reality of overproduction, whose flipside is the permanent underconsumption, characterises the system. While recession in the centre heralds social ills, the social and economic crises of the Third World constantly run deep. On its labour process side, monopoly-finance capital under-prices the value of labour power because it uses labour and dispenses with the lives of labourers in shorter periods. In comparison to chattel slavery, the modern wage slave in the Third World, costs *relatively* less in social reproduction outlays than an African American plantation-slave – always in relation to the changing nature of time and wealth. Contemporaneous war and austerity reduce the living wages over a person's lifetime to a negative income that crushes longevity. Workers are shortchanged with the historical purpose of causing their premature death. Save the genocide of the natives, at least by the sheer weight of big numbers, the potentially lost years of life of the modern wage slave are comparatively greater than those of chattel slaves because at that earlier time a longer life of the slave was preferable to a shorter life. Given the low life expectancy in relation to scientific progress in early capitalism, there are proportionately and *absolutely* more idle wage slaves wasted prematurely now than there ever were slaves to perish in the low-productivity endeavours of the sixteenth/seventeenth century.

The escalation of imperialist aggression abroad and the acceleration of the rate at which finance underutilises capacity reduce to waste human or other resources. The intensity of capital's crisis varies contrariwise to the rate of value usurpation. In other words, the rate of waste is the rate of exploitation, which supports the rate of profit. The value drain depends on the speed with which capital imperialistically aggresses, compresses work and lifetime in chronological time – to do much in a short time and drop, and converts the surplus labour of namely commercial exploitation into higher profits.

Historically, the series of US-led wars and its many military bases abroad evince the case for constant imperialist aggression. Logically, there must be imperialist aggression because capital is self-expanding value, and thusly, expanding imperialism. *A fortiori*, imperialism is 'an attempt to impose an all-embracing world system of hegemony through the efficient use of the military-industrial complex, which manifests itself through the direct control of space, as a framework and a preliminary to depth penetration and subjugation'

(Abdel-Malek 1977) – my emphasis. Just as imperialism cannot be defined by its manifestation in super-exploitation and/or the flows of capital, Abdel-Malek also does not rest his definition of imperialism on space, but rather redefines space as means to an end. Unlike Harvey's reified spatial fixes as subjects rather than instantiations of subject social relations, Abdel-Malek subordinates space to geopolitics; he says: 'the military-industrial complex which wields power of decision in the more advanced states brings to bear all the resources and potentialities of hegemonic imperialism in their maximal combination of scope, intensity and durability through the political uses of space, i.e., geopolitics' (Abdel-Malek 1977). Space, as well as fixed capital assets are objects of the geopolitics of the financial class, the class relations, whose more salient personification is the military-industrial complex. Having in mind the relocation of the microchip industry to the US, the physicality, the space and the real assets, are of ephemeral nature vis-à-vis the strategic politics of capital or the activity of the rudimentary law of value. As imperialism expands subject to finance, it uses, depletes, and/or scraps many of its fixed assets at rates commensurate with the requirements of its financial cycle. The relics of fixed physical capital in Northern de-industrialising states demonstrate that capital's real assets are mere branch-plant economies that could be ditched.

Classification-wise, Harvey's concept of space belongs to some strand of pragmatism. For him, space and imperialism co-define each other, or imperialism collapses into space. The space, the thing itself transmuted into subject, relegates the real social subject, the imperialist class, to obsecrity. At a broader level, lost in this picture of space and spatial fixes is capital, the capital social relation, or the leading link in capitalist reproduction. The physicality represented in wealth erected upon some space, as well as the social classes to which it appertains, things as well as social classes, emerge as indifferentiable subjects of social reproduction. In this motley, classes are equivalent to things. However, the systems' dynamics, or the social forces that induce transformation, cannot be things. Whereas auto-negation characterises reality, in the logical identity of spatial wealth 'equal' capital, cosmic matter self-differentiates but not society – the consequence of such is 'the socialism is impossible, let us make do with capitalism.'

When social science should be concerned with how society allocates its resources, such theorisation questions impertinent issues. Theory, in one of its many guises, is about the *immanence* of its logic or about the unity of the rational and the historical forces responsible for transformations. True, capital creates wealth, and it is out there in the moneyed equivalent of buildings, wars and pollution. Wealth is mirrored in moneyed wealth, the socially upheld convention symbolic of commodities. Money is precursor and accomplishing stage of the commodity cycle. Buildings equivalent to a sum of money

must return a higher sum of money for the financial class. The financial indicators determine whether the buildings should or should not be levelled to the ground. To posit that imperialism exemplified in a spatial fix is only the spatial fix, without its twin other, the US dollar hegemony, is a statement similar in its scope to the *ceteris paribus* (other things constant) clause of neoclassical economics. That is, it chooses what to preclude from the analysis to show the capitalist world in a better light. It is also a statement that exceeds the *pragmatic* definition of truth, or that for an act in objective reality to be truth it cannot be either in excess or in deficiency, or that it has to auto-suffice (a permutation of Charles Peirce's [1984] definition of truth). Although process is all there is, pragmatism chooses to search for truth in a non-existent pre-Socratic constancy.

With this approach, the overdetermination in history, the interrelated and complex reasons behind any phenomenon are reduced to what is accessible by subjectively biased experience. The Europeans experience the buildings and the factories; however, they do not experience them in their electronic moneyed forms shovelled daily to their financial markets. The newly created facts, the additional buildings or colonial settlements, nullify the historical subject behind the facts. In this 'what you see is what you get' theory, the hypothesis tested against the facts will be repetitively borne out by the facts. Experience time and again will reveal that there is objectively a spatial fix associated with imperialism because, no matter the experimentation, capital or the totalising social production relation creates wealth, including not to forget waste paraded as wealth. To properly conceptualise space in its physical, monetary and social forms, and to theorise these forms in their historical ascendancy from concrete to abstract and as mutations of the genus capital, it is vital to weigh the power exercised by imperialism to strip the moneyed returns on these spatial fixes from the masses. Buildings or other spatial fixes will be or not be by the orders of their moneyed forms of value, the paramount fetishes of capital. Whether the moneyed wealth of the developing nations' masses ends up in the US or recirculates at home to enhance social benefits is the litmus test of the strength of the comprador in the national economy.

Harvey's 'hegemony without imperialism' is the building without the subject that transfers wealth from West to East. Even the Financial Times argues that with '7 of the 10 most valuable companies in the world and 14 of the top 20, headquartered in the US,' and the US will be in the lead if it 'remains democratic, free and open.'<sup>4</sup> Forgetting for a moment that it is speaking of a US where the life expectancy of native Americans remain significantly lower than

<sup>4</sup> Financial Times, China is wrong to think the US faces inevitable decline, April 28, 2021.  
<https://www.ft.com/content/8336169e-d1a8-4be8-b143-308e5b52e35>

white Americans, it is clear that the dollar credit, underwritten by imperial reach, is centralised and concentrated in the US.

For objects perceived by the senses to impart truth by their mere presence is more formal conceptualisation than historical-dialectical. Fixed asset wealth such as speed trains and skyscrapers are accumulating in the East, especially in China; however, the leading force vacuuming the dollar wealth of the world against its astronomical fiat-debts is US imperialism. Once the particular observation is referenced against the whole, then the concept of that particular observation changes because its subject is identified. It is no longer just as it is presented to the senses, it is now a product and form of the subject of history given in the dominant structure of US-led capital.

As opposed to geographical space, class is a constituent of history, and in relation to other classes, it is history proper. The capital class channels capital flows by the impetus of the cross-border class ties headed by US-led capital. The activities of resource allocation and moneyed wealth flight to the US are elements of imperialism. In this regard, a conceptual edifice devoid of inter-relatedness and contradiction such as Harvey's space, or that things do not develop from within in relation to their genus-differentia contradiction and the pressure of their environment, disregards the agencies of capital. Without a 'who done it' subject, inanimate space exonerates Europe for five centuries of slaughter accumulated as the historical surplus value. It would then become possible to attribute the famines of China's Great Leap, which were incidentally more weather related (Patnaik 2011), not to the many Western aggressions incapacitating China beforehand, but to a fault inherent to socialism. It also becomes possible to selectively categorise from spaces as opposed to a history of relations. Harvey (2018 a,b) turns inter-Eastern class contradictions into a sorority of Asian nations. He lumps China with Japan and South Korea when measuring spatial fixes, whereas Japan egged on by the US itches for first strike capability against China. The imperialist process or the many cross-cutting capital classes, with the US in the lead, which violently remoulds the working classes into forms of modern slavery, is sacrificed for space.

The reification of class does not preclude a reading of history to resituate a hypothesis with novel facts. In such 'add an observation as you go approach', the historiography of development niches into in the physical things or the spatial observations added-on instead of the laws of the historical process. The series of events reconstituting wealth by the determining moment, the pivotal relationship within the structure or US-led capital, are not subsumed to the dynamics of a process. As ideas take on a physical appearance, here spatial wealth, the figures they assume write off the intermediated process, the

relation that they are, or rather the law of their state of becoming in things. Things in abstract forms, which do not admit their opposites (the law of non-contradiction), but only the idea and its corresponding physical reference (the determination), would be the thinking flaw that led Aristotle not to question the obvious slavery of his time. To posit that slavery is natural in a democracy, or the slave cannot be a free man, nor could she be born as a free man, implies that the category slave does not admit its opposite attribute, the master who is free. Why in the *process of reshaping man as slave* by slave-owners, the slave appears to be recontributing to her enslavement by her own psychological metamorphosis-submission, as if naturally acceding to her condition of slavery, is all that matters. Fast forward to capitalism and its wage-slaves, just like every form of capital that reproduces capital cannot be understood without reference to its content given finance determined production relations, the commodified wage slave or spaces must also not be understood without the *dominant structure that remakes their existence*.

Since theory is inseparable from ideology, any level of abstraction regarding imperialism is adequate in the way it contributes to proletarian struggles. In the war of ideas, or symbols against symbols, the concentrated-centralised capital of the US-led financial class droning Middle Eastern huts from Texas is the time compressed spatial form of capital. This US-led class is heir to the European colonial class and its culture. To be exposed to the risk of early death by militarism and to self-devour by addiction to waste consumption are the landmarks of such culture. More important, the imperialist class subject that wields the weapon of the dominant ideology also reconstructs how reality is grasped and organised in thought. It circumscribes the popular imagination to its forms. Through the insemination of popular modes of comprehension with its metaphysical abstractions, or through the partitioned reality of pragmatism, the imperialist chokes the population into submission. So far, the instrumentalisation of Western Marxism by capital carves the modes of perception and sows the seeds of anti-revolutionary consciousness.

The empirics of imperialism are not much about high-rises or fast trains. They are about where to bomb next and how to control value transfer through financialisation. The expropriated wealth via militarism and dollar channels are snapshots of imperialism in still time. To include the imperialist control mechanisms into the spectrum of observed phenomena, is to include the social cost reproduction of Third World labour, the value proper, into the circuit of US-led capital. Sectional empirical representations are meaningless if not subordinated to their hierarchically structured levers of control.

## 15 A Portrait of Control

The ideological currents of imperialism, tributaries of the historical surplus value, are its culture in relief reconstituting and reconstituted by its wealth. The credibility of the historically accumulated rents of the US-led financial class is backed up by the degree to which its ideological symbols are dominant. World consent to the dollar as the universal commodity is one such symbol, which is also the recognition that dollarized world assets ultimately belong to the US financial class. Denominating world wealth holdings in dollars is *de facto* US-led class ownership of world assets.

By issuing credit to the world, the US also controls global monetary policy – so long as the US stays in the lead, its debts are its credits, or its debt is its wealth supported by its global control. Its interest rate is a proxy of the world interest rate. The US practically sets any developing country's interest rate in relation to its own, which in turn reveals the risk premium and the cost of credit in those countries – broadly, the difference between the US and the developing country's interest rate is a measure of risk in less-developed nations. The US's long-term interest rate prefigures the discount rate of the future or the trade-off between investing-consuming now or in the future. Its debt issued to finance its spending, or equivalently its wars and warring social capabilities, absorb the excessive expansion of the financial sector. Wars of strategic control, the damage created abroad to rework value in mitigation of lower profits, bestow the US-treasury bill its risk-free status and collateralise additional debt. Circularly, US dollar credit supplied to the private sector inflate the money stock and, through speculation, inflate the assets of the financial class. The steady flows of US credit add to the fictitious capital, or the unrepayable financial part of the economic surplus. These seek collateral in further US-debts issued against the capture of the labour of society in the future, and/or the more lives spent in imperialist wars.

In the dollar denominated debt of the vulnerable South, monetary and fiscal austerity with liberalised capital and trade accounts imposed by the IFIS drain value not so much on account of additional growth, but more so because value emerges by the emaciation of the lives and nature. Their austerity stunts growth and what drives the salient growth rates ends up being rents on the liquidation of resources. Accordingly, the real industry of capital in the developing world becomes the waste of the masses. Of note here are the many students of the Chicago-school heading developing countries' central banks, which outdo their masters in crippling their own national capacities. Aside from capital flight and the intermittent crises, which release national assets

at fire-sale prices, there are exchange price and barter terms of trade conditions that drain value. Obviously, low prices earned by the direct producers of the third world must steadily fall below what is needed to sustain a decent subsistence. Not so obviously, the tendency for the low prices accrued by direct producers results from their poor showing in class power balances, as opposed to whether their products are or high value-added manufactured commodities or primary exports. The impact of IFI-engineered fiscal and monetary policies, which through wage depression ensures that the value outlays delivered to the peripheral working classes falls, is significant only when the raw power of the US disarms the developing nation. Being short leashed with heavy external debt service obligations, the indebted developing countries forfeit their sovereignty in return for US-decided disbursements to maintain a steady exchange rate; ostensibly, when national currency plummets, inflation undercuts the real wage by the rate of dependency on imports.

Through its dollar seigniorage and increasing Third World dollar indebtedness, US-led capital sets most exchange rates in relation to the dollar. In indebted and import-dependent countries, the manipulation of the exchange rate by IFI orchestrated delays in the disbursement of dollar funds needed to service the external debt leave the working class defenceless on the food security front. When and if devaluation strikes, inflation rises, which makes the US-marionetted exchange rate set the price of nearly all commodity prices in the developing economy. By controlling two macro prices, the exchange and interest rates, the US-led capital class can lower the price of others' assets and acquire much of their value with the paper dollars it prints, while threatening the masses with starvation.

Although the dollar status is faltering, it remains the international currency. Much of global trade is in the dollar, and much of wealth stores in the dollar. Over two-thirds of all world reserves are held in dollars (Reuters quoting the IMF [2017]).<sup>5</sup> In particular, the mostly de-sovereignised developing world holds the dollar as the medium of value transfer and saving. The dollar doubles for their national currencies. The less autonomous they are, the more the dollar dominates. The safer dollar lures the developing nation bourgeoisie to liquidate national wealth and store it in dollarised financial instruments. More so, with the national states serving the comprador, the central banks carry more dollar debts as they provision dollar-credit to the local financial class in

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<sup>5</sup> Reuters (2017) U.S. dollar share of global currency reserves rises in fourth quarter: IMF, Reuters, 31 March 2017, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-forex-reserves/u-s-dollar-share-of-global-currency-reserves-rises-in-fourth-quarter-imf-idUSKBN17220L>

order to speculate on assets listed in national equity markets, only to shift their tax-supported dollar gains abroad.

Tangentially, the US's ease of turning paper debts into liquidity and treasury bill transferability as collateral have not arisen on account of the ingenuity or creativity of US financiers. Just as the speed of non-value creating exchange reduces the costs of circulation of production by driving capital beyond the spatial barrier, so does the speed of non-value creating finance (rephrasing Marx [1863] or treating financial transaction as non-value creating exchange). The developments in financial instruments and derivatives are the functional response to speedier frequencies of exchange and finance. The returns to capital from the astronomical size of derivatives/risk bets and reinsurance markets momentarily sedate it, however, the answer to the crisis of mounting money without countervalue remains militarism. It is the US military bases and the wars abroad that ensure future collateral and/or create more instability in peripheral nations.

To re-summarise, the US-led class strength manifests in its indebtedness, which is also its wealth. Undoing the status of the dollar as world reserve currency is first undoing the power of US imperialism, its militarism and corresponding ideological apparatuses. It is undoing the consensus that the US is powerful. When consent fractures, resisting formations will fully confront the strength of the US Treasury as the entrusted paper of world debt. Although the expanding US debt, as credit afforded to global financial institutions, is also means to expand economic activity, still given the fictitious debt's *qua* dollar money supply excessive size, it is also means to expand bubbles and induce militarism. The inordinate expansion of money is under the purview of the financial rentier, which through the pressures it puts on an overproduction-ridden cycle to proportionate financial expansion, shifts productive efforts to waste.

Naturally, the persistent assaults of imperialism provoke working class resistance. Some struggles undermine capital and some, like the for-itself identity struggles imposed by the imperialists, buoy capital by reinforcing sectarian politics. The prognosis is such that imperialist expansion in the ex-colonies faces off against few national liberation movements that place liberation ahead of nationalism, or that do not espouse the forms of self-defeating capital-enshrined identity politics (Frank 1982). After all, it is capital through the colonially engineered state, which saddles society with its sectarian identity (Hobsbawm 1996). Few national liberation movements conduct their politics with the strategic objective of internationalism mediating national politics. However, in terms of class-struggle trajectories, or the confrontation that co-aligns with an anti-systemic historical trajectory, the rise of China is proving

to be 'a rising tide that will lift all boats.' Although the idiom associates with sharing in common prosperity, its other meaning is the potential resurgence of revolutionary consciousness. A rising China is an alternative power upon which developing nations may lean onto to face US-led imperialism.

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# US-Led Capital Is the Only Imperialism

Imperialism generalises commercial exploitation to nations. Just as a slave is not paid for her labour, a nation is not paid for its human and natural resources. Imperialism carries exploitation to extreme ends by the industry of war. War-making, the mainstay of imperialism, dissolves, engages/disengages, or allocates resources under permanent conditions of overproduction. Imperialism is both a symptom of capital and capital's state of becoming as it auto-negates to obey its own laws of development, or ultimately to come undone. It is capital's evolution into a higher more condensed stage that mitigates as well as deepen crises. In other words, imperialism is a mutation of capital as the law of value presses down on labour by the practice of war to resolve the contradiction between the relations and forces of production of capital. Although wars existed in all class societies, their underlying reasons change depending on the material circumstances of social reproduction. In the monopoly-finance age, imperialist bellicosity counteracts overproduction by forcing people to consume waste, be consumed by waste, and by the intensification of waste production. This chapter re-theorises imperialism and the case that US-led imperialism remains the only imperialism pillaging the globe.

## 1 Re-theorising Imperialism

Capital is a social relationship for which the politics of cementing its class rule is a matter of primacy. It is neither the development in the productive forces nor the number of unemployed that define whether this or that country is a better modern capitalist or antiquated undemocratic capitalist. US-European centred capitalism is the universal condition, the class that subsumes the resultant of all classes to make history. Beneath the sparkle of its stock of material and spiritual attainment, its Western civilisation, with so many irreversibly lost humans and natural specie to its credit, had surfaced as waste. Relative to what the development of the productive forces could have improved versus what it has accomplished, this is the darkest period in history.

By the dominant stance, the Third World is responsible for its plight on account of its essentialist barbarity. Moreover, for much of Western scholarship, the developing world enters the value chain represented by its puny contribution in money to global GDP. Its income, capital flows, and or trade volumes are

insignificant vis-à-vis Western income and, automatically, its value contribution becomes insignificant. Put bluntly, because value is transfigured against its mon-eyed form realised in Western consumption, the equivalent of imperialist value transfer from the Third World in dollars appears low relative to the value produced in the West. This literally means that the Western working class produces its own income and does not depend on imperialist rents, or, implicatively, it has not developed into a systemic partner of capital. However, the development of the productive forces – of which labour is subject and technology is one component – does not account for the reasons of higher levels of income in the centre. Better productive forces are in unity with wealth and presuppose more wealth, but not variations in the distribution of income over time that pile up as wealth. The flows of income co-align with class power balances, or encounter obstacles that resolve in constant aggression to incapacitate the developing world. Fanon's (1967) point that 'wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery' is a shortcut to the gist of imperialist power through the suppression and exploitation of developing social formations, which creates wealth.

To-repostulate, the political stabilisation payoff to the Northern working classes is not merely hush money, it is a rent component derived from the Northern working class partnering with imperialism in commercial exploitation. This fragmentation of labour is what Mészáros (1986) labels 'the most acute of Marx's theoretical difficulties.' To acknowledge the division of various groups of workers, inevitably asserted in the form of conflicting claims, is to undermine the transitional political form, or the international proletariat represented in global political forms and unionism (Mészáros 1986). He also notes two distinctive features of the social division of labour. First, the advanced capitalist countries are the beneficiaries of the global capitalist division of labour –against the differentially more exploited labour of the Third World. Secondly, divided and fragmented labour is at the mercy not only of the ruling class and its state, but also of the objective requirements of the prevailing social division of labour, or the problem that sections of labour share more with capital than they share with other labour; he says: 'labour happens to share with its adversary within the compass of the materially and institutionally enforced (and to a large extent self-enforcing) social metabolism' (Mészáros 1986). To address a possibly vexing question, the formation of revolutionary internationalism, Mészáros proposes that the conscious management of what capital unconsciously brought into being in the first place by the development of capitalism itself can realistically appeal to the increasing importance of a totalising social consciousness only by calling at the same time for the necessary material conditions – aimed at transcending the given fragmentation of labour – through which the development of this consciousness first becomes possible (Mészáros 1986). To elucidate Mészáros's

not so satisfactory answer, capital's anarchy and blindness to the dire social consequences of its actions, will eventually provoke the masses to reorganise and face its wrath. However, although the working class is universal (wage labour is phenomenal), the proletariat or the working class imbued with anti-imperialism is not a universal class. The wages of the North rooted in imperialist rents and their attendant modes of consciousness differ from the wages of anti-imperialist masses. Moreover, aside from the unconscious racism of liberalism, whose structural genocide, the premature death, has proven more deadly than the conscious racism of fascism, Mészáros's accentuation of the centre as holding potential for revolutionary transformation is misplaced. He also allots less than deserved attention to the leading role of anti-imperialist forms of organisation and armed struggle in the developing world.

Not long after, in 1995, Mészáros suggests that the system maintains cohesion by means of antagonistic *second-order mediations*, such as the nuclear family, alienated labour, civil society, and the state, generating various vicious circles.<sup>1</sup> He leaves out the point that national liberation struggles are ongoing despite the departure of the colonists because the comprador classes left behind, which identify with imperialism, continue to govern. In response, the ongoing national liberation struggles potentially realign the fragmented consciousness of labour since they undermine the imperialist class; the central financial class and its tail-ends in the periphery appear cohesive in their attendant ideological forms. By dialectical inversion, to weaken capital weakens the fragmenting identities from which it draws its strength; thence, the horizon for the realisation of the potentiality of internationalism draws nearer. The primary contradiction of capital is between North and South, or sub-laterally the forms of political representation of capital and labour. Although secondary, the second order mediations are designates of capitalism as a historical stage, or an epoch of waste potentiated by a Western Marxism that disembowels consciousness and relegates the primary contradiction to secondary position.

Disparate global wages justified by neoclassical 'marginal conditions' and the Western Marxist criterion of productive and unproductive labour are the pretence that additionally promotes the waste of the developing world. Often, one-sided abstractions of productive and unproductive labour unmediated from their initial state of concrete labour into the more universal category

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<sup>1</sup> A first order mediation is the ensemble of relations of production, which is equal to total social labour, within the economic base. It is a transhistorical ontological category; a very concrete abstraction that represents human nature and the harmony between man and nature through social labour. It is society reproducing itself. The lesser order mediations are the historically specific relations of production perpetuated by the superstructure, the repressive state and the dominant ideological institutions. In the context of capitalism, they include wage labour, private property, exchange, alienation, exploitation.

living/social labour also rationalise global wealth differences. Unequal wage structures based upon constructed skill and productivity differences, or undeveloped less-than holistic concepts of labour, are forms of inter-working-class divisions. The argument that sectarian struggles by Northern unions for higher wages, in due course, leads to an internationalist solidarity flies in the face of the facts. To date, the Western working classes unanimously put forth either the openly or the liberally imperialist positions. Western welfare reforms countered revolution. Such segmentation of labour is the pillar of capital. The point 'prioritising reform in the centre' heralds revolution only when anti-systemic opposition hinders imperialism's aggression by aggressing its strongest link, or the bourgeois democracy, which transmutes Northern labour into systemic capital. Historically, the Western Marxist adjoining point on low-South value transfers to the North may be that those who do not possess the better machines are an un-readied proletariat. Insofar as the realisation of revolutionary potential co-aligning with the development of the productive forces as a condition for transition to communism, Losurdo (1999) sardonically comments that by such definition, 'it would require that the productive capacities of communism be advanced so wonderfully that the problems and conflicts that are ordinarily connected to the measurement and regulation of the labour necessary for the production of social wealth and the distribution of this wealth would have disappeared.' Nothing of the sort could happen overnight. Under such utopian conditionality, labour, the state, and value theory would have altogether disappeared, and when such ideal is contrasted with the problems of real existing socialism, efforts of land reform and alleviation of poverty are delegitimised because they fall short of the imagined communist future. Logically, the masses of the developing world are to curtail their struggles and capture of power, all the while waiting for central bourgeois democratic reform with better machines to bear fruit. When the failures of twentieth-century democratic reform leading revolution in the centre are highlighted, Western Marxism retreats into the position that imperialism bears progress (Warren 1973). Other Western-Marxist derogatory labels of revolutions in the South include 'impure socialism,' working-class immaturity, imperialism got thinned down into some multitude such that revolution must be *a priori* global (Hardt and Negri 2005) or, lastly, the positivist positions that there cannot be a transition to socialism.

While being the pedestal and predicate of wealth, the billions of the un-sovereign masses in the Third World seize little of the moneyed form of value. As argued in the previous chapter, the lopsided class power structure is the historical agency of capital. However, with capital reasserting itself by the transference between the power of its guns and ideology, the prices

paid by capital to the direct producers of the South are the reverse image of their value contributions. Yet, the fruits of exploitation in moneyed form or, the unequal exchange between Southern wage labour and capital, emerge as exchange between equivalents. Little prices exchanged for lives appear equal by the machination of the law of value (drawing on Marx's point [1867] that the law of value manifests in the sham of value equivalence in exchange). Poverty, a by-product of the law of value, leaves workers the choice between starving slowly, killing themselves speedily, or taking what they need where they find it (Engels 1844). The act of socially induced self-destruction comes to a head under imperialism. The unequal power structure entails more than the symbolic and non-symbolic paraphernalia of power; it is also the internalised capital and capital-seeded methods of reasoning that double for science. Imperialism immiserates and imposes cultural surrender upon the South. Most peculiarly, no matter how one approaches the subject of inequality, mainstream theory turns out to be ahistorical. The phenomenal waste read historically, what we all see before us in death and pollution, which is best put as the product of capital in charge of history, will delegitimate capital.

The global commons have been desecrated, yet none researches history as history in the making, leave alone, as a phenomenon unfolding by the laws of capital. The ahistorical mainstream buries social-class memory alongside the concept of class. In its war against labour, capital presumes people are more like things propelled by laws similar to those of physics, in contrast to social laws. Although the past whose laws of development still lay out the conditions to recreate the present and the future, peoples are best turned into things with only a capital-selected recollection of their past. Such is ahistorical positivism. It is a philosophy that rationalises the reign of the commodity. What is given to the senses or experience is there by its own inertia and is truth as predicate of itself. It imprints itself on the mind as it is. There is a divine order to the way things are organised since they tend to equilibrium, just as there was a divine celestial order in the Newtonian solar system, which discloses divinity. The world is an order assembled by deductive reason and discoverable with mathematics. The same critiques that were levied against Newton by Kant (1781 [1999]), or that his (Newton's) argument was predicate without subject, still applies to contemporary positivism. In other words, Kant's forgotten point that things do not relay themselves as they are and that people explain things in relation to *a priori* space and time, as inborn intuitions, still holds. Although interesting, the transcendental-ontological notions of space and time, which colour our views of reality, are insignificant when compared to class biases. Kant's subject is abstract being, whereas real being is historical-social being grounded

in its material class-process. Thence, in much of received theory, the object before us has no social class or *historical reason cum* subject, it is either caused by concrete individualism or cause for itself – *causa sui*. *Prima facie*, these notions run counter to the dialectics of substance-subject. They are without social provenance (Lenin 1909).

In relation to the above, to define capital as a social relation, or subject, and to presume that value is correlated to the higher price of the product of the better machine, the substance, is to limit the definition of value to substance without subject. It does not account for the vested interest of capital, or the fact that capital would like to erase labour as subject altogether to pay nothing in wages. It may be as well to recall that value is not to be abstracted as only the machine or the object on its own. The machine as a thing is an ‘empirically given to the senses’ concept that accords with positivism, while the machine as some imperfect variation of the ideal form of the machine, is the metaphysical abstraction. In dialectics, however, the machine is the product of the relation of subject to object in their state of becoming. Similarly regarding the value associated with it. Value is both the commodity, object, and its subject, labour the relation class working for wages. When it assumes fetish status, value becomes the relation that governs the reproduction of society as it self-expands. It is the historical relationship that reconstitutes wealth. In the socially necessary labour time consumed at every stage of the production process, there are, in addition to human effort, human lives serving as inputs. In such a social cycle, the consumption/realisation of life is the final realisation stage. War or the war dead are then better suited to close the loop in a turnover cycle whose span is the lifetime of the worker in production rather than the year-end sale of commodities fetching a certain price on a certain market. War as a social production event presupposes and leads social production.

Wars visited upon the nations of the Third World are subject and predicates of value formation processes. It is not only they impart a decisive share of the global social product to the North; they are the preconditions without which surplus labour cannot be ripped away from the working classes. Contingently upon how the money form associates with the power of the subject, whether labour or capital, in the value relation, the shares of value accruing to various strata will get apportioned. At a rudimentary level, the structural genocides and other forms of imperialist aggression should not be discounted from production as power restructuring and value making processes that refound the totality of social production. They engage labour as subject and object, or the labourer expends his labour power on war machinery to produce the decimated labourers. Value-share assessment depends either on the power of the subject in the value relation or the way the money form is contorted to reflect value. More important, every novel commodity in its fetish state speaks for itself as a thing

but conceals its own historical production process. Where to draw the line in the appraisal of value depends on the ideological stance defining the mode of abstraction and categorisation, or on where to demarcate space, time and, ultimately, the power of capital's agencies over concept formation.

Accordingly, value appraisal is a class-biased act in which the money form of value departs from value by the ideological influence of the party judging value. Capital designs the accounting system to accord with its method of valuation, with the view that factor incomes, labour or capital, receive what they deserve based on their respective efforts. Prior to that, capital also designs the power platforms upon which outputs are money valued. It does not however mention that it had beaten the developing world into submission such that its moneyed-output is reduced to a picayune dollar amount. It then shows by foregone conclusion that the low moneyed share of the Third World correlates with its low machinery and low-value added activity. It does not show the sequence of wars that have vanquished the masses. Relatedly, it masks the genus of central wealth, which is its historical surplus value. Wealth is the product of *permanent* colonial and/or imperialist bellicosity, while the historical surplus value is the intellectual and manual labour of many generations, in addition to the relations of power, real as well as ideological/cultural, which compose the weight of history.

Capital also effaces the organic unity of labour. It plays off one section of labour against another and may share more of its wealth with its partnered working class, always with the view of maintaining the supremacy of its relationship. For instance, as neoliberalism bites in Europe, capital rationalises its outcome as a bout of madness in an otherwise pristine history. For instance, Bourdieu (1998) proceeds to correctly elaborate the strength of neoliberalism, however, in a text devoid of the word war or imperialism.

Theory that is de-socialised and de-historicised at its roots has, today more than ever, the means of making itself true and empirically verifiable. In effect, neoliberal discourse is not just one discourse among many. Rather, it is a strong discourse – the way psychiatric discourse is in an asylum ... It is so strong and so hard to combat only because it has on its side all of the forces of a world of relations of forces, a world that it contributes to making what it is. It does this most notably by orienting the economic choices of those who dominate economic relationships. It thus adds its own symbolic force to these relations of forces.

Although Bourdieu highlights the obvious or how capital moulds reality to its historical inclination, he fails to note how could neoliberalism, whose inane logic has more to do with fairy-tales than reality, grips the reason of history

and rises to the status of invincible dogma, all without the war against the Third World. He does not interrogate how could the neoliberal fantasy double for reality unless the threats of war and wars against the developing world are accounted for. While Europe was dizzy with success after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Muslim working classes abroad were 'Islamised' into sub-humans to be droned into defeat. The issue is not put that bourgeois democracy as an exercise of power is itself an intransigent form of capital. Neoliberalism ascends and squeezes the global wage share, including the rents to central working classes, as a result of central working classes integrating rather than collaborating with capital to demolish the peripheral masses, which invertedly reduces the central working classes share from the imperialist loot. This is not an issue of false consciousness on the part of central working classes. They are not credulous in the least. However, transformed into a sub-sphere of capital, they take a cut in pay to reassert the power of capital, its law of value and how it asserts itself in waste production. Just like capital of which they are an integral part, capital's politics holds sway over its economic concerns. Moreover, the white working class can no longer negotiate a higher share of imperialist rents with its partnered circles of capital since less of their services as foot soldiers of empire are required against the already conquered Third World.

All in all, social democracy's blindness to imperialism is not a gaffe, it is more the practical side of Western civilisation whose approach to humanising capital through constitutional welfarism, reinforces fascism. It is argumentatively possible to debate that the Northern working class is not a systemic partner of capital by the fact that it had not yet undertaken larger scale genocide against the 'superfluous' population of the South. However, leaving more or less of the masses alive is the sort of argument that socialist Francois Mitterrand could have signed off on the execution of more Algerians, but he did not. That capital can massacre more but it does not, has to do with '[t]he necessity of the distribution of social labour in definite proportions, which cannot possibly be done away with by a particular form of social production but can only change the mode of its appearance... What can change in historically different circumstances is only the form in which these laws assert themselves. And the form in which this proportional distribution of labour asserts itself' (Marx 1871). Then what follows in a state where the interconnection of social to abstract labour through exchange, the exchange of socially produced waste products, such as the number of dead Algerians, also occurs in definite quantities to reassert the rule of capital. Mitterrand just signed off on a sufficient numbers of executions to maintain colonial rule in Algeria. (see Malye and Stora [2010] for additional information about Mitterrand's role in occupied Algeria).

In addition to its more insidious assaults by its technocratic strata and Save the Children NGOs the Western working class engages in the wars as means of

social reproduction. Labour self-segments and integrates with its local capital through the institutionally self-enforcing social metabolism by which it reproduces (Mészáros 1986). What Mészáros does not mention is the implications of the organicity integrating the Western working class into central capital are such that unless the balance of forces tilts against Northern formations, just as it did against its Algerian and South African settler-colonial formation, these structures cannot come undone. Hitherto, social democratic critique has served as an intelligence gathering tool to re-embellish imperialist aggression rather than a revolutionary platform.

While capital bridges its differences in the universal money form or dollar, it also self-divides as the law of value openly reasserts itself as the law of waste. In capital's 'hierarchical complex ordered in dominance' (Bettelheim 1968), the expansion of waste forces the ruling classes to indulge in the literal consumption of lower-layer ruling-classes farther afield. Since various tiers of capital hold crosscutting as well as contradictory relationships, the rationale 'survival of the fittest' resolves in the consumption of the weakest capital. Reproduction by waste means that leading capital will expand not only by partnering with but also by wasting weaker capitalists along with their social formations.

Central capital wars against enfeebled developing formations and undermines their masses as well as their ruling classes. The anecdote that 'the US is the enemy you must have as a friend' foots the bill. It does so even if these formations are imperialist-friendly since central reproduction requires more socially necessary labour or lives, including those of its partners, snuffed in production. Whereas 'capitalist production squanders human lives, or living-labour, and not only blood and flesh' (Marx 1894), the transformation of waste into use value for the *extended* family of capitalist classes, steps up surplus value making from the industry of liquidating lives. Marx notes:

It is only by dint of the most extravagant waste of individual development that the development of the human race is at all safeguarded and maintained in the epoch of history immediately preceding the conscious reorganisation of society. Since all of the economising here discussed arises from the social nature of labour, it is indeed just this directly social nature of labour which causes the waste of life and health.

Socialisation by the deprivation of the working class of its means of subsistence registers breaking records as workers lose the right to air, water, and nature, the greater commons. Clubbed into submission, a working class that considered some consumables as anti-use value, reincorporates these waste commodities into its diet. Although to compress socially necessary labour time over a worker's life and at the same time augment surplus labour is to reduce

longevity, in times preceding the conscious reorganisation of society (planning), the act of life reduction itself has become the saleable commodity and the premise of the industry of capital.

In a world subjected to the rule of commodities, capital and its money form of value are false reality. It is the appearance that does not reveal the essence. It conceals the horrors of the law of value pressed upon the labour process from which a commodity arises. Essence, the latent ties, internal relations and laws of development that nest at the commodity level, its history, drive the whole system by mauling society, and it never coincides with its appearance. If it did, we would not need science because the appearance of things explains everything (Marx 1894). This progression of essence non-reconciling with appearance was initially Hegel's (1830): 'essence shining forth as appearance in endless intermediation, which is at the same time a unity of self-relation; and existence is developed into a totality, into a world of phenomena – of reflected finitude;' such is my slightly paraphrased caption of it for the purpose of illustration. However, Hegel in upholding the point made by Parmenides that truth must correspond to an unchanging, stable and recognisable identity, and while appeasing the Prussian court, would break rank with his own logic of constant change, or the law of contradiction. He for instance declares that the state as appearance is the consummation of the development of spirit in time, essence, or species being unfolding on its essence. Then again, Hegel's world remains a world of forms or a logical world *a priori* to actuality, he says: 'this identity of being and thought is not however to be taken in a concrete sense, as if we could say that a stone, so far as it has being, is the same as a thinking man. A concrete thing is always very different from the abstract category as such. And in the case of being, we are speaking of nothing concrete: for being is the utterly abstract.' Thence, the idealism of the two worlds: the world of essences constituted of forms that are unchanging and present themselves as truth, and a world of appearances that elides truth because it keeps changing.

Unless interfused in an argument for *a fortiori* purposes, Marx's materialism negates but never shuns the law of identity. It sticks to the law of contradiction as the dynamic of development. For methodological reasons or by the premise of materialist categorisation, which postulates that no concept is reason for itself or there is no given or indeterminate being – that is, no truth in *a priori* forms alone, Marx cannot ascertain that the form of the state is the essence of man; indeed, the state is man's yoke or the principal vehicle for commodifying man.

While on the subject, non-reconciling essence/appearance, or essence as in the laws guiding the development of substance, obviously takes on many forms. It is an appearance or phenomenon of daily life philosophised in different ways in many cultures. Aristotle observed that 'the most distinctive mark of

substance appears to be that, while remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities. But one and the self-same substance, while retaining its identity, is yet capable of admitting contrary qualities. The same individual person is at one time white, at another black, at one time warm, at another cold, at one time good, at another bad.<sup>2</sup> Yet just like Hegel, he also strayed from the logic of a self-differencing reality into metaphysical determinedness or that no two contradictory attributes can appertain to the same object. He did so for the same reason that for truth to exist, the subject must be itself, an identity of itself (determination), and like no other. It also must be unchanging, as opposed to a world in a constant state of flux in which reality remains unknown (Heraclitus). For Marx, the dichotomy of 'fixed versus changing' is illusory because the process is a state of becoming in which finitude and infinitude are indistinguishable, while truth is also an iterative process of knowability rising from unknowing to knowing – processual truth. The pragmatists also adhere to processual truth, but the ideological bent there is for truth to be a matter of social consent in regard to a changing reality that could never be fully grasped (Rorty 1998). And just as every philosophy is the ideology of the times, American pragmatism appoints its imperialist society, purportedly with its independent journalism, judiciary, etc., as the jury that deliberates on the truth of the disasters it visits upon the developing world. As ludicrous as this may seem, given that truth is what the mob makes of it, justice can wait until the Western educated class clasps the reins of power and halts the imperialist aggression. Niebyl (no date) remarked that pragmatism was 'thus the proper form in which the intelligentsia in this part of the world (the US) reflected a then still expanding American imperialism,' – a cursory reading of the pragmatic position follows in section 3 below. By pragmatic arbitrations, the wars of the US abroad, just like outlawing abortion in Texas or supporting its capital punishment, are all truth of the times, and they are so just by the 'democratic' consensus of the dominant ideology.

## 2 Value Reconsidered

The concept value or something is of value or 'worth' something bears a constructive connotation. However, value realises as waste and is falsely perceived to be of use value. It erodes life. Unrestrained surplus value making, or rather waste making, has become the substance of social production. Value is a

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<sup>2</sup> Categories, Aristotle (c. 350 BCE), <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/categories.1.1.html>.

class-to-class relationship whose war, austerity and pollution or the full gamut of natural degradation, hold fetish dominion over all other social endeavours. War, a pure waste industry, is the building block in the totality of social production. Unchecked, the value relation concretising by the law of value, especially, in its absolute surplus value form, extinguishes life prematurely.

Once society becomes replete with commodification, the labourer and her labour power fuse into one and the same commodified social labour. Lengthening labour time on the factory floor, the prolonging of surplus labour time, would cumulatively require the shortening of the lifetime of labour. Conversely, necessary labour shrinks by the diminution of longevity.

To understand the dynamic of social progress is to understand not only the labour stored in the commodity, which is spent and consumed by society, but also the social forces that set the system's motion in one direction or another. Figuratively, the energy of the system proxying the labour encased as value in the commodities that society consumes fuels it. The apportioning of social labour to this or that activity is subject to the value relation that propels society in time. The gyroscope of the substance of value, whether it is waste or useful, is the balance of the class struggle whose genesis is the value relation. Of concern here is value as the value relation and, subordinately, the object representative of value. Although through its feedback loop, the objects or reified labour inform society on a course of action, the dynamic of society does not depend on the material substance of the commodity *per se*, it rather depends on the social forces abiding by social laws that shape the development of society. There could be an immense number of waste commodities about, but the balance of the class struggle is such that the working class is so defeated that it eats waste. Thence, value is defined as a value relation or a set of contradictions in which, value (socially necessary labour time) or value proper contradicts the use value, while this contradiction of value with use value resolves in exchange value. Privately expropriated from social labour by capital, exchange value in the guise of the universal commodity or the money form signals to society what labour to engage and what commodity to produce in the future, only after the worth of current commodities has been deliberated by the market. Whatever earns profits now, mostly waste, will draw less labour time in the future; the war machines using little labour is a case in point.

Capital, the totality of social production, follows the roadmap handed down by the value contradiction at the heart of the commodity. Each moment of the value relation, from regimenting labour, to cutting lives short, to choosing the appropriate labourers whose wage bill is cheap, to wresting their products from them, to grabbing more of the money form arsing upon exchange value, involves coercion by ideological and violent means. All these measures are

overdetermined, that is, they follow no sequential causal order, and occur subject to abstract time, the time at the command of markets, or more protrusively, the social time that annihilates the chronological time available for labour.

In relation to imperialism, the denial of development in resource-abundant and defenceless states crushes the negotiating power of the masses, releases cheapened value for low price. Money, the social convention, reflects the complexity of society. Just as exchange value resolves the initial value contradiction at the core of the commodity, money in its undulating forms and financial instruments absorbs but never resolves the mounting crises of the real economy. It is the form of value designated by capital to correspond to the mass of labour power expended in production and the fetish whose mass of debt holds the future labour of society in bondage. Money's mainstream definition as a unit of account and a store of value must be qualified by its origins in capital constructed accounting systems, and that the value it speaks of is at source the premature death of the working class. Money's fetish status signifies the degree of power capital exercises over labour in the process of expanding value. As such money as a relation that equalises the commodity-object against a money form in order to store value under capital is a negative sum arrangement in which wastefulness eclipses usefulness. The creation of money and its extension in fictional capital co-align with the machination of the law of value, which under the ascendancy of finance spawns imperialism. It specifically lays the groundwork and the trigger for future wars.

The commodity form is the objectified value relation reconstituted by the absolute law of surplus value. This very law is central amongst the laws comprising the essence of the commodity, impelling it to self-expand and conform to its appearance in the money form. What is realistically impossible, the reconciliation of essence and appearance, becomes a possibility by the mysterious force of commodity fetishism acted out by the agencies of dominant ideology. However, the more unequal exchange between wage labour and capital obeys the *diktat* of the law of value, that is by the strength of the chimera of the *apparent* exchange of equivalents, the more the rate of exploitation rises (Marx 1867; Vygotsky no date).

What capitalists in control do to price their products, the mark-downs, and mark-ups, etc., is a resolution of value contradictions mediated by various shades of violence or war and finance, *principally*, imperialism. Even if all values are said to match the total product measured in prices as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Product (GP) in some chronological timeframe, the latter accounts for capital's consumption during successive stages of production, this would still be erroneous because the GDP or GP, like any other mainstream concept is capital-class constructed, while what is value is class

defined. Additionally, even if the class-conscious Kalecki system of accounts, which considers the incomes of the separate departments and classes (Sawyer 1985), is used to tap into the history of consumption, it would still not be possible to derive an equivalent money form of value or distinguish where in the value process is the share of working class or that of the Southern formation without being subjective and arbitrary. That is not only because the GDP and GPS moneyed measures consider financial operations or at times depreciation as value-added (Hudson 2018a), so they are counted as part of new output when they are not supposed to – or any other run of the mill critique of utilitarian accounts, like total consumption may be a revealing of preferences, when the working class cannot choose what it consumes. The discrepancy is rather at an *ontological* level since the symbolic structure of prices cannot coincide with concrete labour just like any symbol of an object cannot capture the fullness of the object; however, add to that the bias of each class that claims the value is its product. At this stage in history and with so much waste, capital may shift blame and claim that labour had created the mess. Although questions of degree matter, price and value are two different substances and time contingent historical processes, which cannot add or agree with the law of identity and non-contradiction.<sup>3</sup>

Smith (2017) argued that under recent globalisation a higher share of value was contributed by low-waged Southern workers subjected to super-exploitation employment. As argued in chapter one, salient economic data are hypostatised utilitarian forms. Moreover, why is it super-exploitation with the better machine rather than colonial genocide or the commercial exploitation, which is the source of more value. Implicitly, this approach still pins value on the quality of the machine and the usefulness of the commodity. Is it not the case that the structurally genocided with high-tech machinery of more use-value to capital?

Prices that figure in the system of national accounts, whose utilitarian value concepts *become* value added, are themselves prices circularly determined within a specific power balance and chronologically truncated time span. They are values conceived of one-sidedly. Instead of defining a social turnover cycle by society's social reproduction time, capital chooses its calendar dates for the turnover cycle. At every stage in capital's cycle, the price system is

<sup>3</sup> Posited as such, the law of identity is taken to mean A is A, which is an understanding proposed by Aristotle. What Aristotle meant by that law of identity and non-contradiction then was that while thinking, every term must retain the same meaning, or be univocal, which was part of his metaphysics or the assertion that truth despite drawing on experience to remould the form, would still be defined by determinate forms of objects not shared with or in contradiction to any other object.

doctored or auto-doctors by construction, to conceal the value it has deducted from the social costs of labour reproduction. More important, even in an earnest endeavour to assess value capture from the Third World and shed the falsity of national accounts systems, assessing the power of the subject in the value relation, which has *ex-ante* pre-set the grounds for the appearance of the money form of value, would still distort value expressed in price. Apart from the identities that all that is sane in wealth is the product of labour and all that is waste is the product of capital, the money form in wages or profits mirrors the power and the vested interest of the corresponding subject, either labour or capital. While the price to power relation is circuitous – price morphs into power and power morphs into price – it is the weaker or stronger (the strength of) subject in value that has already pre-figured the basis of price formation. Thence, before testing for the provenance and magnitude of value in price, the strength of subject ought to be investigated.

Although Sraffa (1960) addresses profit rates measured by a price assessment tracing the history of the capital stock, the problem of aggregation (adding up different type of physical capitals) remains conceptually challenging. It may be recalled that in price terms the profit rate is the ratio of profits to the capital stock, and while the capital stock determines the profit rate, the profit rate *circularly* determines the capital stock. Moreover, since capital's instruments and machines are different and composed of different types of labour inputs across their production histories, Sraffa suggests that it is plausible to date the labour inputs that went into the making of differing capital instruments to better their aggregated estimates, and subsequently, assess profit rates. However, profits as well as capital stocks are denominated in moneyed terms, which are *ex-ante* prefigured by capital or the history of power relations, or power over the market, that lay out the foundation for price formation. From a Marxian position, the Sraffa-mechanism would still be *insufficient* because although circularity is inevitable in thought, the more appropriate point would be to assess the weight of the historical forces behind the recurrence of a phenomenon. The commodities owned by labour go for cheap prices, while capital's are dear. Past prices of inputs are not to be confused with natural prices, prices of production or the long-term average costs. These are sub-categories of prices in various schools of classical political economy toward which ordinary prices gravitate over the long run. The Marxian price of production is distinct from market price, since the latter contains profits, which are the mediated surplus labour swindled during production.

Capital, like everything else, is dead by its intrinsic inclinations in the long term, and it does all it can to avoid the long term. In point of fact, what capital does to avoid the long term is the circumstance upon which Marx establishes the laws of capital. The prices used to date inputs are spur of the moment

instantiations of class power translated into market power. They are the prices on offer in the market at the time of purchase. Thus, dating inputs by past prices of labour bereft of capital's history of repression and its market agencies, which formulates the basis of price formation, reduces Sraffa's approach to a substantive intermediation of value to prices (Ricardian concrete value without social subject); that is, prices in the past are assumed to contain all the information required about the history of repression behind their appearance, when in fact the role of instantaneous price is to hide the continuum of repression and unequal exchange across time. Each price was a coverup for the repression that resulted in a related rate of exploitation, which in turn determined the departure of value from price. The labourer is paid little because he is bombed into submission. It is impossible in thought not to be tautological to some degree; however, Sraffa's prices are the realisations of commodities/things trading in a supply and demand framework, as opposed to being the realisations of historical social subjects in the act of social reproduction. In vivid contrast to such *Ricardian* position, the Marxian point that capital prices its capital stock as well the conditions for the prices of labour and its products requires a dating of the balance of power of the class struggle mapped against past market powers that define the prices of inputs and outputs at every stage of production. What is chosen from the past to explain the present is best done when it de-mystifies the conditions of the past that appear in the present – the de-reification. Every past input as value is integratedly object/subject, which means it is the dynamics of class subjects, or the category of history sub-defined as a social class, which furnishes the social platforms for objects/commodities to be priced at any point in time.

For capital to be properly aggregated, the power of the capital class must be aggregated first. For instance, the wage shares, or the amalgamated prices of labour power, are derived *after* the decision to invest for profits; hence, it is not only the cheapness of labour in wages that informs capital's decision to invest for profits, it is primarily the class power of capital over labour. The ratio of labour to capital's power presenting itself foremost in imperialist aggression, wars, sanctions, etc., and its spinoff as ideological hegemony lays down the social conditions for the formation of prices, which beforehand also prepares the grounds for the profit rates to rise.

What Sraffa and his debaters do not admit is that every past labour input is in principal part a war or a structural genocide that was a value relation in itself and a value relation to other processes by its relationship to other production/value relationships reconstituting the historical surplus value. As such, it is this acknowledgement of changes in the stock of historical surplus value, the power structure that preconfigures the historical imperatives and rules into

which every other player must reflexively react and/or adapt to, which is the requisite for the quantitative analysis of the intermediation between prices summed into profits and surplus value. The historical surplus value may be rethought of as capital-imposed predestination similar in structure to an ideological railroad that has been laid out for developing countries to roll onto leaving them no other alternatives.

Illustratively, the US at the time of writing scrambles to contain China, but not out of some psychosis reflecting its recurrent mass shootings, it does so because its ratcheted power lays out the policy frames, which usurp more value for price from across the world. To Marxian, in contrast to Sraffian method, to 'date' the labour inputs that make up the capital stock and commodities is to first develop a proxy-measure for the speed at which the world surrenders and unconsciously kowtows the policies of the US without adopting social alternatives. Although non-synchronously, the rate of profit rises with the rate of imperialist aggression, which raises imperialist power and its attendant value usurpation. Relatedly, the rate of value transfer to empire in the post-Soviet collapse period and its neoliberalism is set to be higher for instance than the rate when China begins to represent an alternative model. Goldman (2020) notes that China's strategic investment in digital and physical infrastructure and, its economic outreach to the developing world, has nearly doubled in recent years, which makes US's efforts to extricate it from the Third World rather futile. China linked, created a world dependent on its commodity, and thusly eased the costs of de-linking. China's belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is anathema to imperialism.

Without consideration of imperialist aggression as an industry on its own and as relative surplus value through its power reconfiguration, value transfers from the Third world will be small. *A fortiori*, Western value equivalations in dollars are faulty because the historical surplus value is also the store of knowledge from which the conceptual frameworks employed in quantification are built. Equally important, the Western concept of value drops the interface of imperialist class power with the Southern commodity as substance and its money form. It omits the surplus value, which emerges from the realisation of the decimated Southern labour, as well as the power captured by that very decimation. In social reproduction, wars against the South, hunger, etc., are moments of social production as well as final realisation stages. They are the phenomena whose reasons require understanding before one engages in an academic debate on the extent of the disaster. As phenomena, they are the demonstration that class is the existential condition of the masses or their state of being. Suffice it to say that because class is the social relation that organises social reproduction or de-reproduction, then it is value as the phenomenal

waste, which must be re-interpreted as a value relation. By the identity value is waste, society transforms into a waste producing and consuming totality. Against this reality, pedantic empiricists seek statistical evidence whether the death toll of their wars and austerity policies, *viz.*, the crushing weight of their ideology in structural genocide, is at ten or twenty million lives in a year, or whether the planet ceases to support much life in 30 or 50 years. Such questions are superfluous when it is the *essence* of capital as waste that must be adequately conceptualised before measurements. One cannot posit that capital brings forth progress by innate dynamics and then assess its death toll as some unwanted consequence or externality that could be minimised with some tax or technical casuistry – the meliorism.

At this barbaric historical stage relative to the availability of resources across time (past and future), it is pellucidly clear that capitalism is not an ascendant stage in history. What is misconceived, or to see only the good side of capital, cannot be adequately measured. One cannot name a monkey a giraffe and weigh the monkey as if one is weighing a giraffe. Such is the senselessness of Western Marxism. Additionally, what is misconceived, the ideologically construed conceptual framework, which has become second nature to ‘non-organic’ intellectuals, propels the pro-systemic currents of history. Discerning the ideas that counter the dominant current is the differentiating quality of organic intellectuality (Gramsci 1971). Brun and Hersch (1976) were off the mark when they wrote ‘Western intellectuals may be advanced in academic knowledge, but they are somewhat retarded in ideological and political consciousness,’ since without recognising the overbearing weight of history, academic standards no matter how neutral they seem, are simply ideological. Accordingly, the mainstream debate based on capital-concocted data, positioned within the avalanche of capital’s ideology, serves as additional prompts for Western war machines or as supplementary information for the ‘efficient market hypothesis’ to digest.

However, inasmuch as the numbers produced by capital obfuscate, they also serve a functional purpose. They meter the effectiveness of marginal returns on militarism and neoliberalism. The lesser the death tolls or the higher longevity nudge capital to heighten its aggressiveness. That the Western moral jury is out to lunch by pragmatic philosophy stipulations proves the dictum that philosophers express the class conditions of their times. In post-modern as well as pragmatist philosophical interpretations of twentieth century events, truth cannot correspond to the real world because there are no strict laws of the mind that mental events can be explained with as do laws of nature to events in nature (Pragmatism). Truth belongs to the way meaning is constructed in sentences (semantics) while correspondence to objective reality is severed. The rejection of the notion that social construction corresponds to shifting objective facts leads to the ridiculous position that most beliefs must be true

because people have rationalised their beliefs and thus provided enough predicates for what they utter (Davidson 2005). As such, the case may be that some widely held superstitions establish truth. Better yet, by some class-dominant resource allocation mechanism, these very superstitions could improve the lot of those who count as more relevant humans because they convinced the rest that they are superior or *über-mensch*. If not by logical or mathematical forms, truth for the mainstream holds by pragmatic convention and by the reality that they need to bomb the Third World to establish their wealth. In a world wholly fathomed by a human mind, which references its previous class-bound knowledge, truth becomes a class construct or what the thingified people make of it by consensus. Tainted by preconceived class prejudices, pragmatic truth is the bourgeois position against the correspondence theory of truth, or the Hegelian knowability thesis which posits that processually things are true relative to a future knowledge of these things.

By such class rationale or 'do what you can as you go' criterion of truth, imperialist wars proceed by Western democratic consensus and are *just and true* until 'voted' otherwise by the democratic citizens of the West. Although recognised as real, the colonial or imperialist wars are posited as not yet available to sense experience or much of which is unknown (noumenal), and it is this lacuna, which postpones judgment on when to stop the aggression or until more is known about the reasons for their wars of aggression. Wars are out of sight, out of mind. They are not the objective fact perpetuated by the fetishes of the imperialist class to serve its vested interest; they are events, imposed upon the mind, whose truth is not fully discoverable. Accordingly, they are the necessary evil to which the collection of data, which enquires into whether ten or twenty million people perished under imperialist assault, possibly serves to insulate the English academic from guilt when the numbers of their victims are lower by a million or two. To boot, these gradational estimates enhance *utilitarian welfare*. The point that nine million instead of ten million are structurally mowed down means that less are harmed and more are happier; hence, more welfare. Realistically, however, and by what capital unconsciously brings into being as it ruthlessly totalises by reified feedback from capital-unwanted consequences (Mészáros [1995] – the invisible capital making its appearance according to Marx [1867]), or as the data on the number of imperialism's victims fall, which is the unwanted consequence of capital, the imperialist class re-composes itself for a new round of war and austerity.

While the rate of structural genocide is the basis for the rate of surplus value, for the Eurocentric forces enthralled with pragmatism, partial facts correspond to reality as truth, and by inference, only class-desirable facts press society to act morally. The erasure of the categorical imperative because its

universality does not fit ruling-class particularities, leads to shortcuts (heuristics/eclecticism) of all sorts to de-generalise ethical conduct. Morality may then be brought down to the level of lifeboat ethics, in which the gunning down of refugees at sea to keep Europe safe or deliver welfare for the majority whites is ethical (Hardin 1968); actually, Hardin subtitles his paper with the caption ‘the population problem has no technical solution, it requires a fundamental extension in morality.’ Another twisted imperialist moralisation may be observed in the speeches of US presidents justifying war on the basis of protecting our way of life (this catchphrase is referred back to Walzer [1977], but many pundits have since adopted this thesis). Notice it is not life that a *just* class war must protect, but the way of life, meaning the continuity of rising profits rates and central wages by imperialist looting.

### 3 Pragmatism *contra* Value

Although Aristotle posited that ‘experience is almost identified with science and art, but really science and art come to men through experience; for experience made art ... and when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgement about a class of objects is produced’ (Aristotle’s Metaphysics),<sup>4</sup> the point that progress is driven by developments in objective knowledge is something of an observable occurrence. The then debate with Plato is to argue that what is knowable is not only an attribute of unchanging *a priori* forms, it could also arise from what practice imparts. For both metaphysicians, however, truth was in thought or a mental image about the definition of the object as it is and nothing else. Yet for an empiricist tradition of pragmatism whose reality is presumed impenetrable by thought because knowledge *absolutely* fails to catch up with its developments, what is knowable cannot be given to the senses. The unknown pollutes what is known leaving no room for the certainty required to establish truth. At a preliminary level, the absence of forms accounts for the absence of truth. Since no form could fully correspond to an object in such inter-penetrating reality, or because no object is determinate being on its own, truth is set by convention.

Despite pragmatism’s adherence to process, the infinitude of the whole colours its approach to truth. However, process-wise, the whole is the mediation of parts, which becomes itself a knowable part – knowable not known.

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<sup>4</sup> Art is not art in the modern-day sense, but the Greek *techne* or expertise in any profession gained by experience. Aristotle’s Metaphysics, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.html>

The forgotten whole is a small planet peppered with the tombs of fallen French and English colonial soldiers. This part *becomes* planet 'is only what it is' (determinate being) and is *knowable* just as any other of its constituent parts. Epistemology since Hegel is about knowability rather than knowing, and what is knowable now remains true relative to a better future understanding of it.

The pragmatists adhere to process philosophy and recognise the constancy of change but still impose upon it a static formal notion, the absolute unknowability. Not much has improved since pre-Socratic philosophy, for something to be known with certainty as truth, it must be known in its unchanging form. Although, such is inconsistent with pragmatism's processual precepts, its reflection of reality is tailored in thought to produce a philosophy in line with an imperialist class position, as noted by Niebel above. As such, the value contribution of the South to the North is known to be denominated in dollars despite the uncertainty of knowledge, and it is gauged as minimally significant despite the labour of death. Moreover, the North is said to exploit the South to bring it progress. Again, Robinson's chestnut that 'it is better to be exploited by capitalism than otherwise' connotes that the unexploited developing world will be stuck in its impoverished position or barbarism and not become as the 'well to do' and civilised but exploited English workers. These are positions that parallel the Eurocentrism, which omit wars as value processes or cohere with the advance of imperialism.

However, theory is also about adequacy in the process of conceptualisation. To avoid ludicrousness or too much detail, just enough has to be carved out of the sediments of thought and the rubble of formalisations, to convey a meaningful picture of the object in motion. Conversely, when the concept is class constructed and precludes significant details or dynamics from objective reality, it tends to run a course separate from the real development of the object under consideration. Consider the omission of imperialist wars as value processes and predicates of other value processes. That is, wars are not considered as production processes, and constituents of other production processes. The lopped off concept of value, or value relations without wars, does not adequately transfigure against the fullness of production relations. Since it ignores war and repression as an enterprise uniting both aggressor and aggrieved, it reduces the value contribution of the South to its GDP or to the puny money transfers via Third World trade or capital accounts. Not to forget, wars visited upon the developing world also integrate them with capital, and as a form of exploitation it supposedly civilises them. The social processes that primarily caused these developing nations moneyed amounts representative of value to be small relative to Western incomes are exactly the social value relations of

war, colonialism, austerity, etc. Conversely, the reality and the causes of the imperialist wars cannot be rationalised on the basis of the representative dollar amounts that the developing world transfers to empire. Such position begs the question why NATO should bomb anywhere or even engage with the developing world when its moneyed and value contributions to the West count for so little. Why bomb for insignificant moneyed rents is the issue that demonstrates the point about theory tailored to class interest. When the value transfers in moneyed forms to empire are insignificant, what is adduced *for the sake of convenience* is that the West does not bomb for profits. It does so to assist victims at a cost to itself with its R2P. One arrives at this result in a roundabout way from the class-influenced construction of concepts, or by intellectual corruption acted out as science. Either Third-World value is immaterial to the US or NATO bombs to save respectively.

At a further remove, correspondence truth is not about thought *absolutely* catching up with real developments. That is both impossible and absurd. Just like there is knowledge whose development is subjective, there is also knowledge whose content is objective, whose truth is objective, and whose substance is practice determined (Lenin 1909). Lange (1945) sees that although ideology is inescapable, ‘ideologies have no interpersonal validity,’ while appeal to facts reconfirms ‘the objective validity of scientific statements.’ The verdict on adequacy/validity for him rests on the basis that facts are interpersonal or available to everyone and subjected to the rules of scientific procedure. From an analytical angle (Lange’s lens), it is still possible despite the falsehood of ideology, or equally despite some form of pragmatic consensus, to account for an objective truth by mere consideration of the role of practice in re-categorising theoretical concepts. Interpersonal comparison ferrets out truth in ideology or, similarly, out of some fantastical self-sufficient act, neither in excess or deficiency, unfolding in reality as truth – the pragmatist position.

In the above, the consensus of pragmatism as predicate of truth is also the consensus fashioned by the dominant ideological proclivities. However, truth may be put as a moment of the false (Debord [1967] – Debord rephrases Hegel [1807]), or to rectify Aristotle’s reversion to forms with Engels (1886) position: bettering the arts is a continuously recorrected process in which truth is objective, concrete, and time and space determined. The pragmatist self-fulfilment or self-sufficiency of the act in objective reality as truth is judged against a rather unrealisable congruence of an idea with its practice. They infer their consensual truth from the untenable position that logical truth is factual truth. To re-elucidate the pragmatic position, because truth is altogether tenuous, then what is truth is simply what people approve as true (Rorty 1998; Davidson 2005). Oddly, the permanent uncertainty associated with the search for truth

around which there is consensus is itself a truth. The pragmatists unknowingly observe that the theories borne out by capital are falsities just as capital itself is a fiction hypostasised by the divisiveness of the working class. However, they do not observe that instance when the working-class critique of capital reappears as truth, or a critique spinning off the new event (the newness) that breaks the monotony of received theory (Badiou 2005).

All the same, Lange's analytical approach misses the intermediation of events from concrete to abstract through class activity as opposed to atomistic practice or deliberations – it is not abstract individuals who are at work verifying theories, it is social individuals or classes. Lange distinguishes individual scientists outside of class who are capable of denying capital's enforced truth, which capital thrusts upon society, or those who refuse to take orders. Indeed, there are many such heroic persons in the graveyard of history. Nothing of individual relevance is above class or history. Emancipation is a class act and not about Hollywood-like stars appreciating the necessity of shorter working days or the laws of transformation to communism. It is not about reducing the working day to six hours in Denmark, while such shortening of the workday necessarily shortens life in the South. The apprehension of necessity must extend past the immediately apparent if it is to broach freedom and the commensurate infrastructure that supports freedom (Nimtz 2000). Exemplified in revolutionary consciousness and organisation, it is the class personifying social man that appreciates the historical necessity. Such necessity must overturn private property in wealth and knowledge. The idea lost in Lange's, capital levels the particular conditions by totalising them through violent class mediatory frameworks. In contradistinction to psychological individuality, the social class, with its sub-categorical social man, is the historically relevant social being.

Not to dwell on the inexhaustible truth debate, correspondence *cum* processual truth is the state of becoming of practice reflected in thought, or the fusion of the abstract with the concrete in the *law* prefiguring their state of becoming, which is itself informed by the history of the object under consideration. History here denudates the social conditions totalised by the reified signals of capital. Laws of thought capture the systemic necessity, or the process knowable.

Since no idea can be fully borne out in practice, measurements are therefore not about proving the isomorphism of thought with fact. Truth is concrete and, once more, it is space and time specific (Engels 1886). It also corresponds to reality depending on the definition of the law governing the development of the object, or the mode of abstraction carried out to include and exclude certain characteristics in the development of the object captured in a concept.

Karl Niebyl (1946) had singled out the incompleteness associated with projecting one-sided abstractions such as marginal utility and productivity, concepts erected upon the notion of abstract as opposed to social man, onto the whole of society. He warned that as 'mathematical tools used *pragmatically* for the direct purposes of special-interest groups ... they veiled the increase in the margin of error if applied to the whole of economic society, and actually emphasised the character of this procedure as one of rationalisation or of ideology formation' (Niebyl 1946). Anticipating Badiou's 'newness or the new event', Niebyl understood that uncovering truth in dynamic processes must overcome the motionlessness of received theory, or its conservatism, which is recreated by dominant ideology (Niebyl 1940b).

By reducing social man to one-sided abstract man, the mainstream is then capable through propaganda to even cut down abstract man from a category that includes all humans to only Western white man. That is not so because logic, or any mode of thinking, hinders the universal consideration of man. After the statutory end of slavery, no philosophy can dare say that it only deals with a certain phenotypical group of people and not others. However, *the objective class reality to which bourgeois theory must adhere blocks such universal representation of man*. There are by the identities instituted and gradually empowered by capital a novel category of the natural slave of Hellenistic times resurrected in modern times. The veiled Arab women and Africans are examples of such compartmentalisations. By the class divide, the Third World and its power – whatever is left of that – is partly represented in any Western concepts of man to count as real lives. Wasted lives that significantly contribute to value formation are completely unaccounted for. That is not so by the pejorative tones of Orientalist discourse. Such is just icing on the cake. The real schism begins with the definition of the concept of man as white man nesting in value, which metastasises in the class divide, which excludes the Third World by outright devastation from the process of wealth making.

#### 4      The Time in Value

Western accounting systems that designate the ratio of price to value are solipsistic exercises. They concoct Third World value in the mind and disregard it in the real world. An equally demanding work effort in the South would be priced or waged at several folds less than its comparable activity in the North. The worth of human life in terms of life insurance payoff matches the stock of wealth per capita or, adjacently, the dollar-worth of lives is as disparate as the North-South wage divide. By faux intellectualism, capital distinguishes the South as a

separate and unrelated entity, despite the fact that the North has anteriorly formulated Southern policies, typically under the watchful eye of US military bases.

Through the medium of indebting the developing nation, the financial containment, the centre controls a nation's monetary policy and, at once, its product market. Additionally, by pricing the ravaged nation's real output in relation to its dollar through the exchange rate peg, the imperialist influences local wages. Altogether, by setting the class-power terms of trade – not only the barter or the price terms of trade but what precedes them in terms of social power, the centre determines a lower wage per value of labour power, or the same effort delivered at work. Although developing nations may hunger for food by IFI austerity or are NATO-bombed on TV screens, they are perceived as insignificant/unrelated to the totality of social production. To argue the misperception because white classes are incapable of parting with strongly held beliefs when confronted with the facts, or to speak of cognitive dissonance, is misleading. As organic partners of capital, the white classes determine that the process of Third World preclusion is a natural order, just as slavery was in Hellenistic times. At a foundational level, the class reason for the perpetuation of such process is the social consciousness of the North rearticulated with its social being through the de-reproduction of the South.

In parallel to the unfeasible essence appearance identity, prices proportionate value, or prices coincide with values, only in the impossible state when subject collapses into object. In the phantasmal condition, or as people become things and fully internalise capital, prices become equal to values – not that there will be any surplus labour left, since there is no labour to squeeze. In an idealised world, or when price and value are equal, essence, the constituting laws behind price formation, is also appearance. For something to be only itself is a state of the world that makes science redundant. How unrealistic is that: in the example of Hegel's definition of the state as the realisation of the ethical idea, state and the individual coincide as essence-appearance, subject or man matches object or state – both content and form whose structure is the state. Such is the murkiness of Hegelian thought because even in Western bourgeois democracies where most have introjected capital as natural, there are minority-strata that seriously oppose the imperialism of their central state. In Marxian terms, the realisation of man as species-being in the state is a continuous process of restructuring society through class-power balances that broker the function of the state even under socialism. Thus, in a world structured around class relations, subject and object, 'the socially organised workers regimented by a labour process and producing the commodity' and 'the commodity itself' respectively, depart from each other by the mutually reinforcing ideological and material powers of

ruling classes. The latter powers dictate the degree of alienation. In the Third World, the power form is the synergy between imperialist ideology and guns.

Correspondingly, a price measure of value is biased. The relationship of value to price, or the magnitude of value represented in the price that ear-marks the rate of exploitation and value transfers to empire, is not a stable rule or some positive correlation of value with price across time. Fully conceptualised, price as the magnitude of value is a relation defined by the specific balance of class forces in a specific time and space.

To identify the real worth of commodities or the developing world's contribution to value, one ought to probe beyond appearances and assess the social forces that mediate the actuality before us, or the social class hard at work to midwife the present as history. In pre-capitalist trade devoid of the fetishism that stands between the act and its outcome, it was straightforward to spot that a saddle took as many hours to produce as two picks; such transparency is no longer so under capital (Engels 1847). Under capitalism, what the working class does, and the outcome of its activity are determined by a market for exchange between things, whose profit-making purpose, rather than the betterment of society, self-realises as it camouflages the actual labour that went into the making of its products. Mészáros (1995) characterises the charade as 'beyond the immediate existence of things' is beyond the false reality put forth by capital. With that in mind, research in political economy becomes a process of de-mystification.

Is there more to capital than the contradiction attendant upon the private expropriation of socially produced wealth? At an elementary level, capital is an abstract but real social/class relation, totalising social production in the historical stage of capitalism. By way of functionality, capital is a social relationship that self-perpetuates by cementing its class rule; hence, power politics takes precedence over economics. Once capitalism sets in as the universal state, it is neither the development in the productive forces nor the number of unemployed, which define whether a mode of production is modern capitalist or antiquated pre-capitalist. A mode of production is the unity of a historically determined level of development in the productive forces whose subject is a set of production relations appertaining to that specific level of development in the productive forces – save the case of rupture (Marx 1867). As the development of the productive forces attains a level to which the out-dated relations of production no longer correspond, the tendency is for such relations of production to change in order to reflect or deny, contingently upon the state of revolutionary consciousness, the expropriation of the surplus associated with the newly formed productive forces. The expropriation is carried out by war, which as a power exercise imbricates social production. The central class formation enforces

and universalises the laws of capital. It is also the class structure that subsumes all labouring classes to command history. Its objective undercurrents homogenise labour, or thrust a unity upon the diversity of the division of labour, while its subjective policies go to extremes in order to widen the gaps between global labour. Amin (2010) argues the universality of capitalism in reference to Emmanuel (1972) as follows.

Still, despite this permanent asymmetry, capitalism is one and indivisible. Capitalism is not the United States and Germany, with India and Ethiopia only 'halfway' capitalist. Capitalism is the United States and India, Germany and Ethiopia, taken together. This means that labour-power has but a single value, that which is associated with the level of development of the productive forces taken globally (the General Intellect on that scale). In answer to the polemical argument that had been put against him – how can one compare the value of an hour of work in Congo to that of a labour-hour in the United States? – Arghiri Emmanuel wrote: just as one compares the value of an hour's work by a New York hairdresser to that of an hour's labour by a worker in Detroit. You have to be consistent. You cannot invoke 'inescapable' globalization when it suits you and refuse to consider it when you find it troublesome!

A more concrete way of putting the universalism of capital across is to recall the point made in chapter two that nothing escapes the guns of capital. Capital's global reach is its universalism. As capital unconsciously operates by atomistic totalisation, it commodifies and homogenises all it reaches (Lukács 1919). Although to expand commodification in scope is to lay claim to all human and natural resources, the process of auto-commodification, that people willingly engage in reproducing capital through its wage system, is a matter of scale that visibly protrudes in the deracination/waste of labour. Once people are refugees or on the verge of hunger to be wasted, the commodification becomes a matter of scale or gains in depth.

Some wages may appear as zero or, to put it differently, some labour may appear as unpaid, however, all labour is paid differentially as the residual of the surplus forming the wage bill is redistributed amongst members of the working class. Through power and market signals, the ruling class decides the share of living wages out of the social product and the time for production, the time to engage and act subject to its minimum socially necessary labour time requirements. It outlines the policy whose interface decides whether two or three family members will have to work for below-subsistence wages. It may also deem that the life expectancy of the majority in Africa and the Arab World

will have to be cut down by some 30 or 40 years to satisfy a specific output of prematurely wasted humans. Perlman (1969) concludes that surplus time is the time of life exchanged for survival; however, as theorised so far, surplus time is the time of life deducted from historically determined survivability.

The duration and the intensity of the social activity that people experience in chronological time to produce commodities, is expropriated, socialised, commanded by capital, alienated and/or is independent of the direct producers or society. Capital commodifies nearly everything and what appears as un-commodified in the present is a commodity cross-realised in its organic interrelatedness to other commodities and their corresponding money form. Any commodity by its very state of being gestates or is in waiting to be realised. Although a price associated with it at an exact point in time looms on the horizon, its implicit price either through the venue of social reproduction or financialisation cross-realises with the prices of all other commodities. Consider air pollution paid for at this time in terms of tonnage per dollar and paid for before the current time in medical bills as an example. Although outside the scope of this work, the complexity is not easily reducible to a deductive procedure, but a systems approach may formalise or model the process.

Capital disciplines people and tables their lives into its time and price records. It decides the duration of the turnover cycle. It may report the profits from a car it sold in quarterly intervals, while the much greater wasted lives and nature it has used to produce the car, were each a production sphere whose waste products gestate and are realised. All the while, capital rewrites the working class into competing to be wasted or into paying for the waste. The money and time accounting books of capital veneer the value books or the lifetime reproduction events of society.

Under profit motives buoyed by commodification, the real purpose of production would be more about the enlargement of the waste industry and the waste commodity rather than halting the degradation of the environment. For capital, the issue of war and austerity that waste human lives differs from the case of pollutants as waste. Capital flaunts its bogus admiration for nature but is reluctant to do so for the human lives it extinguishes in the Third World. It is less willing to openly exchange these wasted lives for an amount in compensation as it does the CO<sub>2</sub>. Canada and Australia have provided some token reimbursement for their genocides of the natives, while France has just recently (2021) toyed with an apology for massacring Algerians.<sup>5</sup> The political right as

<sup>5</sup> The Algerian state estimates the death toll in Algeria between 1830 and 1961 at nearly seven million people to ten million people, see <https://elhiwar.dz/event/213168/>. Such is tantamount to a depopulation strategy. However, in 'No repentance nor apologies for colonial abuses in In

the emphatic expression of history in the centre is aware that imperialism is a power play in which innocent lives in the South must be prematurely ended. It calls to openly disavow the human rights rhetoric because at times the US might have to bomb for national interests. Beneath the jingoism, it does not see the dead are the desired output of their bombing, or the commodity for which a price markup per scalp enters their accounts as corporate profits.<sup>6</sup> All in all, capital designated indemnification of victims of genocide serves as a demand-pull stimulus that counteracts the downside of capital's business cycle. Just like the welfare payments to Native Indians or Aboriginals, which raise morbidity or boost demand for drugs and alcohol on reservations. Recollecting, redistribution by tapping into the circulation sphere is rent fallout from imperialist wars for the Northern classes to partner with capital. Token reparation to Aboriginals boils down to an advertisement that beautifies capital such that it may continue to massacre more Muslims abroad instead of natives. Adequate reparations occur when capital ceases to aver to its crimes because it is too weak to call for reconciliation and whitewash its history.

As proposed above, to do political economy is to demystify the value relations covered up by capital's system of prices and accounts. Pollution and the wasted lives were never free of charge. In past imperialist wars or during the emission of pollutants in the last century, a price tag per human being or per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> did not register in capital's accounts, but it had certainly been incurred as lesser moneyed costs covering social reproduction and as a reduction in necessary labour. Waste was respectively exhibited in price or value forms. As explained in the previous chapter, this lower necessary labour occurs by the production of the immediate death of social nature and the lesser longevity or with fewer people surviving over the social turnover cycle or the time it takes to reproduce society. The knock-on effect of the death of social nature and the defeat of the masses rebalances the power platform that ship value via

Algeria, says Macron the issue becomes a Pandora's box given the genocides of France in West Africa and farther afield. Although, in times of strength, imperialism admits its crimes because it is in a position to water down the impact by placating the minority's living descendants (as Canada did with native Indians), reconciliation with a strong Algeria is unlikely. The words of president Houari Boumediene, 'there are mountains of skulls between us and France' are daily re-invoked by the state to rekindles popular memory. Canada's genocide policy, to leave but a small percentage of natives alive, is a more efficient imperial strategy than France's. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210120-no-repentance-nor-apologies-for-colonial-abuses-in-algeria-says-macron>

<sup>6</sup> Scalping was an incentive to recruit settler-fighters. Colonial authorities introduced a program of scalp hunting that became a permanent and long-lasting element of settler warfare against indigenous nations in the US (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015).

financial channels to empire. As a part of society dies off in waste production for a cost-price, or in the industry by which society earns less to reproduce, the industry of dying itself is labour time that regenerates surplus value. The diminished population count over the turnover cycle relative to its longevity potential is the output and a barometer of the intensity of the rate of surplus value.

Unless capital kills for sports, capital-liquidated or auto-liquidated society at the behest of capital is a source of surplus value and profits. Air and lives were not free then, but they were used for free in industry, realised for a zero price on the then accounts of the owners of the means of production, while at the same time being continuously realised for a positive price/cost incurred by society. In the countless acts of production that comprise social reproduction, every capital-unpaid-for social natural input is a commodity whose cost to society re-enters the market and exchanges for a price. Seen from the vantage point of social reproduction, the exponential death of social nature contributed to profits then and will contribute again. The moneyed form of wasted social nature is implicit in the prevailing credit and it signals value by the degree to which development in the South departs from its potential. Relatively, an inverse signifier of lost development and indicator of surplus value in money form is the estimated price for the wasted social nature, including the irreversible damage incurred by the planet. Now these in view of current planetary conditions are phantasmagorical.

The commodification of the planet means that most of what exists is subject to a value relation whose actualisation as a commodity enters the market and exchanges for an equivalent in money form. By bending chronological time to its demands (e.g., nine to five workdays or longevity), capital, or the social relation reconstituting society, organises the time of the social order and foreshadows the time of realisation. Whether the concrete labour time of the production of commodities is compressed or relaxed in chronological time, it will *ex post facto* obey the demands of minimum socially necessary labour time. Ideally for capital, optimal labour conditions are those that squeeze effort and life out of labour in the shortest chronological time to meet competitive pressures (production prices) and float above average profits. Through market deliberations/mediations, the concrete labour becomes the abstract labour time. It sells for a wage in the case of the labour power commodity, or price in the case of the salient commodity. Put differently, the logically preferred conditions of production or the consumption of labour power in production referenced in chronological time is literally how fast human life expires at work to meet the requisites of social/abstract time. Historically, capital balances its inherent/logical proclivities with its political requisites for resilience.

Just to be sure, the abstract or real social time of which I speak is the time of impersonal history or history whose genome is the capital relation. This concrete become abstract time commanded by history serves to rearrange labour conditions for maximum surplus value. It manifests in the degree of misery experienced by society in concrete time. Abstract time is the essence of time whose appearance is concrete time. The latter is subordinate to the former by the *rappoport de force* between capital and labour. Just like conventional time, abstract time has a past, present and a future, however, these co-determine each other because the signals of the market for the consumption of time in social reproduction condition the quality of life. For instance, there are profits to be made from the stock of future pollution, as such, capital pollutes more in the present to cram people's lives in time and space at a future date. Abstract time does not tick like a clock at equally spaced intervals. It is the intensity of hardship at work, or the event time of life squeezed out of labour at different rates between the seconds of the clock. Socially-lived or abstract time defines the discomfort of the monotonous routine on assembly lines, the humiliation in the food bank queues or the horror of the Iraqis under US bombs. True to form, this social time feels like it lasts longer in the chronological time spent toiling at work; however, it is more than just a feeling, it is also the time encapsulated in products alienated from workers. Time lost to work instead of leisure and years of life lost. Abstract time is not the existentialist angst related to the arbitrary existence of being human. On account of class repression, abstract time becomes the social time that lasts long for everyone because working classes lose the leisure hours or the time of life that they can spend on their own. It is event time, or anecdotally, it is travelling from California to New Zealand and arriving a day later, which does not mean that the person had skipped a day of life. Society loses the free time in which revolutionary intellectuals may write about the conditions of the working class rather than a fascist strolling outside his cottage in the German countryside to contemplate the vapid thrownness of existence (in reference to Matin Heidegger's German man who ponders his own death after a long life in contrast to a Yemeni man to whom death is salvation from the hunger and war during his life).

Social or real time is quite different from Heidegger's personal time which springs from personal despair, the remorseless baring on the individual's inner nothingness (Heidegger 1927). Lukács notes that such time (Heidegger's) is associated with pseudo-objectivism. He says: 'in Heidegger's *diseased philosophy*, however, real time is de-secularized and becomes devoid of content, theological, concentrated purely on the element of personal decision. So the whole pretentious point of Heidegger's philosophy of time and history does not go beyond his ontology of everyday life. For its content is still merely the inner

life of the modern philistine frightened to death by nothingness, a nonentity in himself, and gradually becoming aware of his nothingness' my emphasis (Lukács 1980). The decisions and practice of dominant capital/impersonal history create the ideological context and supersede personal time. They create the intellectual whose *diseased* philosophy says 'pay attention elsewhere' or look into yourself instead of looking at what the imperialist class is visiting upon the developing world.

The market derived time or *abstract* time is elevated into a fetish of 'dollars per hours of work' that dominates social activities (Lukács 1919; Ilyenkov 1961). How then does this abstract time concretise as the depredation of human lives? To demonstrate, a diversion into the origins of abstractness is required. Abstract in Marxian thought is not an object of the mind or an idea unrelated to the world. It is a concept that separates and captures in thought an actual side of phenomena. In its historical development, the abstract is a specific relationship whose process matures into a concrete, or the many sided developed whole. This definition originates with Hegel (1831), although its development there is about spiritual ascent in contrast to the Marx's primacy of materialist conditions. In skeletal form, the abstract is a moment of the concrete, whereas the concrete is the dialectic interrelatedness of dismembered wholeness (Ilyenkov 1961). For Marx, the abstract as well as the concrete, are dialectical categories reconstituted in thought by scrutinising the systemic dynamics at the heart of the object, albeit contingently upon its own materialist circumstances. Unlike the ahistorical neoclassical method of 'add new info' from newly observed phenomena, or from the immediacy that has not been explained, to check a model's theoretical stability, the concrete is the abstract historically unfolding by its inner contradictions. In contradistinction to empiricism's selective observations from facts instantaneously overturning past theories (critical rationalism), Marxian theory is the systemisation of the transformation of the abstract into the concrete by its inherent laws of development. Every concept refers to an aspect of reality whose history has been explored. It is mediated and not immediate or 'given.' Whereas vulgar economics bases much of its findings on given this and given that, like given competitive prices, Marxian science is exactly about explaining the 'given.'

In the critical rationalist approach, knowledge develops faced with the inap-posite question that reality remains an unknown, instead of reality becoming progressively knowable relative to the even more progressively knowable. This epistemological score has long been settled when Hegel debunked Kant's unknowable noumena. All one can add is the social forces commanding the development of science through transformative iterations and ruptures are possible because as Althusser (1976) points out ideology is not the utter

falsity that falsifies everything. It is the imaginary, which may or may not correspond to a relation posited by science. When critiqued from a working-class perspective, or stripped of mystification, ideology ceases to block the development of truth. The metaphysical proposition that things are unknowable contrasts with theological omniscience or truth as an attribute of changeless forms. Using noumena, or things that hypothetically cannot be experienced, to examine whether ideologically commanded science elicits the development of knowledge runs counter to the factual developments already observed.

For Ilyenkov (1961), the ascent from the abstract to the concrete connects analytically developed concepts in a system, which answers the objective dismemberment of the object as well as the unity of all its aspects. The ascendance from part to whole presupposes the ascension from the concrete perceived by contemplation to the abstract (the holistic or universal quality). Separate aspects of the object are understood as they are regarded as parts of the whole or only in relation to the independent movement of the whole (Ilyenkov 1961). Analysis begins with the sensed object, the actuality fully developed, and works its way to a mental concept, or concrete, of the object. Relative to actuality, the intermediation of the abstract and the concrete is real, but in thought it belongs to subjective dialectics; obviously, it cannot be fully mapped against the observable phenomenon. Althusser and Balibar (1970) posit that the real is one thing while thought about the real is another because of 'the primacy of the real over thought about the real, since thought about the real presupposes the existence of the real independent of that thought; and two, the materialist thesis of the specificity of thought, and of the thought process, with respect to the real and the real process.' The former point may be illustrated with reality being ahead of theory, while the latter point implies that a fuller understanding of reality must not pass final judgment with metaphysical forms on a rather dynamic reality. The abstract has an actual referent in history, which is not just the object but also by the fact that thought about the object is itself presupposed by the existence the very object under consideration. This circularity, thought predicated by material being, is the unity of theory and practice.

With the above detour in mind, abstract time is the time that society condenses in social production per money wages. This exploitation writ large expands the production of waste as it reduces the longevity of people situated within a social turnover time whose compression leaves more surplus labour to capital. Since value realised as material substance is concrete labour time embodied in commodities conditioned by abstract time, the struggle for time is a struggle to regulate the reproduction of labour. Moreover, since labour-power has a value associated with the global level of development of the productive forces (Amin 2010; Emmanuel 1972), the struggle to minimise

labour time per moneyed unit concretises in the industry of thinning the stock of labourers and labour power available to society.

Capital ratchets its control of the labour process by its intertwined domination of space and time. While imperialist wars extend hegemony over the South, they also reduce the outlays on real wages per unit of time delivered in production. The time targeted for regulation includes the time encapsulated as value invested in human lives – the reduction of the social cost of the reproduction of labour. Not only human effort but also human lives are used as inputs/outputs in civilian-end use commodity production, waste commodities or military-end use commodities – more generally, waste accumulation. Labour's struggle to control time, equally, the struggle to repossess time, is also a struggle to re-appropriate its social product as in working shorter working days or living longer relative to the times. The grounds upon which labour struggles are defined by the social nature of the wage system, which makes the wage bill the equivalent of the wages of the global working class whose labour has across time created wealth. Perlman (1969) designates the contributions of many peoples throughout history to social production processes, which culminate in the current conditions of social reproduction, as follows.

In the capitalist process of production, the worker embodies or materialises his alienated living energy in an inert object by using instruments which are embodiments of other people's activity. Sophisticated industrial instruments embody the intellectual and manual activity of countless generations of inventors, improvers and producers from all corners of the globe and from varied forms of society. The instruments in themselves are inert objects; they are material embodiments of living activity, but are not themselves alive. The only active agent in the production process is the living labourer.

The living labourers of today build upon the labour of the past. Furthermore, the social nature of wages and production imply that all social resources are engaged in production and reproduction even if they appear to be passive and waiting to be deployed. After all, people and nature are commodities self-expanding to the demands of social or abstract time, which realise by the biased bent of imperialism. In the North, shorter workdays become an asset to capital and its adjunct classes as they implicate longer days and realise the shorter lives elsewhere in the developing world. An anti-systemic struggle in the North would be a struggle for the homogenisation of labour, bridging wage gaps and working conditions across the globe; not just 'let us get more at the expense of others.' A larger portion of wages in the North should not mean a lower wage share altogether in the South.

## 5 The Struggle for Time

To put things in perspective, the categories of Marx's capital undergo a process of ascent from abstract to concrete. Labour is said to be abstract or concrete, social or private depending on how the concept of labour is situated within historical developments, or the aspects chosen out of the conditions of the labour process. Each abstraction belongs to a specific moment of historical development captured in thought as capitalism moves from simple to mature stages. Wage labour itself is a social relationship that develops only in relation to its capitalist context. To expand the point above, unlike the metaphysical notion the abstract is not an *a priori* 'form' of which the real object is some deviant representation, while the concrete is not the fullness of the sensory perceived object. Both abstract and concrete are logical or mental categories dissected from a multifarious phenomenon (Ilyenkov 1977). To abstract or to select what is relevant to forge the building block of a system of thought is to designate the principal relationship that defines the *modus operandi* of the objective system. As is well known, for Adam Smith, the central concept was the division of labour. For the neoclassicals, it is subjective utility. For Marx, it is the commodity *qua* value, alienated and objective.

Another issue defining conceptual relevance is historical determination. For example, the concept market under capitalism wholly differs from a pre-capitalist market – since much of life nowadays depends on markets and it did not then, similarly for the concepts money, labour, rents, interest rates, etc. What is crucial for social reproduction, such as wage labour or its product, the commodity, or the division of labour, any of these may be picked as a starting abstraction/concept for analysing a system. Whichever concept is chosen, its content must be historically specific. It must appertain to a determined period in history whose laws differ from those of previous phases. The concept market must then be qualified with the adjective capitalist such that it becomes a capitalist market. In other words, the concept/abstraction relating to the object of investigation cannot be for reasons of adequacy transhistorical, or that which refers to the same unchanging thing at all times.

Furthermore, labour's characterisation as abstract or concrete is a reflection upon its real development in time. Concrete labour, the actual personal effort afforded to production becomes abstract after market-deliberations. Similarly, for concrete and abstract time. Both categories, abstract and concrete, are an intermediation of one another depending on how time is consumed to the demands of production and/or as guided by markets. The state of becoming of abstract and concrete time is their measure or historical time. Together they represent the process by which capital socialises labour time in production to be alienated and expropriated.

Capital's socialisation *qua* commodification is totalising, and so is the time in which it operates. Abstract time is by definition social and totalising (Lukács 1919; Ilyenkov 1961). For capital to preserve its rate of exploitation, more leisure time in the North must imply less leisure and longevity in the South – always, it must be recalled in period specific to available capacity and not in relation to ancient times. Abstract time, the time that derives from the exigencies of exchange, dictates concrete time, the chronological time it takes to produce commodities. Such time is not only the hours on the clock in a factory. It is also the time of the labour process as a whole or the time in which the working class, with all its elements, productive and unproductive, including the time of mothers raising children, get consumed subject to the pressures of minimum socially necessary labour time. Abstract time, a subdivision of capital, also signals the optimal rate for the transformation of use into exchange value or the frequency of realisation – how capital reduces the time between the production of the commodity and its sale.

However, as a conceptual moment in capital or social production, abstract time is not at the origin of capital's command system. It is, as everything else under capitalism, a derivative or a secondary moment of fetishism or the rule of commodities. Although the real agent of history is the social class, in relation to its forms of consciousness subsumed in the class struggle, the fetish of the commodity is the surrogate of the capital class in command. At a broader level, the real agent of history is history itself auto-differentiating under the spell of the commodity. Such is a variation upon the Althusserian position that the agent is the motor class struggle not an isolated/analysed stratum in the class struggle. For Althusser (1964), it is futile to distinguish from within the heap of class relations, the overdetermined history, couched within the class struggle a specific class as historical subject. In a restless and overdetermined process, to designate a specific form of the social class as subject is undue reductivism. That is, to assign a subject of history from time independent and still moments, when the very interaction of the system or its dynamic already instantiates in the outcomes given in the structures of the class struggle before us, is sophistry. Since the results of the class struggle reveal its class composition, to define with precision the leading class by mentally dismembering the class struggle to its components is superfluous speculation. Developments, national security or insecurity, incomes are all outcomes of the class struggle *qua* history. For the South to develop to one degree or another is to overturn capital to one degree or another. In the order of determination within the totality, capital the leading relation and resultant of the class struggle in correspondence to the dominance of the rule of commodities, is the kernel relaton; subordinately, in equation-like precision, the more alienated the working class becomes from its social product, the more the rule of commodities.

The regulation of concrete time is the regulation of the reproduction of the working class and its associated costs. Such regulation unfolds in the wars, slavery, union busting, etc., or history as it happens. Reading the position above inversely, history subservient to the reason of the commodity is the dialectical measure or the mediated contradiction between abstract and concrete time tempered by the power balance of the class struggle. Events such as how many people are put to work, for how much time, how many are shed as unemployed, what conditions force them to work for almost nothing, or literally killed, are the ‘wanted consequences’ of capital. The frequency of the dislocations and their magnitudes are the consequences of the law of value as it extirpates labour to allocate resources. The law of value subjugated to the fetishism of commodities operates under the onus of the submission of concrete to abstract time, or how much of life should be compressed between the hourly intervals of conventional or chronological time. Such collapse of abstract into concrete time rolls out in social time, the quality of life.

Fetishism, itself an attendant moment upon alienation, cloaks the social-class agency. Colloquially, things or market signals did what went wrong not people. Uninhibited fetishism is the substratum of the logical precepts that pollutes perception. Man begins to perceive and process reality subject to the given without a horizon of change made possible by revolutionary alternatives. Labour fails to recognise itself as a commodity and lives the illusion of capital (Lukács 1919). It reasserts the fictitiousness of capital. Alienation, fetishism and reification are moments of capital’s dynamics, reciprocally reconditioning each other to reproduce dominant ideology. Fetishism occupies a distinct position in Marx’s logical ordering because it ‘clings to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities and which is therefore inseparable from commodity-production’ (Marx 1867). It is there from the start, and with it comes the promotion of false reality via the production of ideology.

The fetishism of late capitalism has reinforced waste production and consumption such that the wasting of man as a commodity has come to stand atop the pinnacle of the ‘divine’ fetishist order. Bombing the poor spectacularised on TV screens is a high rating show. The obfuscation is more than just the dulling of the working class. It has become the near complete severance of social consciousness from social being. This has occurred because reification, the thingification of subject as a mode of thought, penetrated the deeper layers of knowledge acquisition, seized the structure and process of thought, such that to play on David Bohm’s implicate order, people end up not thinking, but reorganising their prejudices.

For example, wars and pollution are said to be ephemeral conditions that technological advance will redress. However, more than a century of

technological advance has cost hundreds of millions of lives in wars and war-related deaths, not to mention the calamity of the environment. Positive tech-determinism and meliorism are the reification or the attribution of causality to things. Worse yet, it is the very people that have incurred the tragedy that actually reify the subject. Machines are said to be the salvation of man. To reiterate, it is not the thing or the commodity, or the metaphysically abstract idea of time, which triggers the march of history, it is the ruling class in relation to other classes, or the class struggle. History takes its cue from mystified market operations in which 'the worker denies himself ... does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind' in return for a wage (Marx 1844).

Yet despite the obviousness that to control time, labour must own the real and ideological means of production, the concussion sustained by the beaten masses had resulted in loss of vision. Labour has been commodified and its struggle to de-commodify itself remains short of target. The de-alienation of labour is its reclamation not only the commodities it produces, but also the environment, and altogether the means of social reproduction expropriated by capital. The time that labour struggles for is a time structured around its control of production, or one derived from asserting its historical role as subject in the value relation projected onto the class struggle.

## 6 Abstract Time Mis-defined

As defined above, abstract time is a secondary moment of the value relation associated with the phase in which the commodity restructures the social-time resolution of its value versus use-value contradiction by the signals of exchange value. The concrete time society spends in production or in an interval of chronological time contributes to social reproduction or de-reproduction by how markets price the life/effort of labour expended in an hour or a lifetime work. Abstract time, abstract labour or social labour are subdivisions of the value relation whose equivalent is the universal commodity or the money form. Abstract time is also society's effort spent in the making of all commodities including labour power. The time it takes to produce commodities is deliberated *ex-post* by market instituted exchange, or the price/wage informs society and producers how much effort should be squeezed from labour in an hour of work to stay competitive and above average profits. It is the concrete labour time condensed in chronological time, which obliges the law of value as it minimises necessary labour or the social wage bill. The abstract and the concrete side of time cross-condition each other and manifest in the changes

to the conditions of livelihood associated with the necessity to reduce socially necessary labour time. Getting more out of labour for less in the shortest period may be a partial caption of the abstract time relation. Saying it is the social relation of capital, which reconstitutes society and organises the time of social labour in line with the production of surplus value is a wider understanding of abstract time.

As to the falsification of abstract time, Postone's (1995) work is exemplary and a more emphatic pro-imperialist version of Western Marxism. He epitomises the liberal stance that both socialism and imperialism are wrong, however, the socialist states are more pernicious and deserve the aggression they sustain at the hands of the Western world. He prioritises the role of abstract time in an 'abstract' or rather metaphysical fashion within historical development. Instead of laying the accent on a capital class represented in dominant/class ideology as the motor of history, Postone lets stand reified social time for capital itself – capital as *a posteriori* resultant of class activity. It is his European space and time delimited concept of capital, which delimits and corrupts all other conceptual subdivisions. Like Western Marxism, he theorises the European space of capital, but not capital the totality. To be specific regarding capital's subdivisions, he poses time as a concept sectioned from a process (the transition) and assumes all that dynamic thereafter must be assessed by reference to that fixed form. His abstract time, like a supernatural force, is a priori form of society yet runs the affairs of society. As such, the historical subject transmutes into the form of the ticking clock. With the class struggle gone missing, totality, the interconnections of the whole, also goes missing.

Whereas the abstract and the concrete are categories of subjective dialectics, Postone treats these as I mentioned earlier in the manner non-sensed (unseen) and sensed (seen) respectively. He further splits abstract from concrete time in an undialectical way. He says that the 'historical transition from a mode of time reckoning based on variable hours to one based on constant hours implicitly marks the emergence of abstract time, of *time as an independent variable*' (my emphasis). He then declares relatedly in the same text that 'abstract time, on the other hand, by which I mean uniform, continuous, homogeneous, empty time, is independent of events.' How could abstract time be dependent on the transition, which is a series of events, and then become an independent variable and independent of the events that followed – abstract time becomes a 'so be it' divine fiat or a form unrelated to further events and experience.

Postone also failed to reference the part to the whole or the concrete back to the abstract or even notice the continuum of ascent from the abstract to the concrete. His remark that 'concrete time as any sort of time that is *a dependent variable* – a function of events or actions,' is qualified elsewhere in the text as

'the amount of time that determines a single commodity's magnitude of value, which is *a dependent variable*. The time itself, however, has become independent of activity-whether individual, social, or natural. It has become *an independent variable*, measured in constant continuous, commensurable, and interchangeable conventional units (hours, minutes, seconds), which serves as absolute measure of motion and of labour *qua expenditure*' (my emphasis). If such relation was to hold, that is if abstract time acted as an independent variable in an equation that influences the dependent variable, concrete time, without addressing the unity of abstract and concrete (the parts) and their qualitative change represented in historical relationship (the totality), capital would have long perished as result of excessive myopia. Capital would be guiding its activity more so with regression analysis upon stationary data series and less so with intelligence agencies, NGO's and Think Tanks to shape/tap into the temperament of the masses in order to abort their potential revolts – the dependent and independent variable terms arise from confounding econometric analysis with history. Similar statistical causality, often modelled upon a stationary series, predicts the risks within some margin of error but not the historical uncertainty or structural changes. With a formalised sketch of dynamic processes, the historical uncertainty ceases to be, and revolts against imperialism in places like Palestine become of the same quality as capital as opposed to being the negation of capital.

Abstract and concrete times reinforce each other and sustain capital by balancing the degree to which exploitation physically and spiritually grinds down labour along with its potential for anti-systemic consciousness/practice. Unlike Postone's metaphysical abstract, abstract time is a dialectical universal, or the generalised material circumstance, constantly re-manifest in the universal equivalent, or the money form. Money or credit are underwritten by the time of labour of society or longevity and are related to value forming processes such as wars, sweatshops, and union crushing, etc., which are the concrete labour conditions and their concrete time. Recalling, there is a relentless and qualitatively shifting interface between the fetish-commanded dynamic of capital and its realisation in real outcomes that ought to be demystified for a sounder understating of social processes. All the same, Postone's statistical-like concepts of abstract and/or concrete time, or independent and dependent variables respectively, are removed from continuous social activity. By substituting historical causation with statistical causation, or by conscripting reality into mathematical language (dependent or independent variables), such logicism precludes a revolutionary consciousness attendant upon a negation of the reason of a history soaked with the auto-expansion dynamic of the commodity.

Postone further criticises Lukacs (1919) 'who (Lukacs) equates capitalism with static bourgeois relations and posits the dynamic totality, the historical dialectic, as the standpoint of the critique of capitalism.' He elaborates his (Postone's) position on 'the structure of social relations characteristic of capitalism takes the form of a quasi-natural opposition between an abstract universal dimension and one of thingly nature ...' accordingly, and this is the gist of what he aims at, 'the temporal moment of that structure also has the form of an apparently non-social and nonhistorical opposition between an abstract formal dimension and one of concrete process. These oppositions, however, are not between capitalist and non-capitalist moments, but, like the related opposition between positive-rational and romantic forms of thought, they remain entirely within the framework of capitalist relations.' Oddly he labels Lukacs' approach static, yet he employs statistical jargon, such that he considers his position on history as an 'automatic historical flow related intrinsically to the social domination of abstract time.' Notice the resemblance of 'automatic flow' with the flow of a stationary time series. The endogeneity of fixed abstract time causing concrete time is a relation of independent to dependent variables in a stochastic process. In such formal approach, structure, quality and historical types must be the same across chronological time. As such, opposition to capital will never be anti-systemic and, structurally as a result of the uniformity of elements in content, Cuba will be as repressive as the US.

For Postone, however, there is no immediacy (the given phenomenon) because he tailored in thought a part of reality that he would like to see and assumed that such was all there is out there. His processing (rationalisation) of events is about idea deviating from an idea. That is why in such world of removed from events, it is possible to posit that the left, which supported Vietnam when it was aggressed and divided the world into camps was wrong because such is a deviation from the pure idea of non-aggression. He notes that the left 'too often found itself in the position of being the mirror image of Western nationalists' (Postone 2010). Along the same lines, he also stresses that people who regard the struggle against Israel as progressive are taking something reactionary and regarding it as progressive. The violence of imperialism spearheaded by Zionism abroad, which is the thrust of global capital accumulation by means of waste, fades from the picture (Kadri 2020). In his totality of pure ideas, he could equate imperialism with socialism. Labour, time, society, etc. as ideas are only formal notions of their forms without palpable being. If in the odd case any of his concepts designate something real, they do so in reference to Western democracy, cultural or psychological traits of the more advanced countries – the Achilles heel of the Frankfurt School. In relation to the Frankfurt school and broader Western Marxism, Rockhill (2022) aptly notes that

such Marxism bereft of class struggle ‘can thereby be redefined as a kind of anti-communist critical theory that is not directly connected to class struggle from below but rather freely criticises all forms of domination, and which ultimately sides with capitalist control societies over and against the purported fascist horrors of powerful socialist states.’ He further adds that ‘their criticisms of capitalism pale in comparison to their uncompromising condemnation of socialism. Their brand of critical theory ultimately leads to an acceptance of the capitalist order since socialism is judged to be far worse. Not unlike most of the other fashionable discourses in the capitalist academy, they proffer a critical theory that we might call ABS theory: Anything but Socialism.’

In addition to animating the senses-wise concrete vis-à-vis the metaphysical abstract, which erases process and qualitative differences, Postone reduces abstract time to the time that ‘productive labour’ imparts to production. As time to produce becomes shorter with technological progress or with higher productivity, less labour is demanded, and class struggle is no longer consigned to labour versus capital but between that time which reduces the demand for labour and labour (Postone 1995). This removes capital and its class agencies from the scene. Employment cannot be explained with the fact that machines may assimilate less labour as they improve over time. Had this been the case and on account of improving technology, much of the world’s workforce would be unemployed, when in fact, all must work to reproduce even for below-subsistence wages. Postone adopts an arithmetic definition of unemployment, which is ‘[t]he use of machinery at less than full capacity results in the unemployment of thousands of workers’ (Postone 2005). Anyways, such is not an argument since employment and wages are political stabilisation measures or punitive policies that discipline the working class (Kalecki 1943). His is a statement of form but not fact, which is trite and outside the context of value relations or the relation by which capital stabilises through its employment strategies.

Aside from the truism that better machines shed labour elsewhere, he argues that socialist nations replace the market by the state and that ‘means that mass unemployment immediately would entail a political crisis, one that would call the system into question. State capitalism necessarily requires full employment to legitimate itself.’ State capitalism is another hollow concept, for all states in the era of capitalism must be capitalist. Not that this only implies that full employment in aggressed socialist countries is undesired because it legitimates the capitalism of the state, it also errs on the side of the free market, its price system and abstract time as inescapable realities. The firm may create employment per machine to produce, but capital creates employment primarily for political stabilisation purposes (Kalecki 1943). In

the interface between the individual capitalist and capital, it is capital that lays down the rules. Developing nations are confronted with the problems of building capacity, which requires the full mobilisation of resources in price systems independent of imperialist meddling. Society is all productive in social reproduction *contra* the putative one man to one machine productivity. The only reality one is sure of is the one man behind the machine is a social labourer – as opposed to an abstract labourer – predicated by society. However, Postone's productivity is only the abstract man to machine ratio in still time. Observably so, defeated labour personifies capital and pits itself against the labour-saving machine – his labour is a multitude of abstract labourers; however, that is not a theory about anything. It is a narrowly selected observation, which does not account for time (history) or space, and therefore, a fiction amongst other fictions of capital adopted by a commodified intellectual. Set against the development of labour in time and space, the discovery of the laws which make the very participation of labour in the wage system a form that recreates capital amounts to a picture of reality consistent with the law of value.

However, Postone's 'man to machine ratio' criterion is typical of Western Marxism's. Only the US General-Motors type of worker is productive, while the mothers dying under US bombs in the developing world are unproductive. Instead of theory detailing how the absolute law of surplus value requires imperialist massacres to create the wealth that Northern nations, wealth appears as *deus ex machina* outside the mediation of earlier than historically determined deaths. Theory would address the law of movement or capital's knack to safeguard its rule by means of employing some of its adjunct working class in the industry of crushing other working classes. It would look into how in the imperialist centre, the whole welfare structure produces more educated and healthier workers, or rather fitter soldiers of empire, as subsidiaries of militarism.

## 7 Productivity and Productive Labour

The productivity of the masses in the developing world is real and measurable in the growth of global output set against the abjection of the South. As postulated so far, the dollar productivity of the South depends on who counts the dollars, why dollars worth is less in the South, and the timeframe of accounts. To just focus on GM type Workers with machines that reduce labour time per unit of output voids the purpose of science, which is to state in space and time terms 'what is' (Dunham 1947). 'What is' in Dunham's conceptual frame of reference, are the working people organised in working classes against capitalists

organised in ruling classes and their representative institutions that own the machines, which is a contradiction that must be maintained over time for surplus value to be created. To express a different reality, or '*what is not*' and conceal the interest and advantage of powerful groups is social mythology, a theory that reduces reality to meaningless verbal acrobatics (my emphasis as a re-interpretation of Dunham [1947]).

The ratio of abstract man to physical machine is partially referenced in reality. However, neither abstract man nor physical machines exist independently of the organising social relation. The productive labour of which Western Marxism speaks is just the one-man hours of work per machine denominated in dollars. Such man is ahistorical. Not that symbolising a thing without history is unfeasible, but man without history is man without society or a mother and father, which cannot be. Such unreal man incurs imaginary drudgery in theoretical time and produces hypothetical commodities. His productive labour is no different than the neoclassical measure of effective labour hours-input into production. The hours of labour are calculated for the US factory without calculating the time of their navy pilots and their victims on the grounds abroad fetching the dead and the raw materials for the factory of the North at a convenient price to work with. To slightly reword Kafka, it is only such illusory concept of time that makes it possible for us to speak of the day of judgment by that name; in reality it is a summary court in perpetual session. The real workers are subjected to the labour process, or the process whose purpose is to cut the costs of social reproduction. The real man on the job is the man forcefully socialised by deracination, alienated from his society and who delivers at work what society has invested in him and, by implication, productivity is social productivity. Of all the realised products, the thrust of the absolute law of surplus value is for waste products to sell and be regarded as necessarily useful either on their own or by absence of alternatives to society.

Western Marxism's totality of social production is also a set of relations between atomised/unmediated people. It is not class relations ordered in hierarchical dominance, which determine the movement of the whole, it is the resultant matrix of individualistic volitions situated outside history. Instead of the historical forces, it treats the reified forms of capital that imperialism has created as its starting point of analysis; thence, the absence of the historical surplus value.

Totality as the concrete conception of history, or capitalism in its current phase, is capital metamorphosed into the imperialist class as the decisive link that leads the whole social structure. Capital through imperialist practice rearticulates other modes of production, with the centre remaining in control. The resources of the developing world underwritten against the dollar are the

property of that central capital, and these are either used, slaughtered or put on hold to be engaged in some variant of the business of slaughter. To recollect, the act of imperialist war or the killing itself, the premature extinguishing of life in structural genocide, is a production activity that over the lifetime of the worker leaves more surplus labour to turn into capital.

Moreover, to identify the idea of 'machines reducing employment' with the dynamic of capital, is to substitute a formal equation depicting the impact of capital for the web of class relation to which the capital relation is central. The development of the machine-thing is its depreciation as it occupies various spaces. Such is not the development of capital, the social relation in time, which is the subject of machines and other things capital produces. While reductionism elucidates thought, reduction-wise one may pick the relation of capital to machine that is best illustrated as Northern weaponry engages the South. Moreover, the collapse of capital into machine would reflect the development of capital by the narrow benchmark of depreciation or appreciation of physical capital. Ludicrously, if followed through, the social totality becomes a totality of various machines determined by their rates of depreciation. However, capital totalises by class relations that dominate to organise the social conditions to ensure its continuity. By the nonsensical identity of capital with machine spun into totality, the reasons for underdevelopment in the South would be the lack of better machines, not imperialism.

Doubtless, better machines associate with higher productivity. Productivity accounts for higher value-added stages of production. Incidentally, value added, or better put waste-added, is the additional tech-know how step in the processing of a product in production, which is a different category from surplus value. The latter is the relation that morphs surplus labour into capital (Marx 1867). The concept of productive labour may be mentally isolated, interred in thought to designate a moment of social production. For instance, a worker on the assembly line is productive, while the secretary is unproductive, and so on. As such, it is a dismembered relation of a production process captured in thought. As a one-sided concept, productive labour can be chopped off from the more mature concept of living labour to elucidate the mediatory relations that underlie production. In isolation, it may explain a particular process of production, but it cannot explain the fullness of reality or reproduction. In social labour, the labour of social reproduction, which brings to life both productive and unproductive labour, productive labour alone is nowhere to be seen in immediacy, but somewhere to be detected in the mediated actuality, the concreteness perceived by the mind that occurs as result of necessary laws. What is before us in mature form (immediacy) is the working class whose members by their very coming into existence are interrelatedly productive and altogether

earn the social wage to reproduce. In Western Marxist vernacular, the productive labour associated with better machines is not the global working class *qua* living labour, which is the producer of surplus value, it is rather white labour, integrated into capital, which most adds to the heap of commodities. From an optic rooted in reality, however, it is not the workers in Northern factories that account for the making of sane wealth because they run the better machines in some moment of time-asymmetric reproduction, on the contrary, because white classes are part of capital, which together with capital, sway the content of wealth toward waste, which as it (the waste) turns into dead labour, enhances the productivity of the premature death of labourers as commodities.

To build an argument for wealth based on the category productive labour is a thought exercise that exaggerates a specific activity from living labour for the sake of analysis. In its abstract state, productive labour as a concept and as used by Marx is a relationship to itself and to its environment. It is a one-sided view of the real, in contrast to being only the form of 'productive labour' whose material instantiation is some deviation from its logical being. The Marxian category of productive labour exists in a state of flux with its counter image, unproductive labour, re-actualised in living labour. Labour altogether is re-engaged, disengaged, wasted, or commodified by capital. Drawing on Ilyenkov (1974), productive and unproductive labour are subdivisions of the broader measure living labour. For Marx, dialectical categories are not self-reasoned ideas whose intermediation is actuality, like Hegel's (1807 and 1857) categories of being and nothingness, for that is metaphysics with a dialectical twist. Marx's category is not *cause for itself or indeterminate being*. Each concept is simultaneously determined in itself *and as* a relationship to its material circumstances. The ideas as forms in Marx differed from Hegel because although both reason from appearance to essence, Hegel's phenomenology was the result of inherent tensions within the spirit proper, as opposed to materialist circumstances reconditioning states of consciousness. In the former (Hegel), the immanence of the logic determines the path of development, in the latter (Marx) the logic is unearthed from the development of material conditions. Marxian logic is contingent upon the state of becoming of each object in relation to itself and other objects in its course of development.

Once removed from their historical contexts, notions such as productive/unproductive labour become self-contained and cannot be reassembled to reconstitute the totality form which they were derived. Productive labour is not additive, and naturally, the social product as an incremental build-up of value flows cannot be adequately inferred from it. The market-deliberations reference value to abstract labour, which is the social labour of the working class as a whole entombed in the abstract moneyed form. The determination

of value flows rests in the conditions of the labour process. A more divided labour leaves more to capital in surplus labour. To say there is more or less productive labour does not determine the rate of surplus value. Productivity will remain dependent upon the independent developments of the productive forces, while the rate of surplus value will depend on the degree of capital's repression emergent in the exploitation of labour.

The one-sided categories of productive and unproductive labour ascend from their particular conditions to their general condition, which is social labour, and as always by the mediation of the market and the response of labour to the operations of the law of value. Productive and unproductive labour are historically specific processes and are not apart or sequential in time. They are concomitant and relations within the totality of capital. They are both activities of commodified waged and unwaged social labour. The Eurocentric accent on productive labour being responsible for wealth falsely projects that one-sided particular onto the whole. Such biased induction purports that the social labour of society is only that of the 'more productive' Western class. However, to recognise social class is to recognise its cross-border and organic ties. A class in relation to other classes is history, while history's historical surplus value fates the developing world to produce a wealth to which it is not entitled.

The law of value devolved in the aggressions of capital exemplifies abstract time dictated as concrete time. It will regiment the working class to fit its life's length and quality of life into capital's chronological time. Abstract time is the product and instigator of the coercion exercised to produce with minimum necessary labour. Although dubbed abstract, abstract time is social time, and it is as real and felt as the coercion exercised. However, in a totality of pure ideas, imperialism as the practice of the law of value does not coerce real people, it represses the forms of these people. As such, real but abstract time should cease to evolve into a real possibility, or the abstract time resulting from coercion, because the events and subjects that presuppose it, are only formal. Accordingly, the interaction of the abstract and the concrete in thought resolves to become possible and actual solely by logical necessity, in contrast, to necessity borne out by a unity of logic and history. For instance, Hegel (1831) speaking of real possibility, typically considers immediate actuality to be a variation upon the forms. True to his idealism, he posits the primacy of real possibility in forms as predicates of actual objects or events rather than as the synergy of thought with material circumstances.

When this externality (of actuality) is thus developed into a circle of the two categories of possibility and immediate actuality, showing the intermediation of the one by the other, it is what is called real possibility.

Being such a circle, further, it is the totality, and thus the content, the actual fact or affair in its all-round definiteness. While in like manner, if we look at the distinction between the two characteristics in this unity, it realises the concrete totality of the form, the immediate self-translation of inner into outer, and of outer into inner.... . Developed actuality, as the coincident alternation of inner and outer, the alternation of their opposite motions combined into a single motion, is necessity.

Although it is rather difficult to cite Hegel without seeming to quote out of context, here he says, albeit in caricature form, that ideas necessarily bear what is real into existence; however, the argument is without recourse to material-historical periodisation. Consistent with idealism, he does not allude to forms reshaped by actual circumstance, which would circularly alter the essence of the form – to illustrate Hegel's point, it is only man that makes labour, but labour does not remake man. For Marx and Engels, labour remakes man not only in thought, but also physiologically. The conceptual structure of Hegel, no matter the phenomenon, rests upon the absolute idea or a self-consciousness that identifies with freedom. In any case, the above quote is worthy if only because it is indicative of logical *immanence*.

Nevertheless, reality is not a sideshow to *a priori* ideas. Abstract time's functional quality resolved in its twin other concrete time is about the time in which capital usurps most out of people in the shortest chronological time for the least cost. While Hegelians and post-modernists alike assess their cultural phenomenon of time repression with sullen dispositions, toiling peoples of the Third World, to borrow the expression of Palestinian novelist M. Abdel-Al, 'are being saved from their lives by their early deaths.'

Furthermore, by restricting abstract time to the time of productive labour, only the time squeezed out of labour in factories that produce a supposed final stage commodity, the interconnectedness of production or things disappears. To produce anything, a colonial or an imperialist war is a must, because encroachment wars reduce the costs of items used to support labour and production. However, to produce waste, to cakewalk into Iraq as the US did in 2003 and create a trail of hundreds of thousands of lost lives whose concrete time squeezed to almost nothing by abstract time, is mainstream-wise not considered a factory with productive labourers. The US jet fighter pilots are not productive labour generating the surplus time assessed against the lives of their forcefully engaged victims in the industry of war. That interrelatedness, the fact that war as an accumulation process and an event restructures global accumulation, is lost.

Definitions unsituated within laws fall short of encompassing multifarious situations. Redefined from a social reproduction scope, productive labour is

all the global labour employed and subjected to the immiserating force that compresses the social cost of labour reproduction. Relatedly, abstract time is the concept that captures the degree to which global society's time – not the European only factory-labour clock – is to be controlled. That is more than just the working hours spent in the factories. It is about lessening the stock of potential labour time, or the shortening of lives way before their historically determined expectancy. The conjoint impetus of the primacy of politics and the absolute law of surplus value is the historical imperative by which capital depopulates. Apart from capital's war and its neoliberal austerity, examples of structural genocide include the unnecessary daily deaths of children under the age of 5, around 25,000 each day, mostly from causes preventable with low-cost (UNICEF 2010).<sup>7</sup> Another blatant example of depopulation by imperialist war is the Congo, since 1961, it lost anywhere between 15 and 25 million people as a result of imperialist assaults (Pan African Alliance 2017).<sup>8</sup> These estimates vary, but they always rotate in the ghastly sphere.

The countervailing impact of struggle against the tide of history is contingent upon the forms of anti-imperialist social organisations. It may be as well to mention that capital, the impersonal force unbound by ethical standards, cannot be adduced from its appearances, its prices or its high-end commodity glitter. Behind the spectacularised reality, capital or the real social force driving things effaces itself. By scratching the surface of things, one sees the objective developments of capital, the way it imposes dividedness amongst the working class or, closer to the topic, through the reduction of longevity over the social reproduction cycle. It is this latter process of waste *qua* relative depopulation whose marketed products are the mediated dead that counters capital's permanent crisis.

In relation to capital effacing itself, the case may be that the auto-development of the productive forces and, technology in particular, may create the conditions where people conflate the physical assets of capital with the capital class itself. Consider automations or robotization such as an Uber-Google self-driving car, the AI drone or, the more ubiquitous automated teller machine (ATM). The rapport between the individual and the machine is an immediate contact between worker/social man and physical capital without intermediate labourers representing capital or without the bank teller. In the

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF (2010) 25,000: The average number of children dying each day is 25,000, UNICEF, April 2010, available at [https://www.unicef.org/factoftheweek/index\\_53356.html](https://www.unicef.org/factoftheweek/index_53356.html).

<sup>8</sup> The Pan-African Alliance (2017) 'A Nightmare in Heaven' – Why Nobody Is Talking About The Holocaust in Congo, Medium, 11 April 2017, available at <https://medium.com/@PanAfricanUnity/a-nightmare-in-heaven-why-nobody-is-talking-about-the-holocaust-in-congo-53f8ab27fb97>.

case of the ATM, the customer is dealing with the Bank and its managerial class, stockholders and trust board, its leverage over the state, its ideological apparatuses in universities and media outlets, its financial arms, etc. through interface with the machine. However, such contact is with the thingified features of an already thingified ruling social class. Capitalists as well as workers immersed in the commodity form and its dynamic are commodities as well, since the phenomenon of relation between people is a relation between things (Marx 1844). The point to discover is not that a machine and its reduction of labour time are against working classes, and only so by the rule of capital, for such is facticity. The concern here is how capital has commodified social being and through its co-optation of Marxism in the West aborted revolutionary consciousness.

Under capital, the embodiment of the labour of the working class in things and machines reworks the other way around to implant the dynamic of the commodity in the mind of labour. True enough, capital's twin, its pervasive fetishism muddles the image of reality, however that wears away at intermittent intervals or as the unconscious anti-social development of capital de-reifies reality. Labour-saving mechanisation not only sheds labour, it also blurs the human intermediation between machine and man. However, confronting the machine or thing is a confrontation with capital and its capitalists who have also been thingified. To replace the US military-drone (thing-machine) introducing societies to US-style democracy by firing the ideas of George Soros or his NGO's at the masses, the deadly impact upon the masses may remain the same - the thingified human resembles the bomb.

## 8        The Positivist/Pragmatic Method as Rationale for Imperialism

Niebyl (no date) observed that to ignore the labour process is to ignore the source of change in capitalist development. To extend this proposition is to include imperialist practice, or the submission of developing-world labour to the central gun, as the source of change. Niebyl adds that 'without accounting theoretically, and that means at the same time concretely, for the source of the structural changes, these changes, and indeed the economy as such, appear accessible to analysis only in quantitative terms. And it is then from such quantitative data that inferences as to possible meaning have to be made. What we have as a result is the pragmatic method.' As such, the quantitative expression of the concept of surplus value given in profit or economic surplus becomes its definition. However, profits and surplus value are incomparables, and to derive surplus value from a capital-constructed quantitative assessment means that beneath the quantification both the theory of surplus value and the laws of capital are lost (Niebyl no date).

An example of capital constructed data obscuring social dynamics is degrowth theory. Positioned within the barrage of imperialist ideological offensives, the only countries to de-grow will be the weaker ones in the South. Elliptically, the approach is a spinoff on the Club of Rome's systemic projections on the over-use of natural resources by Meadows *et al* (1972). Account rendered of changing income distribution, the economic growth rate is indicative of the profit rate (when all the value added goes to capital in a stretch of time, the profit rate equals the growth rate). However, to limit growth in a developing formation aggressed by imperialism and experiencing demographic expansion at the same time is to mangle the masses. The Third World requires significant growth, savings and investment in lockstep that internally circulate to guard the economic surplus within the nation state. It also requires the mobilisation of idle resources to lift its people out of poverty. The crucial point of developing world growth is to strengthen national defences against a Western capital that expands by militarism.

Profits do not grow *on their own* because the momentum of the quantity of past profits positively impacts future profits. Of note, lagging variables like the growth level or its subcomponents to determine their future quantities does not seize the dynamics of an exploitative system, it merely projects capital's assembled data onto some other point in algebraic time. Corporate profits grow because militarism voids the development of the South and pounds the working classes into surrendering their resources. One is sure that a whole gamut of other social measures also contributes to cutting costs and raising profits, but here the key moment of militarism around which all other tributaries coalesce is considered. As argued in chapter two, the leading link of capital accumulation is capital's war of encroachment, which principally halts competing development from emerging in the Third World. Instead of making the case to arrest militarism and imperialism, the mainstream hides the imperialism behind the sugar-coated language of rationing the use of natural resources, degrowth, or green growth.

Also lost in the pragmatist-positivist misinterpretation is the principal idea that 'it is not the individual labourer whose labour constitutes labour value, so it is not the particular industrial worker, or a particular group of industrial workers, or the industrial workers of a particular nationality that represent the industrial proletariat or what Marx meant by that term' (Niebyl no date). Value is constituted by global social labour. Concepts formalised by capital, like the growth rate of GDP, whose quantity cloaks capital's class affiliation, appear 'so real to be the incarnation of the abstract and theoretical and its transformation into the concrete and practical all in one' (Niebyl no date).

The straitjacket of paradigmatic social science starts with assumptions symbolising selective and history-independent facts, which become ideologically

and ethically neutral ideological tools that masquerade as theory. These forms of thought hammered as theory are not only one-sided abstractions, they are formal (metaphysical) typically of quantity. It is because of quantification that the possibility of comparability exists to serve as an instrument for the organised dimension of capital. The things quantified by capital bear little reference to interdependent reality.

Since markets and wars must expand to expand wealth, mainstream concepts develop as beacons of capital and in ways that pave the way for further capital expansion. Their inner logic is structured to parallel such expansion. The predisposition for quantification mimics settler colonialism. With theory tailored to isolated facts on a one-to-one basis, the newly created facts or white settlements become self-reasoned and ahistorical concepts. They become the starting posts of analysis shifting through time as settlements expand to erase the previous devastation of snuffed natives. With memories and histories deleted, the newly formed facts or new settlements become the new benchmark for comparison. The natives who owned their homelands but are losing with the advance of time will be portrayed as having little in terms of wealth and ownership before the arrival of the white man.

Through the subordination of science to the privatisation of ideas, capital intellectually corrupts its concepts. Its apparatuses popularise its faux science. The concept paradigm, which levels time, motion, and quality to that which is quantitatively additive, becomes the symbol used loosely to draw inferences about all sorts of situation – even Kim Kardashian's new dress design revealing more of her posterior becomes a paradigm shift that receives a billion likes on social media. Like the settler colonies that eradicate natives, the vocabulary of capital becomes a power fact that strips peoples from the right to revolutionary consciousness. It gains a transcendental quality and engraves itself in the mind to distort perception. It could only do so because the defeated working classes accustom themselves to the crushing power balance and shift their customs to abide by the terms of defeat.

Capital's manufactured statistics, which are more numerology than science, are the dogma by default since there is either no one left alive or no one powerful enough to question their validity. Whereas 'correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice' (Mao 1963), the formalism of positivism, or of facts in the mind, which could be developed independently of the real development of the facts, amounts to hallucination. The absence of the class subject in their modes of abstraction omits the fundamental premise of existence, interconnectedness. To put it in Marx (1859) words, the ties of 'the

independent, autonomous neighbours' extrinsically or accidentally related, and their elements, which all form the members of a totality are nowhere to be found. As such, the distinctions within unity evaporate (to gauge Marx's thought upon the paradigmatic approach). The crude empiricism of positivism splits the real object from its interconnected self and with it also 'the organic interconnection of parts' (Marx 1859); or while on the same issue, the totality that Lenin (1914) described as 'the universal, all-sided, vital connection of everything with everything.' In its false *concreteness*, and in discarding the contradictions within the object and reference to how the whole bears upon the different parts in its development, the laws of capital can also be partitioned – as opposed to being universal. Although the interface of geopolitics with imperialism adheres to capital's laws, in a world segmented in the mind, the politics of imperialism appear unrelated to central accumulation.

## 9 Value and the National Boundary

Neoliberalism brought more wealth laden with waste. With geopolitics holding sway over geography, the planet has long been a single factory in which the frequency of the waste cycle is undercurrent to profits. The co-existence of war and waste alongside wealth is not a hypothesis waiting to be proven, it is the phenomenon that calls for an explanation. The source of that alleged wealth, since it is mostly waste, is not Northern relative surplus value or its better machines. The social relation responsible for the wealth in command of the productive forces is the imperialist class, which may be defined as the principal waste relationship that de-reproduces global society. Furthermore, understanding how much relative to absolute surplus value there is in a commodity by national origin amounts to quantification by whim. The absolute and relative components of surplus value in their immediate state are indistinguishable. Capital's interpretation of value by its money form magnitude veils the exploitative process. The US issues the world reserve currency, not so much to meet transaction demands and lubricate the wheels of development, but to own and control the means of value making and value transfer.

Although abstract and relative surplus values are not in a race with each other, by the sheer size and misery of the Southern sections of the planet, it is the South whose contribution to wealth is highest – in line with the already developed standard that the rate of exploitation mirrors the rate of repression and with that the rate of premature death incurred in wasteful social reproduction. Globalisation may be at least five centuries old (Frank and Gills 1996; Wallerstein 2004); however, rarely does colonial war and genocide figure as

early *production sharing* measures similar to the current phase of the international division of labour. And just like productive labour, relative surplus value counts only as a one-sided abstraction – thought demands one-sided abstractions; however, these are impertinent only when they originate in logical forms or are metaphysical. As a concept, it should not be confined to national boundary or a modern-type factory. Furthermore, to categorise relative surplus value is to acknowledge its ascendance into the more general concept of the social product, of which it is a mentally parcelled-out historical element. As posited above, defining the contribution of relative surplus value to the social product by machine quality in the North, while ignoring the efficiency of military machine quality in the South, is a class biased exercise.

To consider a dollar-price share of Northern income as proportionate to the magnitude of relative surplus value is also misleading. The industry of the destruction of the South does more to raise relative surplus value than a machine producing cheaper consumption items in the North or in the Sweatshops of the South. The South is both subject and object of value. In the South, militarism realises wasted lives for a price while the living labour wasting away contributes to its value forming processes. Militarism involves the highest technology, is undertaken to arrest the development of revolutionary consciousness, and reduces the costs of the necessary consumption bundle for global labour by the rate to which it wastes and de-subjectifies the working class, including no less, the demand for cheaper wasted lives. The latter demand derives from the unconscious side of capital, and while submersed within dominant culture, it is practiced in plain sight as a justification for survival in a world of scarcity. Militarism, a subdomain of waste, is thence more cost or scale efficient and remains the gyroscope that steadies the capitalist system.

At a more foundational level, prices do not just signify the item on sale in the here and now. Prices are composite significations of past and future costs/realisations regulated by the exercise of class power. Every price is influenced and influences its corresponding price system. A waste product or a valuable input realised in the past will tie into the entire cost structure and, depending on market moderation, it may appear in the future as a standalone product with its own price (there is a price for a ton of CO<sub>2</sub>), or it may be latent or implicit in other prices. Save the chimeras of moneyed capital, a single commodity's price networked into the price system forbids by complexity-recursiveness the identification of a single commodity value with its single price. A non-composite price may exist as falsity in the hypothetical here and now because capital deems it so; however, actual prices, composite and complex, are what exists in real time and space. The money form or measure *cum* magnitude of value signifies the whole of the social product of labour without accounting for

the power exercised behind the formation of prices. It is possible to abide by capital's time and accounts and set the sum of the prices as the sum of values; however, for that to make sense as a comparative benchmark, the static notion that unproductive labour does not add to value has to be dropped and the premature liquidation of life as a surplus value making activity must figure within – unwaged mothers spend and death sells amongst many other calibrations. In social reproduction, value, or socially necessary labour time, is refracted by the machinations of the market into its money form. Accordingly, value cannot only be gauged by the hours it takes to make a gadget in some factory on a given day. Even when everything else is held constant, that would still be too difficult since the commodity is realisable in many past and future forms and for many interconnected past and future prices. Value is better gauged by the socially necessary labour time harnessed in the process of social reproduction, say over the lifetime of a worker. The image of value is not what new cars look like. It is what the money form of value inflicts upon the lives of people. The true image of value is waste.

In a system of thought whose cultural frame is Eurocentrism, truth fleetingly transpires as the resultant of working-class symbols that confront the symbols of capital. Sorel (1908) realising the difficulty in comprehending the intricacies of value in political economy, rethought Marx (1845) 'ideology as a material force' by suggesting that the class struggle transforms into a mythological battle of good versus evil, or capital's signs against labour's signs (Sorel 1908). Whence the sectarian activity of making value or the production of the single nation in the North signified in its symbolic money form is referred back to the whole and to accumulation via imperialism, there surfaces the social production totality, which is a product of the global working-class. The moneyed symbols which should designate that product would be assessed by proletarian internationalist rather than nationalism. In this war of symbols, transient truth emerges as anti-systemic ideology that co-aligns with Marxism-Leninism. Thus, where one situates the source of surplus value, in the national or international structure, is the barometer of scientific method. After all, social production is the totality scaffolded by the labour process in the act of social reproduction. In social reproduction, not only workers operating machines, but all workers are productive and living labour at once. As discussed in the previous chapter, the labour of the South wasting away as it de-reproduces to restrengthen value is the *raison d'être* of capital. It is not a question that it produces more or less things than the North, especially as the North is in the South and *vice versa*.

The broader picture, inclusive of the South, observed in its state of motion, is history. The absolute general law of capitalist accumulation (AGLCA) intensifying the value relation is the rationale of such history. Capital's dominant culture, the biasedly selected precepts from the stock of human knowledge

parading as knowledge, pave the way for its essence to unravel as waste. Effective anti-systemic struggle coincides with the scientific method by demystifying capital's symbols. Left unchecked, capital's command of the ideological channels would determine the resolution of the real against the false and systemically reaffirm, as opposed to negate, capital's growth by waste. So far, value flows incarnate in an amalgam of pollutants, bombs and other waste-laced commodities emerge as the social product. Sane commodities useful to labour are the alienated products of labour consumed by the capital class in organic-food like fads. Waste commodities, however, return to labour in order re-alienate the lives of labour from labour. Since waste sells, however, useful and dis-useful commodities become, they rolled into one stock of wealth.

Of the wealth, the waste is consumed and the act of consumption itself demonstrates that labour reproduces capital through its mode of auto-consumption. In such an order, it is capital's production, which 'does not simply produce man as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the role of commodity; it produces him in keeping with this role as a mentally and physically dehumanised being' (Marx 1844). Marx reaffirms the commodification of man in the symptoms of 'immorality, deformity, and dulling of the workers and the capitalists. – Its product is the self-conscious and self-acting commodity ... *the human commodity*' (my emphasis). He critiques the classical political economists for not asking 'how many workers are maintained by a given capital, but rather how much interest it brings in, the sum-total of the annual savings,' which is to them 'the true purpose of production' (Marx 1844). Such is an affirmation of the rule of the capital class commodifying man to be wasted, to be the consumer of waste, and most of all, a man whose waste is the annual savings or, better yet, the reduction in necessary labour.

## 10 Class Institutions and Waste

Bourgeois classes gel in forms of social organisation such as the national state, or supra-national forms, such as NATO, EU, etc. These are forms and means of capital, which preside over the complex and interrelated social order. In a vertically ordered power structure in which wealth is dollar denominated, the degree of sovereignty enjoyed by weaker states shows up in how much of their wealth they can retain and recirculate nationally. The principal constituent of sovereignty is working class security, or what filters from it as the embodiment of labour in the state. Compared to others, for instance, it is the sovereignty of Cuba or China, which permits them to retain more of their wealth in physical assets or national financial means.

The state in the imperialist centre is commandeered by capital, while its adjunct, the white working class, is an organic extension thereof. The long-standing imperial armies and much of the social structures geared to bolster militarism are white working-class forms of social organisation. Though there are strata of the Northern working class, in addition to Native Indians, Hispanics, African Americans, and immigrants from the Arab/African regions in Europe, which comprise a potential proletariat, the balancing act of capital between empire and republic has ensured that the white class reproduces itself just as capital does through the practice of structural racism, the discrimination inbuilt into the power structure, as a value forming activity. This US-European two-tier class system shadows the North-South divide. Central social inequality redevelops under the cover of the *de jure* rubric of political equality. All are equal under the law, but the weight of white historical surplus value relegates the majority of non-whites to inferior social positions.

In retrospect, the white working-class struggle for higher wages was not only the economism of a class co-opted by the labour aristocracy. Its rising incomes may have appeared as a bribe by petty bourgeois elements to stymie labour's historical agency (Marx 1850); however, the decisiveness of the imperialist value usurpation component from the South was missing from such analysis. Also, such is not only a case where the left fails to explain to workers that trade unionism and economicistic pursuits splinters them and subordinates them to capital (Lenin 1902). Although Lenin suggests the way out is to prioritise political struggle, the situation a century later informs of a different picture. The spur of white classes is their settler-colonial culture continuously reinjected with colonial-imperialist booty. Their reproduction is the reproduction of capital. An example of the futility associated with the rehabilitation of such classes, is the case of white Rhodesia; white class formations must be defeated for a modicum of liberation to avail.

Within the Northern welfare state, an organic bond has been established between the state and white workers whose imperialist-currency-denominated wages follow imperialist-currency-denominated growth in productivity – they just follow capital-constructed productivity and are not caused by it. Recalling, the mainstream story of productivity is null and void as historical subject, and wages emerge as the appearance of the rate of slaughter in the South. Productivity associates with scale and cheaper commodities whose subject is the capital relation at work. Two points must be re-emphasised. First, the wealth is mostly waste; and, secondly, the shares of incomes that constitute wealth over time are reassigned by class power. As argued above, the imperialist-currency denominated wages are usurped from a global social production process whose subject is the wasted South (capital at work), in contradistinction from the productivity

of the better Northern machines. Machines-technologies are subjects only in an objectified or non-human world. As it were, Northern wages are connected to the imperialistically snatched value transfers because the wage bill is the residual of the social product minus the share of profits – profits grow by the decimation of the South, the value activity. Meanwhile, class power resulting from global conquests furnishes the financial channels for the flow of the value transfers assuming the form of imperialist rents.

Rewording the productivity argument: for the substance of the surplus value (the expropriated products) arising from better technology to revitalise the value relation, that is for things to roll over into more things, the subject labour, namely in the South, must be wasted by destructive wars or other waste industries. Rigour in the analysis of historical causation requires that before one observes the statistics that more wealth leads preceding wealth, one must observe how the social agency of labour or how the crushing of labour in relation to capital is the subject of social production, and its object in waste accumulation.

In relation to class composition in the centre, US Median real wages stagnated since 1980,<sup>9</sup> while revolving debt over the same period has increased by more than fivefold. Cheap credit steadied consumption growth, while the burden of debt further let fall more of the marginalised ethnic groups into the poorest income echelons. At the time of the great financial recession in 2008–09, the blame fell on mostly defaulting African American homeowners when their debts, compared to the debts of the corporate sector, were insignificant. The decline of socialist ideology meant that the share of Northern marginalised classes would mirror the share of labour in the South and its decline relative to that of the white class. The literature brims with evidence of declining minority wealth – Baptiste (2014) described it as ‘the staggering loss of black wealth due to the subprime scandal.’ At any rate, variations in income do not define class, or social being reproduced by forms of social consciousness and organisation. The white class does not earn a wage, it collects rents through its social democratic representation in the state vis-à-vis other circles of capital. A white working class smug with the bombing Gaza because its fighter jets are manned by Zionist settlers is the same class whose militarised police reduces the life expectancy of African Americans.

The growth of the financial class has undermined the US industrial structure and employment in manufacturing as a share of total employment

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<sup>9</sup> The real median weekly wage has remained steady at around 700 US\$ until 2012. It then started rising, albeit, at low rate until the Covid-19 recession beginning in 2019 brought it down again. Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, weekly hourly earnings from the current population survey, BEA (various years).

fell.<sup>10</sup> Recent globalisation and automation are history's realisations when it is subjected to finance. With the onset of deindustrialisation, Harvey (2003) described the parting of national capital with its working class as 'traumatic, if not catastrophic' – a position shared by a slew of Post-Keynesians. Worried about the health of empire, Harvey also noted that the US 'was complicit in undermining its dominance in manufacturing by unleashing the powers of finance throughout the globe' (Harvey 2003). Others (Rowthorn and Ramaswami 1997) maintained that deindustrialisation is principally the result of higher productivity in manufacturing and that advances in the central service sector, rather than in the manufacturing sector, are likely to encourage the growth of living standards in the advanced economies. The reification of machines is not innocuous, it reeks of the chauvinism that justifies the structural genocide of the South.

These accounts appeared around the time the US embargo and invasion of Iraq. With militarism duly considered, embargos and wars are also an outsourcing enterprise of US capital, which in-source better industrialisation and rent-related employment in the US and Europe. This sort of market exchange does not feature in neo-Keynesian accounts. Keynes's catchphrase 'the euthanasia of the rentier' was a critique of the rentier of the republic but not the rentier of imperialist rents. The contribution of war to value is unheard of. In terms of productivity rates laced with imperialist rents, militarism overtakes the much-flaunted garment factories of super-exploitation in Bangladesh or anywhere else. History reined in by the US is neither irrational to harm its adjunct working class by de-industrialising, nor shrewd enough to permit a trade-off between productivity gains in manufacturing and services to better the living standards of the North. History is objective and impersonal. It actualises by its own reason, the reason of the commodity transfigured in dominant ideology. It is incongruous to juxtapose personal rationality upon the course of historical development. For the US capital class to undermine its minorities is consistent with its course of history. However, it is not the higher value-added steps in production migrating to the developing world in run of the mill outsourcing, which enhance the service sector and the living standards of capital's white class partners, it is the imperialist war and hegemony, which predicate the totality of social production.

The US is heir to the European stock of culture – culture as a store of knowledge. It is this five centuries old 'kill for profit class culture,' which for reasons

<sup>10</sup> Roughly, employment in manufacturing went from 16 million to 12 million, while the number of establishments declined from 350,000 to 275,000 between 2000 and 2016, US Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Census Bureau's Business Dynamics Statistics respectively (various years).

based in materialist reproduction cannot be unlearnt. Resistance to that capital and its modern imperialism is meaningless in economic unions and demands for more Northern state welfarism. Consider white class participation in the many imperialist wars – participation either directly or indirectly because many of the developing states are products of imperialism. Western war machinery is bombing and starving millions, yet the argument to counter war is discussed in terms of the illegitimate of profits of arms sales to the United Arab Emirates when it bombs Yemen. The argument rests on delusory grounds: either the US is not to blame because it only sells them the guns, but they kill each other, or it should not sell them the weapons to kill each other. The issue is not framed in terms of its two primary constituents, first, the death of many in Yemen and elsewhere is the product of Western war machinery realised in Western markets; and secondly, US control of Yemen's Bab Al-Mandeb strait, a strategic chokepoint, props up US global hegemony and completes capital by ensuring control over the sphere of circulation. While the Yemeni people conduct anti-imperialist armed struggle, the war is analysed as a tribal tendency intrinsic in Arab culture.

## 11      Dollar Hegemony and War

Financial and industrial capital were never far apart, and both benefited from colonial and imperialist plunder. Both were part of the same global value-extraction process (Amin 2012). With the onset of the current age of financialisation they further fused together with industrial capital transmuting into financial capital (Patnaik P 2008). Patnaik posits that in the latest phase of finance, industrialists, issue debt, speculate on and buy back their own stocks with lesser emphasis on production as a source of profit. In the order of determination, the imperialist class is first a financial class, with industry tailing fluctuations in its moneyed market. Out of pervasive finance, the financialisation of commodities, especially oil, partially relegates much of the pressure on commodity prices to the purview of the Federal Reserve in the US. As commodity-contracts *become* financial instruments, they face off, not only against the pressures of production and demand, but also against the fluctuations in the price of competing financial securities and equity market. Such may be evinced on the basis of prices of food-staples around the world, which partially fluctuate with US interest rates. With higher turnovers and quicker returns in finance, the industrialist *become* financier submits global labour to the exigencies of financial cycles. Accordingly, imperialist aggression to stake territory and resources underwrites the additional credit that steadies the financial profits

rates. Debts, it may be recalled, are underwritten by future labour and imperialist loot. As debt-supported profits rise without a foundation in current production-demand conditions, and with increasing bad debts (components of fictitious capital) bundled up in all sorts of financial instruments, the necessity to expand by militarism to undergird finance gathers momentum.

Not that the gold-standard was holding prior to 1971, however, war industry spending and imperialist wars, the Korean and Vietnam wars, in particular, played a crucial role in fully detaching the dollar from such commodity. However, the dollar did not gain confidence out of thin air because of its debt-tradability/futurity, it remained grounded in all sorts of commodities, principally oil (Patnaik P 2008). The expansion of credit is both an objective process (independent of capital) and a thermometer of the health of capital. To recall, Minsky (1992) presented a case in which a dizzy-with-success capital borrows over and above the rate of the expansion in the real economy, such that as the real economy slows down, the huge debts bust the economy. Beneath the mathematical curves, excessive borrowing in boom times illustrates the zeal of credit for high returns throughout history (Hudson 2018b). In sociological terms, and that is what matters, the dynamics under capital, as distinct from other phases of history, are such that the more labour accedes to the bondage of debt, the surer of itself capital becomes.

At any rate, the unchecked expansion of the commodity as value must be preceded by unchecked credit. Drawing a graph of GDP levels against credit/debt levels is not much of a theory. Moreover, that a social or physical system erodes by some increasing entropy or loss of energy over time and, similarly, investment euphoria recedes is also not theory. These may be stylised facts. Theory is to explain *why* capital, the leading relation of an impersonal history, catharises itself by using the financial crisis to purge underperforming industries, while keeping labour at bay. Relatedly, theory ought to query *why* capital does so as it monopolises credit and concentrates wealth while the starving masses acquiesce to their premature death. Such may be a partial list of the many '*whys*' of theory that require, not a detailed list of all the related and missing facts, but of a law whose systemicity bears scrutiny against objective developments.

Nonetheless, the fiat of the state as a moral authority in the composite but oxymoronic term 'fiat money' is not the true backer of the dollar. Had this been the case, the US would not need to intervene in the developing world to impose its terms of trade and cultural values. Its fiat is its capacity to destroy. Patnaik P. (2008 and 2009) argues that the oil shock of 1973 was hyped, while its concurrent spike in the interest rate represented the opportunity to ditch post-war demand policies and the pretext that introduced more austerity and the

control of private finance over public spending. Since then, capital increased its rate of credit issuance. As the supply of money rose, the US's chiefly-controlled strategic commodity against the large digital sums of dollars became oil. However, it is not oil *per se*, which is the collateral against US debt. Oil, the thing, does not act and it does since it does not exist in uninhabited lands – as discussed in an earlier work (Kadri 2016), the control of oil is the relation that holds together by waste, which underwrites the dollar. Substance-wise, the labour and the war-consumed lives of many in the weakly secure states where oil is found became the future guarantees of the dollar debt. When credit is underwritten by the future value that labour produces, it is the wasted lives of Arabs and Africans, among others, which are the future value that backs the dollar.

The organised dimension of capital, through its state or state-like institutions, allocates real and moneyed resources in compliance with the law of value. Through the state it rearticulates social classes as it intervenes in production/ownership relations, the social division of labour, the distribution of social wealth/revenue to each class, including the standards of living of the members of each class. It does so in a manner that satisfies the profit rate of a whole capital class, as opposed to the narrow interest of the single producer whose micro-accounting books instruct that zero wages imply maximum profits. Very low wages would sink capital altogether and the state as capital's form and functional/distributional tool navigates the competing stresses between its hold on power through demand management and maximisation of profits through wage-share compression. To deliver an optimal result, capital's groundwork entails the violent splintering of labour and systemic depopulation or lowering average longevity relative to the historical standard. By doing so, capital redresses its political insecurity, while reducing necessary labour vis-à-vis surplus labour.

Hegemonising culture and managing resources to pre-empt a global solidarity and revolutionary convergence is a principal aim of aristocratic nations (Emmanuel 1970). Emmanuel was speaking before the onset of neoliberalism. Since then, weaker countries compete for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by compromising their living wages and environment. With the retreat of socialist ideology, this also led their respective working classes to inter-compete in a race to the bottom. At a metric level, inter working-class dividedness is proportionate to capital's strength. Accordingly, in imperialism capital realises its ultimate form. With its supremacist liberalism, control of the bureaucracy, the apparatuses of the deep state or, more appropriately, the deep capital, in addition to militarism as the chief accumulation domain, the US is probably in excess of the fascist mark. In parallel to this basic schema, the rate of exploitation, which under

fascism reduces to the dictum cut short the life of inferior classes typified by some racial construct, positively responds to the rate at which imperialism meets fascism.

To draw on recent events for illustration, the central working classes' acquiescence to their countries' provision of weapons, participation and alliance with Israel or the US as they bomb Gaza and Iraq respectively is a stark case of some ethnicities being expendable. To wit, there are nations whose human losses are irrelevant to Western civilisation. In quasi-equation form, since the rate of exploitation rises with the repression exerted upon the labour process, then the most repressive state of capital, fascism, is its logical end. Dimitrov (1935) suggests that the imperialist circles shift the burden of the crisis onto working people, especially, the masses of the weaker nation, while paradoxically capital's permanent crisis becomes its historical predisposition to fascism. With waste maturing in finance, Western social democracy is the bargain capital strikes with central labour as it inevitably circumnavigates history towards fascism.

Although many central manufacturing jobs went South since 1980, the academic question that may be asked, would international solidarity rise if the jobs come back to the North? Obviously, not so, because internationalism was absent before the recent bout of globalisation, while in the centre internationalism requires a re-theorisation of value consistent with the phenomenon that it is the lives of peoples in the developing world spent in waste industries, which are the reified form of socially necessary labour time or the substance of wealth. Correspondingly, the politics of central class struggle would be to fuse the tactic of the violent demolition of the central institutions, which had prolonged imperialism within its strategy. For long, the false credo of social democratic reform, which would supposedly advance revolution through increasing labour's autonomy, had created many of the Northern jobs and a welfare state, but these all the same did the opposite. Western Marxism with its 'the West is ready for socialism, but the East is not' motto de-prioritised armed struggle in the North and South. At the time of writing and with the hold of neoliberal ideology and the rise of the central far right, it is no longer the prospect of socialist revolutions in Europe being pondered, it is fascism. While central capital creates service jobs at home to shift income from the Southern national space to the North, it also draws value through the sphere of moneyed-circulation in the form of imperialist rent. Together, the parasitic jobs and the wage tainted with rents restructure the power base of the North for further aggression.

Circulation is not secondary to production. For Marx (1863), 'circulation is a moment of production, since capital becomes capital only through circulation,' which implies that the process of turning M, the initial money invested by capital into more money, M', through exchange is also a class governed process.

Just like the labour process, which is required to produce a commodity, control of circulation channels is a global power play governed by the US financial class. Confining class struggle to the fight over shares of wages and rents (money circulation) from the social product is a game used by capital to re-bolster its political and then its economic standing and, to simultaneously realise itself. The globalisation associated with neoliberalism may have been a way to cut the costs by moving certain steps of production to the South and raise profits, but it is also about relaxing the restriction on wealth flows, the capital and trade accounts, for capital to complete itself.

Neoliberal relations of production overcome production-related constraints and ensure a rising rate of exploitation. By the unconscious side of capital, extending production to the periphery homogenises production conditions and puts upward pressure on the Southern wages. Such outcome is often associated with civilian-end use commodity production. As productivity and wealth grow, their spill-over onto welfare will be class power determined. The same could not be said of the war industry. The presence of Western occupation forces on the grounds in some Third World nation like Iraq along with their better war machines also bring in moneyed wealth. As is well known, the US loaded planes with cash to buy off the resistance. War related redistribution may momentarily raise the standard of living of a narrow strip of Iraqis, at least those remaining alive; however, over the course of time, capital's knack for waste kicks in to siphon more of the national wealth.

Chossudovsky (2006) argues that the increase in productivity that followed neoliberalism has resulted in an increase of global unemployment and poverty. However, job creation under capitalism goes further than the putative rising productivity sheds jobs. Employment is development-derived, however, the development required to create demand is an outcome of class struggle. Relatedly, the pressure to keep FDI recipient country wages low meant further pressure to decapitalise the countryside to eject the excess labourers. While there were more manufacturing jobs, the dislocation imposed on the countryside has contributed to a rise in unemployment and a fall in farmers' incomes, which when waste is added becomes altogether a negative sum game for the host country. While global unemployment was a lever that influences labour costs globally, either because of the rising unemployment rate or low-wage employment, living wages and standards of living were squashed.

## 12 The War Terrain

The US's belligerence transfigures as command of the real and financial value creation and value transfer chains. The US's historical trajectory is war-riddled,

and it requires more encroachment wars for its wealth to grow. At the current historical conjuncture, in between the choices on offer for the US to aggress places like North Korea, the world braces itself for the sort of accidental US incursion on Russian forces in Syria, Ukraine, the Baltic states, or Central Asia, which may spark a nuclear conflagration. Although sending in soldiers to fully occupy a state may no longer be in the offing, as was the case in colonial days or in Iraq, the US-Euro sponsored NGO's, their foreign aid and lending institutions persist as novel soldiers of empire. These supplant the role of public sector services, hollow national defence, and minimise the expression of the working class in the state. Considered as activities in social reproduction, drones and uranium bombs, aid and NGO activity are value processes that further accomplish the waste processes of capital. Lenin's (1916) imperialist scramble for the redivision of territory between competing capitals has morphed into a redivision of peripheral-state governance between the US-led financial class ruling from a distance and surrendering national classes.

With the financialisation epiphenomenon, some in the Hardt and Negri (2005) tradition call to chuck away Lenin's theory of imperialism. However, to re-theorise imperialism as some multitude of hegemonic forms of similar content is also to hypothesise that a new theory of imperialism should appear as a more comprehensive and concrete theoretical expression of the essence of the new facts (Ilyenkov 1961). It is to say that the rational kernel of the previous theoretical version (Lenin's theory of imperialism), welded to the reinterpretation of modern imperialism as its universalising component, is so surpassed by novel circumstances such that the structural change warrants a theoretical change. Things do change; and although receding, the omnipotence of US imperialism, whose militarisation and finance continue to usurp world resources, implies that the change was merely formal rather than of. The synergy configuring militarism, finance and imperialist rents, characteristics of the US-led financial class, continues to funnel value to empire, which implies that the theoretical kernel of Lenin's approach still applies. The essence of such remains the law of value as guiding current of empire. It intensifies or decelerates the apportioning of socially necessary labour time in relation to anti-imperialist forces. Equally important, the class in charge of empire reproduces by militarism and, insofar as social type, the US financial class is heir to past European imperialism.

Under neoliberalism, the lesser sovereignty of developing nations eases value transfers to the North. More waste activity, state enfeeblement and disengagement of useful assets are also characteristics of a social order governed by the capital process *metamorphosed* into imperialism. Meanwhile, the ascendancy of finance strengthens the imperialist rentier and, interrelatedly, war whose potential is constrained by the nuclear deterrent. As in Lenin (2016), war continues to be the chief mechanism that resolves capital's outstanding

contradiction – the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and production relations.

To consider only higher rates of financial expansion that fulfil the inbuilt drive of commodity expansion is not grounds to throw out the essence (its laws) of Lenin's theory of imperialism. The 'kernel,' or the seminal relationship of imperialism is its class type attendant upon its class relation, which is its rentier-financier. Finance has grown and its class category heads history. The word of the federal Reserve of the US partnered with the city in London reshuffles global transfers and production processes. Unless China qualifies as an imperialist formation, which deconcentrates and decentralises capital to the point when imperialism thins down to hegemonic clusters in which the financial class no longer wields power, recent developments can be slotted under the genus of variations around the same essence that do not qualify as structural shifts requiring the abandonment of Lenin.

To suggest that China extends beyond its borders by the pressure of finance resolved in war, and hence it is imperialist, is to assume that it has been presided upon by an imperialist-class type or a culture of imperialism. Contrariwise, China wards off US-led intimidation and, as such, it impedes the law of value to operate freely in favour of capital, or to realise more waste. To consciously overlook a history of European and US-led aggressions, to drop the fact that imperialist formations accumulate by war and are war-dependent formations, is faux history. To overlook the fact that China's trade surplus, the value of its wasted lives and resources, is stored in US dollars, is also faux history. As to US-European dependency on wars of aggression, van Zwanenberg (2022) indicates that the 'the countries of the European continent had been at war either within Europe or in India, North America and across the seas for over 450 years.' At this juncture, to nurture its war addiction, the US-led imperialist class oversees the ideology and function of every international institution and apparatus of cultural production, foremost, its breeding of Western Marxism. In between the Rambo of Hollywood and the star academic whose definition of imperialism co-aligns with the US's strategic interests; the latter is a more efficacious imperialist tool.

Imperialism according to Patnaik and Patnaik (2017) partitions into three phases. First, the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century mutated into the imperialism of finance-monopoly capital (up to the point of the Second Great War). Secondly, in its post-war phase, capital disciplined the avarice of financial imperialism to re-ascertain its rule as a result of competition with the Soviet socialist model. In the third and current phase of *fiat* dollar hegemony and financialisation, neoliberalism and wanton interventions rise in inverse proportion to the organisational and ideological defeat of socialism. Catchy

acronyms like TINA (there is no alternative) and R2P are examples of what was borrowed from the dominant discourse to shape the present as history. Other important landmarks include the further truncation of the debate spectrum to the desires of capital, especially, the derogation of contrarian theory. Public debate is confined to capital's playing field, and labels like fake news and conspiracy abound to stigmatise critics. The edifice of received science evinced in planetary decline, is way stranger than the flat earth theory. The conspiracy inherent to dominant ideology, which convinces people to make history in ways contrary to their wishes, is rather the emperor's new clothes. With revolutionary consciousness slumbering, and with an inundation of access to social media by the corporate-plugged clones of capital trivialising knowledge, critique of the system also registers as delusional utopia. Any method of thought other than regnant positivism or metaphysics is eschewed as nonsense.

The state of socialist ideological retreat may be exposed in the way Western Marxists transplant historical agency from US-led imperialist class to some vassal state leader in the South. In relation to the example of Yemen above, the UAE, whose rulers are guardians of 'US oil under their sands' and whose assets are dollarized, that is, effectively not theirs, are not autonomous. US-led capital is their protector and sovereign. Seen from that angle, US-led imperialism is liberal and selectively democratic at home and a practitioner of reinvented versions of obscurantism abroad. To be sure, the US dollars of the Gulf or any other state parked in US treasuries are *de-facto* those of the US treasury. Gulf dollars simultaneously funded Islamic Salafism and the Western educational institutions that sub-humanise Muslims as justification for the expansion of war. As opposed to being associated with the imperialism that reformulated it, Sharia law a vast and diverse body of knowledge reflecting the complexity of social life for centuries has been reduced to the selected brutalities associated with modern-day Salafists. A Gulf US-dollar worth of food in an Islamic world exposed to war and austerity buys the allegiance of many hungry folks.

In the 'blame game' of liberalism, capital reduces peripheral subjects to few traits of tradition from their multifarious culture. It lumps together diverse conventions into a single heading such as the Muslim, the African, the Arab. Not long ago, platitudes of this genre were the logic of fascism. It then politically and constitutionally empowers the select 'identitarian' whose jostling for rents tallies with imperialism's strategic goals. The capital in capitalism, unlike preceding historical stages, also commodifies everything in its way, and to do so it must homogenise the cultures of consumption. It requires a culturally differentiated but commodified sub-human to bomb, while at the same time, it requires of that sub-human to adore its line of latest luxury consumption items. For that goal, it melts the old boundaries between the old feudal-like

social divisions of labour, igniting intercommunal wars (Marx 1845). Only under capital, massacres that impose cultural homogenisation become standard practice. Since the accumulation of wealth by the bourgeois in each vertically structured identity group must expand by undermining the group's own working class as well as the working classes of the other groups, the fuelling of identity politics supressing class politics becomes the permanent inter-working-class war.

### 13 China Is Not Imperialist

To define imperialism by some of its symptoms rather than its dynamic is often the method used to characterise China as imperialist. However, the notion that China engages in FDI, lends, or sets up industry abroad, and therefore, it is imperialist, are characteristics equally shared by grocery-store chains. To flush out the true imperialist, one must associate control over space and time and capital flows or value transfers to the centre with military aggression. Imperialism as posited above is about the metamorphosed social type in the social relation of capital from the industrial class in the lead to finance in the lead.

Capturing a symptom from diverse phenomena that accords with one of Lenin's characterisations of imperialism, as in the concentration of capital, is not the same as defining imperialism by the intensifying dislocation attendant upon the law of value. Whether by citing the export of capital or the space upon which wealth concentrates, a definition of imperialism is lacking if it does not expound the determination of the class subject. The imperialist class mode of auto-reproduction is war centred. In imperialism, US military spending becomes an investment in aggression crucial to global accumulation and imperialist rents since it disarms the masses of the Third World. Contrariwise, setting up industry and infrastructure in the developing world, as China does, builds the host-country's productive capacity and empowers their masses. As such, China as historical subject is anathema to monopoly-finance imperialism. Comparing empirics with empirics, does not designate a threshold for the admission of new imperialists into the US-led club of imperialism. Wealth concentration flowing from imperialist aggression is the litmus test of the who's who of imperialism.

Imperialism accentuates the alienation of the social product from the social labour of Southern formations. More and more, the contradiction between value (socially necessary labour time) and use value, which resolves in exchange value, plays out as war. In imperialism, the transition from the social to the private, or from social wealth into private wealth is a condition of permanent war. The logic of war for profits corresponds to the observed

constancy of war. Although splicing the historical with the rational is cumbersome because the historical is more difficult to pin down than the logical (Ilyenkov (1961), the preponderant waste and war of Western civilisation facilitates the proof for the unity of the rational with the historical. With greater concentration and centralisation of capital, the objective commodity whose substance is objectified labour and whose governing relation is the law value magnifies into the waste. The delegated agent of the class hiding behind the commodity is the US–European coalition whose recent function is developing-state decapitation.

Against this tide, China remains in a position of self-defence. The encirclement of China culminating in the pivot to Asia and the hundreds of military bases ready to disrupt trade flows to China are afoot. In everyday practice, the US aggresses China: economically (tariffs and other measures), diplomatically (relations with Taiwan), politically (propaganda war) and geopolitically (China is said to be a national security threat). The propaganda war, especially the false human rights accusations that China abuses Muslims, is the US's latest subterfuge; oddly this comes from a centre whose ideology of austerity and war kills thousands of Muslims daily. Reasonably however, there are two points to recall. First, China is unstoppable because its growth is autonomous. Secondly, it is absurd to propose that China is imperialist when it supplements the capacity of peripheral formations and does not aggress the planet to drain its value through violently imposed unequal exchange.

Aside from Chinese debt held by foreigners being insignificant (Tsui et al. 2017; Wong et al 2017), China does not impose its currency as means of transaction to capture value through the barter or exchange terms of trade. China does exactly the opposite. At times, it is rather compelled to act against its own interest because as it circulates the dollar, it broadens the space in which the dollar trades, and with that the hegemony of the US in the sphere of finance. With the dollar being the world reserve currency and savings medium, China translates its trade surplus into physical assets fixated in the developing world, or it dumps its dollar surplus to avoid continued or abrupt US dollar-deflation. Just as it seized Russia's assets, the US could just confiscate China's dollar-savings with the stroke of a pen. Hakans and Hynes (2016) illustrate the concrete measures China takes to circumvent dollar risk, such as, buying gold, setting up alternative development banking and payment systems, and pricing trade in national currencies. Aside from the fact that the US may confiscate foreign reserves stored in its securities or deflate its dollar debts, based on a secular trend, holding a US currency to store wealth over the long term is irrational because on a secular trend the US dollar has been declining relative to other currencies.

The global money supply, with its fictitious capital component, namely dollar debt issued against the future that has yet to have a corresponding real

value, is mostly US debt. Only in the case of US imperial constellation does the dollar debt becomes the credit of the US-led capital class. Many currencies around the world are proxies of the US-dollar by their state of dependence. Furthermore, the astronomical rise in dollar supply (Hudson 2018; Tsui et al 2020) makes of it and its proxies the bulk of global fictitious capital and, at the same time, the outstanding money form of value. Despite China's ranking as the second biggest economy in nominal terms, it is overtaken money-wise by the combined dollar income sum of the US and its dependencies. Beside the dependencies, or countries too weak to issue sovereign currency, in the more developed world, the Europeans and the Japanese also lack sufficient sovereignty and shelter under the US security umbrella. Although Hudson (2022) thinks that 'what worries American diplomats is that Germany, other NATO nations and countries along the Belt and Road route understand the gains that can be made by opening up peaceful trade and investment,' impersonal capital, works otherwise – Europe shares in the power clout of the US and derive imperial rents thereof. It prioritises the politics of destruction or the domain of waste. Europe is a decisive constituent of impersonal capital. Its cultural heritage, namely the plunder driven by racism, is the crushing mass of history, is on loan to the US to lead. The dynamic of capital welded into its materially substantiated heritage is about the power to crush and grab. Without the primacy of power, none of the NATO ruling classes and their courtesans would be able to impose their terms upon the relations of global trade.

However, the strength of China is more significant than the sum of nominal dollar figures because as a production capable continent with improving standards of living registering higher purchasing power parity output than the US, its counterweight in the global balance structure acts as a centripetal force that undercuts the torrent of Western imperialism. China already lays control to the integrated production network and/or circuit of the commodity/use value chain, and it is inevitable that it will control the exchange value chain.<sup>11</sup> As argued in Kadri (2021), the reasons for China's inexorable rise lie in its freeing the value relation to increase productivity through assimilating the positive linkages of the global economy while keeping control of moneyed forms of value, technology repatriation and transfer channels. Most important to the success of China is the successful agricultural policy under Mao, which freed

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<sup>11</sup> Based on the relative weight of trading partner vis-a-via trading partners, a recent paper using mathematical techniques concludes that countries around the world have an interest in trading in Chinese yuan instead of dollar. Such is rather self-evident since China has already become the major trading partner of most countries. See *Dollar-Yuan Battle in the World Trade Network*, Célestin Coquidé *et al.* (2022) Arxiv, Cornell University <https://arxiv.org/abs/2211.07180>.

the state to finance development. The retention of wealth and the continued improvements in living standards since 1949 represent *ex post facto* proof that the Communist Party of China (CPC) was the embodiment of the masses in power. For Losurdo (1999), China remains steadfastly socialist and its 'social order ... is currently considered valid and presents itself as a kind of gigantic and expanded New Economic Policy (NEP). This is an NEP that has become harder to achieve because of globalisation and power relationships worldwide. Nonetheless, the program is quite conscious of the necessity to connect continually socialism, democracy, and the market with one another, and to transcend the crudely simplified notion of the homogeneity of the society it is attempting to build.' The NEP was Lenin's response to muster national forces, including the bourgeoisie, to repair the damage of the war and the invasion of 1919 that backed the counter-revolutionary forces. There was little industry left in Russia in 1921 (the end of the war), while the Soviet nation needed to build capacity/national security to avert further aggression by imperialist forces. The same could be said of China's undercapitalised economy after the Soviet Union decided to drop China for entente with the US in 1961. Retrospectively, Mao's position that peaceful co-existence with imperialism was self-defeating has been vindicated since the Soviet Union lost the cold war. At this juncture, the success of China's NEP in building capacity had put it beyond the reach of US's first strike capability.

Acting out its internal drivers, imperialism must aggress developing or competing formations. In such an imperialistically overwhelming context, the rise of China appears to defy history, whereas in reality, it is an accommodation of history, or better yet, a satiation of capital's unconscious side or its unrestrained demand for cheaper inputs; US-Europe threaten with Taiwan but lead delegations of businessmen to retain their interest in China. The failure of the US's policy of crowding in a US style 'democracy' in China demonstrates the strength of the ruling masses. In China, the state was in command of market reforms calibrated to respond to development and security needs. Communist China was the US's enemy and two wars in Korea and Vietnam were fought to curtail its immanent rise. As the US became a principal economic trading partner of China, the US policy maker thought its emergent wealthier capitalists would constitute an organised class that would seep into the system and alter the class structure, and as such, dismantle the rule of the CPC. True, there arose many rich people in China, but not a capitalist class with its own forms of organisation. A class, as argued in chapter three, is a state of being that reproduces through control of the means of production and the political forms of power. The class and national struggles of China are *ipso facto* co-aligned with internationalism. As China does well for itself, it attenuates the weight of the historical surplus value upon the globe. The individual bourgeois in China is

sub-ordinated to the national objectives, which are working-class objectives, since national security pre-determines development. The sociological type of the rich industrialist in China and his historical end or function is *ex-ante* decided by the national position vis-à-vis imperialism.

In the US, policy makers abided by reason of the commodity. That same rationale, which required the Soviet Union and China go separate ways in the early 1960's, would later attempt a disintegration of China by integrating it into its economic cycle. It is not too smart to envisage victory by dividing the enemy. Nonetheless, the commodity's drive to expand, especially, the subconscious side of accumulation pursued by the capital class, also required that the US tap into China's wealth and exploit assets, especially labour's applicabilities built by socialism. China's nationalist defences coinciding with working class strategy seized the potential in the historical undercurrent and reciprocated with sloganeering that lured the commodified business class. While the quarterly time horizon of the commodity laid down the policy horizon of US policy, China's horizon was dictated by the longer term social horizon and the strategy to enhance national defence. With a giddy imperialism after the defeat of the Soviet Union, China attracted the commodity-minded capital class by making available its cheaper-cost side. The polluted cities of China in the 1990's, which are now clean, are testimonies to the waste effect. China did answer the demands of capital, which is the exploitation of its vast resources; however, it did so in a controlled manner and always with the rule of labour within the party unscathed. Now the rule of labour in China is not the facile economism of hiking wages per more productive worker, which eliminates class struggle; The concern for wages is secondary to national defence concerns. In a developing context, raising defence capabilities to raise the calculated risks of empire in case it attacks is commensurate with the principal development measure. Development after all is a residual of the class struggle, which tallies with the sovereignty of the Third World nation. Circularly, the security of the nation imparts the security of the masses, which re-imparts the security-sovereignty of the state. Since imperialism is war, not wages but the betterment of military technology is the primary objective of the masses.

Once China dug its heels into the integrated production and trade networks of the global economy, the organised side of imperialism realised they reached the stage of no return. China is different from the Soviet Union because it is interwoven into the international basis of what it takes to reproduce humanity. It is not only because closing the technological gap in weaponization disconcerts US-led imperialism, but also because the West cannot easily rid itself of China, while China is its looming nemesis. Tracing the historical root of China's rise inevitably leads to Stalin's Eurasian project and his vision of a

Eurasian Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> It was the impetus of arming the communist resistance, successful agriculture, and industrialising the early stages of China's revolution, as opposed to reified symptoms of neoliberal market reforms, which truly launched China.

The social economy of China, with its model of sovereignty and self-reliance in essentials has already propagated by role-model contagion. It has borne out Abdel-Malek's (1981) position that the national liberation movements remain the fundamental matrix of social dialectics, or the primary route out of dependency. Curiously, China's development backed by its sovereignty revalorises upward its assets. No longer are Chinese wages and resources cheap, which incidentally shows how the terms of power influence the price and barter terms of trade. The sheer size of China and its investments in real capital abroad through the BRI encroach upon a *de facto* US-led capital owned world. One is reminded that US world hegemony is a form of control of world assets; control is *de facto* ownership. Under the cover of its nuclear deterrent, every country trading with China on fairer terms or scurrying for ties with China that hedge against imperialist waste is partly being lost by the US to China. If only by the demonstration effect, its model of sovereign development tears down the mythological edifice of European civilisation. China augurs the rise of the civilisation of world labour, and it is the first serious opposition to five centuries of capital's civilisation centred in the Western hemisphere.

#### 14 Reproduction by Waste

The question of whether the world is at the stage of barbarism or not depends on who is on the receiving-end of barbarism. To the battered masses, the glass may be half-full, but that half is full of waste, while the empty half is nothing. Nonetheless, the ongoing existential catastrophe leaves everyone on the receiving end, albeit, by the gradation of life-expectancy at birth. As pointed

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<sup>12</sup> Stalin's objective was to connect Asia with the Soviet Union in a greater Soviet commonwealth. The early support of the Soviet Union to the CPC is well known, few interesting telegrams from Mao Tse-tung to Stalin requesting assistance are scanned at the Wilson Center: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/17634>. In one letter, the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) was responding to advice from the Soviet Union to quickly liberate Xin-jiang and pre-empt British counter-revolutionary activity in the region. Even Kraus (2018) who dubs the liberation of Xin-jiang an invasion, rather than liberation from pro-imperialist forces, could not but show that the assistance of the Soviet Union was crucial to the early defeat of nationalist forces allied to imperialism. In 'How Stalin Elevated the Chinese Communist Party to Power in Xinjiang in 1949,' he concludes that the PLA victory 'couldn't have happened without the aid of the Soviet Union.'

to chapter one, society as well as nature do not develop in a gradual manner across time. They auto-differentiate and may undergo ruptures or revolutions. The natural as well as the social system could be thrown off balance by the collusion of differing causes acting together at contingent moments. In social ruptures, the historical conjunction may occur when the proletariat reads its emancipatory politics outside the prism of 'better US-European culture and its value theory,' and enroots its praxis in internationalism and an understanding of surplus value reconstituted by waste relations.

For the time being, the time and space remaining under the command of US-led imperialism, shrink by the rise of China. Naturally, socialists who were ideologically weakened may awaken to novel forms of organisation. In a world that requires violence as means to reproduce life under capital (Fanon 1967), those resigned to non-violent struggle may reclaim armed struggle. Yet, capital is aware that imperialism is a power game. The mainstream channels are awash with war frenzy. Anecdotally, Tony Blair voices concern over the ascent of China and blatantly speaks of the antecedence of European power to wealth. Unlike many Western Marxists, he recognises the contribution of bombing defenceless nations to imperial rents. John Bolton, the U.S. national security advisor (2018–2019), is not far off the mark when he facetiously remarked that there is one super-power, the US, and everyone's role in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is to limit its advance. No matter what concession or compromise an aggressed nation like Libya or Syria makes, US empire cannot take yes for an answer; it will inevitably aggress them. Aggression is an industry interwoven with accumulation. The imperialist class fulfils the mandate of the commodity as self-expanding waste, which must culminate in the evisceration of peripheral states.

To Lenin in (1915), the experience of war should stun and break the working classes at first, while calling them to anti-war activism later. These were different times and Lenin was right in his optimism then. However, unlike 1915, and with so many wars stretching across the time spectrum since, there is less reason for optimism at the current historical intersection. War has proven to be of great value to the Northern working classes partaking in imperialist rents. Instead of the '*action directe*' required in support of the South, the modern US left critiques the Pentagon for its high spare parts/toilet costs. The Pentagon paid '\$640 for toilet seats and \$7,600 for coffee makers,' and, by implication, it is wasteful and inefficient.<sup>13</sup> It escapes this 'left' that waste is the form of capital

<sup>13</sup> Another Banner Year for the Military-Industrial Complex, The Nation, February 2022, [https://www.thenation.com/article/world/weapons-spending-pentagon-2021/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Daily%2004.02.2022&utm\\_term=daily](https://www.thenation.com/article/world/weapons-spending-pentagon-2021/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%2004.02.2022&utm_term=daily)

and, at the same time, the purpose of capital. The efficiency of the Pentagon, its returns per unit of input/dollars poured in it are highest for finance, and the high price of toilet seats embeds within it a component of the under-priced wasted lives in the South. Since 1915 or, earlier in the sixteenth century, passing by the déclassé of Louis Bonaparte and the Chartists, the rents of imperialism have deepened the rifts of the working-class. The white class chiefly negotiates its shares from imperialist-rents which bears it as an organic constituent of capital; thence, the reasons for cautious optimism at this point of time.

The waste or, sub-categorically, the many years lost from potential longevity are, by extension, a structural genocide carried out by capital in command of history. The quantitative impact of the historically wired genocide may be gauged as a result of imperialistically imposed famine policies (Avramidis 2006). Its impact through underfunded health can also be assessed by extending Sutcliffe's (2006) measures of unnecessary deaths. The numbers of the victims crushed by the weight of history is in the millions every year. Still, this capital, of which one speaks, is a social class that cannot be sliced like a salami sausage in order to apportion moral condemnation to its various slivers. No class-independent ethical value-comparative judgment can be made about the parts while skipping the decisiveness of the whole. From a working-class angle, value *qua* capital as a totality is amoral (Lukács 1952), while from capital's angle, it is moral on account that it harms the least numbers when harm is inescapable.

What is often intended when the curtailment of civil liberties in a small dependent nation is flaunted by the mainstream media as unethical or *contra* human rights often develops into an excuse for the sacking of the smaller nation. However, whatever restrictions Libya imposed on political freedoms were in response to an impending assault by the US sixth fleet, or the US-sponsored Islamists inside its territory, yet these restrictions were considered as valid reasons for its destruction by NATO in 2011. In hindsight, the fact that the white working class supports such obvious lies does not stem from ignorance, it is rather a personification of a capital-class position. Even in utilitarian ethics, brakes upon Libyan civil liberties by the Qaddafi government were a more humane working-class standpoint than the destruction that followed and the contribution of the collapse of Libya to the power of imperialism. In any case, ethics based on statistics are a calculus of crime.

Similarly, it is theoretically salami-like to speak of this or that sub-imperialism as central capital's undelegated power. History identifying with capital is not a salad whose constituent forces are to be discerned by some probabilistic exercise. As one assigns subjective probabilities to several factors leading to an outcome, every epiphenomenon may be derived from lateral phenomenon. Again, appearances explain appearances without mediation or the who done it.

By means of statistical extrapolation as well, percentage shares of wealth concentration would logically and, albeit absurdly, turn anyone into a sub-imperialist. Any sizeable state in a given region becomes sub-imperialist. It all depends on the class bent in the mode of abstraction, the dynamic laws that relate the abstract state of a concept to its concrete state, and the accounting system with which it is quantified.

Contrariwise, capital incarnate in an imperialism, which commands history, is a totality. Since it is hierarchically structured in dominance, its lower suzerainties' exercise of power is made possible, though not necessarily certain, by the clout of US imperialism. It is specifically the crushing weight of this clout, the weapons of NATO backed by its propaganda apparatuses, which is not qualified as a weapon by Western Marxism; thence, the room that is available for academics to nuance an argument and discuss what the other side in the developing world is doing wrong while it is being butchered by the very dominant thought currents housing nuanced debates. Understanding the historical moment, the assessment of the actual balance of forces, has not been a strong point of Western Marxism (slightly rephrasing of Krupskaya's in the Lessons of October [1925]). The substance of the power of the ruling class or US-led imperialism is its capacity at ideological production, refortified by its strategic positioning and aggressions across the globe. Dominant thought is the differing currents that gravitate toward the reason of the commodity as self-expanding value. Putting structure to thought, the global stratum invested in dollars increases its wealth as the US-led class collateralises its dollar debts/credits with imperialist aggression/control, which is also its ability to recruit labour in bondage conditions and to further waste the future labour of the developing world.

The masses act via the agency of the social class and its corresponding state of consciousness. Social humans think for themselves but draw from a dominant ideology whose strength varies with class rule, before embarking on a course of action, whence the uncertainty in historical uncertainty. In parallel, the control of capital over the means of production establishes the objectivity of history. Determinably, historical events, objective and uncertain, lie beyond the reach of probability's guesswork. Yet this history cloned as capital, the product of organised social agency actualised in cultural and institutional practices, has its own dynamic or laws of development. The law of value, and its ascension into the AGLCA, is the principal mediatory frame by which global society reproduces. Such law allocates resources primarily by the practice of imperialist wars of encroachment. And, as argued so far, imperialist wars are a wage system in themselves and act as back-stoppers of the broader wage system. In comparison to Malthusian analysis, which speaks of overpopulation

in relation to welfarism leading to moral degeneracy and higher population pressure, the Marxian wage system is theoretically far more devastating in its impact upon society because population reduction is intrinsic to the system (Malthus was critical of policies that aided the poor). Marxism posits that an overproduction crisis characteristic of an objective history imposes the creation of the reserve army of labour as a condition of accumulation. The principal capital-labour contradiction appears as the capital-population contradiction, in which the winnowing of the population winnows the stock of labour power to the demands of accumulation. For Malthus, welfare could reverse to avert the excess population butchering itself, while for Marx, the butchery is itself the bedrock of accumulation.

Additionally, and as argued thus far, the industry of wasting the reserve army of labour ties into wage deflation and implies permanent depopulation. The upshot of that wage system or, when waste as production is taken into account, transpires in the fact that living labourers consume not only the objectified labour of other humans, but literally the wasted lives of other humans, as in war, or objectified in commodities. Accordingly, while classes are expressed in social structures, the structure of the North, always with the help of its lackeys down South, cannibalises the South.

The estrangement of history, its alienation from responsible social control, emerges in dominant cultural strands and resigned attitudes. One bogus explanation is the allegedly inherent psychological death drives of humanity, but that is too off the scale to ponder to the allegedly inherent psychological death drives of humanity. Under capital, the necessary law of destruction as value unleashed becomes reason for social reproduction and abounds as destruction for the sake of destruction. The only glimmer through the impending threat is as Ilyenkov theorised, and it arises *when reason appears in the universe as the inverse process to entropy, or as a challenge to doom*. The high social entropy setting on course a similarly high metabolic rate of social de-reproduction ought to spur the elimination of private property and reorganise man and nature. However, under the prevalence of meliorism, religious eschatology and despondency breeding the absurdities of bourgeois social psychoanalysis (like mass death-wish), the ongoing calamity may yet stun and break more people than those enlightened and tempered (the reverse of what Lenin expected in [1915]). That is so because history or the concomitant of the class struggle, with a US-led imperialist blind to the subconscious of the commodity, reproduces by exponential waste. As living labour produces itself as dead labour, the rate of exploitation associated with wasted living labour counteracts the tendency of falling profit rates. Consequently, capital requires more cheaper inputs of social nature per unit of output. By squashing nature and the lives of people

against its constructed market or identity subtended conflicts, capital interlaces waste processes with all the phases of global accumulation. To not raise to prominence to the issues of premature death by neoliberal austerity, or genocides in Rwanda, the Congo, Yemen and Iraq by militarism, and the destruction of states, is to presume that these states are failed projects whose output, principally their dead, fetch little prices as they are realised (sold and consumed in complex price systems and asymmetric time). The value of the dead cannot be construed on the basis of their puny money form at which their dollar-cheap labour power traded in their puny dollarised-economies. The contribution of structural genocide only appears cheap in money terms because, as per the run of the mill principle, money is the fetish that conceals their true value to capitalist profits. Millions of lives appear to have perished for picayune dollar amounts, when in actuality, it is the death as product of the sophisticated machines of war and their costs, which create much value; it is the value imparted by compression of life in death of living labour in the developing nation *bonded* to war industries that is the relation at the source of wealth. Labour, by the condition of its very demise in the industry of war, is both productive and the raw material/output of war production. War after all produces dead people for a price. As argued in chapter three, the high costs *become* revenues US militarism, which produces the dead with living labour, raises exploitation and counterbalances the dampening impact of the rising organic composition of capital upon the rates of surplus value – a time bound law conditional upon realisation. To add meaning to the previous proposition, the value relayed by living labour *transmuted* into the dead poor, the value reified in the corpses, like any commodity, realises in many implicit and explicit prices across the time spectrum. These implicit and explicit prices, past and future prices, *are the result of the social action* of waste and war, which add up as actual and potential moneyed wealth in the coffers of capital. The million dollar drone is not only killing an Arab whose income over his lifecycle is no more than 10,000 US dollars; here, the killing act itself is an activity that earns the financial class more than the one million invested in the drone. Value making is a social and historical activity and only after intermittent gestation periods an entry on the ledgers of finance. The legerdemain of wars as burden to empire persists only because broad strata in the North cannibalise the South.

As argued in the previous chapter, equating the sum of the values of commodities to the sum of the prices they command at any given point and in a given nation over a specific span of time is a faulty measure of total value. Such depends on the espoused system of accounts, which, under capital's utilitarian principles, amounts to something from nothing, or there is no social labour inputted in production across history behind the wealth. In such accounts, whatever one finds at the shelf in the storers is supply or production given in the

price of the item without a history of the item's making process. In relation to militarism, it would seem that the US military intervention abroad was unnecessary to reduce the price of the item by weakening its subject. Militarism does not seem to reduce the negotiating power of aggressed nations, and therewith the costs of capital to raise its profits. In utilitarian accounts, the pounding of a weaker nation, which in actuality registers as value and for a price, was not a pre-condition for profits to emerge. Sure enough, the industry of war integrates the different national spaces upon which it operates. It homogenises the level of development in the productive forces between aggressor and aggressed. In the case of the US, the factory space of the war industry is the globe. Without the outlays on war psychology, war preparedness and expenditure, which include social spending boosting national character at home and paying for paving the grounds for the engagement of a developing country in war abroad, the supply chain of war, and with it, the supply chain of all commodities, gets disrupted. That society is a war machine, as per the Deluzian on position leaves out imperialist war as an industrial process. For Deleuze (2011) markets are universal but not universalising and through its many centres in many states, generate wealth and misery. There surface the rhizomic counter-image of diluted imperialism; there also surfaces the notion of the state as a form independent of periodised historical circumstances.<sup>14</sup> Suffice it to say that Deleuze follows with a parochial indictment of states since 'there is no democratic state that is not compromised to the very core by its part in generating human misery.' Capitalist states organise markets and are instruments of markets. A capitalist market is universal; however, it is not states in charge of markets that generate 'both wealth and misery.' On the contrary, markets objectively homogenise labour, while the leading imperialist states counterbalance the objective tendency at the behest of capital, always by restructuring the power divide in their favour through war. Of note here: markets are never abstract. They are not formal markets that ideally equalise wages when they expand, since neoclassical economics also says that as a way to idolise markets. Markets as predicate institutions of the state institution are means of enrichment in which the rate of profit must exponentially undermine living conditions. The law of labour homogenisation equally exists in its inversion, or to counter the wage-equalising tendencies of the market that grind down profits. That all states are to blame because their practice is 'shameful' without defining the structure of power and the role of war in social reproduction misses the vertical decision making structure. States are forms of capital, which reflect the gradated power

<sup>14</sup> Deleuze J (2011) Control and Becoming, The Funambulist, <https://thefunambulist.net/editorials/philosophy-control-and-becoming-a-conversation-between-toni-negri-and-gilles-deleuze>

of capital in the international division of labour, otherwise, with such Kantian moral equivalence, the enslaved nation becomes equally responsible with the enslaving nation. On the social reproduction side, war is the leading knowledge and production sharing economy. Just like the negotiations to set up a corporate factory abroad, the US war machine also sets up its downstream affiliates, the embassies that double for espionage stations, the NGO's, the Peace-Corps, etc., and the social divisions for its wars abroad. It must conscript willing and unwilling bonded-labour in its war projects. The predeterminate condition of global accumulation is war and the gearing for war.

However, what registers as war-abroad related income in US GDP is not the cascading prices of war related activities across the globe. What registers is only the amount of war-sale items, incomes of personnel affiliated with war, or the incomes with which these items were bought and sold in the US. US income from abroad is represented by the small share of incomes of US national from overseas activity, which are tabled in Gross National Income (GNI). With an accounting system tailored to let US income appear as if it is all of national origin by restrictions on time and spatial connections, the contribution of war and waste, more generally, to the interlocked system of waste production contribution to US income, disappears.

Moreover, the social activity of pounding labour is an historical event whose appearance in the money-form of capital registers by the coincidence of the uncertainty with the necessity of history (the event) rather than by some stationary time series with statistical lags. Waste output varies as if each event constituting waste as value-added activity in the past is independent of the previous level of output, whereas waste like any commodity is dependent upon the power of capital to exhume or bury the effects of past waste events. The necessary social labour time of waste events is reified/realised in waste commodities and hidden from view, until history or class struggle decides otherwise. The waste events are the successive poundings of labour determined by the prioritisation of politics, ensuring the rule of capital, set against short term profits. These waste production activities gel in prices or are implicit or non-synchronic in systems of interconnected prices across the spectrum of time. Like all other symbols, prices are diachronic and synchronic with the commodity as a self-differentiating continuum supporting social reproduction. For instance, the coke-can is a soft drink with a price at this point and medical bill down the line with another price. By the combined effects of overdetermination, uncertainty and recursiveness (the interdependency of factors), wars of past times and wars of the future (the pounding) are at play through the market to influence prices. Their products may be backgrounded but assume one money form or another. For instance, US GDP, tables the sale

and wages of an F35 jetfighter and its pilot at work engaging indigent labour on the ground who perish on the job of self-defence against a US war machine; however, that fighter sale and pilot wages are price mark-ups, which appear as such only because of the implicit presence of the input and output of wasted-life production. These inputs and outputs, the living labourers becoming dead labourers on the ground, are not on the invoice of final jet sale price and jet pilot wage although they are logical predicates and actual inputs in the making of value. In social reproduction terms, the impact of the cheap wage share of labouring victims on the ground over their shorter lifecycle is missing as value constituent in their contribution to output or GDP. Since US-European armies erect the power platforms behind trade, what is also missing are the structural pressures of the dead as under-priced commodities upon the prices of all other commodities. To re-valorise the dead, to price the necessary labour robbed by capital, and re-include that power as a symbolic money quantity in output, is to project a more complete picture of output.

The time-uncertain events of wasted social nature and their silenced contribution to output are what makes the difference in price mark-ups over prices of production and, therefore, the foundation of imperial rents. The waste events widen the gap between necessary and surplus labour. Likening price to value without assuming that value is a historical relationship in which the pounding of labour is the industry that forms the continuum of surplus value and by intermediation, its profit money form instantiations, elides concrete totality.

Recalling that because the terms of power set the terms of trade, capital freely reassesses the value magnitude in price of the commodity through the market platforms it designs to drain more value per price. The production of wasted humans occurs at the initial stage and at every stage in the production process. Wars or related labour coercion processes are what detaches the actual commodity, be it life of labour or the product of labour, from its historical subject, the working class. In the early stages of capitalism, the stage of colonial plunder and slavery, waste through commercial exploitation launches value out of the commodification and liquidation of life. In the imperialist stage, this negative dialectic persists as such and assumes phenomenal proportions relative to the times. The chimerical account of capital, a picture of things in still time, veils social de-reproduction. It more precisely inters in the rubble of its fetishes the social cost of labour's reproduction, or the value proper. Waste as a form of capital revitalises the relations necessary for the law of value to cut loose. Thence, the de-sovereignisation of developing nations, their cultural evisceration and de-subjectification, to relegate them to stone-age-like conditions by bombing

and sanctions, altogether minimise necessary labour and, conversely, raise the surplus value. These measures minimise an already minimal necessary labour time. Simultaneously, the generalisation of the waste activity, commodityfication and the mobilisation of idle people and assets to be wasted, broaden the scope to industrial scale waste and increase surplus labour.

In the absence of anti-systemic struggles, the waste form of value reinfuses the global value chain with the defeatism of labour. The ripple effect pressures the global wage-share downwards while augmenting the power gaps between the wasteful classes and those who are wasting away. The masses supposedly idle in some desert and unexploited by capital, but bombed, become the masses most exploited by capital. They are the labour whose minimal social cost of reproduction, which is of equivalent natural value in social reproduction across the globe, is borne out in minimal moneyed form by their national formations. They cost little to keep alive in their home countries, and such little cost pushes down the costs of labour everywhere. Their bondage to the waste industry consumes the value of their lives reduced to labour power in the shortest possible durations. Aside from their minimal moneyed costs that breed super profits, the value associated with the waste of life in the South is a peridacte of capital. Such logical and actual predication in an organic social production totality situates waste in the ontology of capital. Quantifying value in thousands or billion of dollars is just a side exercise to the fact that without the waste of life capital cannot exist. To theorise the value contributed by the Third World as low in money form because their wages in their homelands are cheap, or their products sell for low prices, is the sort of valuation that becomes received theory by the power of US aircraft carriers.

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## Waste Is at the Origin of Capital

Although commodified man in Roman slavery may have been an embryonic circumstance of capital (Emmanuel 1972), it was not until the sixteenth century that world development came to be governed by the capital relationship and its adjunct commodity. The debate on whether it was the internal contradictions of Europe or the external contradictions of a newly integrated world system that launched capitalism culminated in a theoretical discussion on the origin of capitalism and, its offshoot, the controversy over the modes of production. Frank (1978) observed the transformation to capitalism in Europe was regarded by many, specifically Dobb (1946), as a product of internal European contradictions since Marxism held that internal contradictions determined external ones. Although by the sixteenth century the world economies joined together in a world economy (Wallerstein 1974 and 2004), for adherents of the internal contradiction thesis, it was the development of the wage system in Europe, which in like fashion to the universe emerging from the Big Bang, replicated itself across the globe.

That internal contradictions hold determinacy over external ones for Marxism may best be illustrated by Mao Tse-tung's (1937) allegory: 'with equal external heat applied to an egg and a stone, a chicken emerges from the former and nothing from the latter - because of their different internal compositions.' However, as the world becomes 'a single world capitalist system,' Frank notes that such unity 'renders the question of the internality or externality of the determination, at least of this process itself, irrelevant and unanswerable.' He also argues based on Marx's *Grundrisse* (1863) that when the ascendancy of the internal relations of production over external relations of exchange is considered subject to realisation or expanded reproduction and accumulation, or as capital subverts use value to the benefit of exchange value, then necessarily capital requires circulation as a moment of production to realise itself as capital. Marx (1894) had in advance erred on the side of Frank as he avers that 'the expansion of foreign trade, although the basis of the capitalist mode of production in its infancy, has become its own product, however, with the further progress of the capitalist mode of production, through the innate necessity of this mode of production, its need for an ever-expanding market.'

Although trade/exchange on its own does not produce new value, this chapter attempts to show that the trade in the skins of the natives, slavery and butcheries in the colonies were value processes or waste industries whose products, the deaths created by the waged labour/waged naval soldiers were

the commodities that founded capital then and continue to be the principal domain of accumulation to this day. It will focus on the commercial exploitation or the *modus operandi* side of primitive accumulation as the principal social activity, which threw the more developed East into the lower ranks of the global social order of capital. It is a faux problematic to posit that Europe made it into capitalism because of some intrinsic quality that others do not share. Capital is a social relationship of control and once it comes into existence in a world integrated by the gun, it becomes universal and further integrates the world into a hierarchically ordered system to siphon wealth to the victors. The exclusion from development is capital's private property relation, which is itself an industry of waste.

The demolition of African civilisation and the transformation of humans into commodities for sale as slaves was a primary process of production with which the wages of war effort/industry reconstituted value. At this juncture, imperialism continues to war against whole states in order to partially or fully commodify humans and resources. The premature deaths and the death of the trenches are overlooked activities and predicates of capital equally intense as the forms of commercial exploitation in slave cotton plantations. Theoretically, trade is not sub-sequential to value making activity. Capital does not only create the cotton garment as value in the factories of England and then sells it abroad, it also creates the dead native and the slave as value alongside the garment, and before and after the garment. The dialectical unity of exchange and use value in production is social time determined, or once the European ship sets sail to capture slaves or slaughter natives, its activity is value objectified in the corpse-commodity and its exchange or trade simultaneously realised in the earnings attached to the butchery. Once capitalist production relations loom, there cannot be trade without trade being a culmination of some of use value realised in exchange.

To rework Mao's example, in the totality that is the world system, it was not the egg that hatched the chicken, it was the heat applied to the egg, or the violence of primitive accumulation, which mediated the egg into the chicken – the capital of slavery that grew into capitalism. The plunder as exercise of commercial exploitation is intrinsic to primitive accumulation, and it is what Europeans across the globe undertook as an industry in itself and as a *pedestal* to all other industries (Pedestal as used by Marx [1894]). In line with this argument, in the newly integrated world system, it was not English agriculture that experienced the rising productivity, which consolidated capitalism (Wood 2002), it was the war and waste domains of accumulation. Estimates based on Jaffe (1980) put the value contribution of slavery in European output at several folds the European share, while the death toll of European expansion (estimated based in Jaffe) between 1500 and 1900 is at around 400 million

people. Whatever the margin of error in the figures, the slaughters were the realisation of private property as capital's novel production relation and the reason without which capitalism cannot exist. Victims of capital's structural or immediate genocides in the twentieth century are in the hundreds of millions. Accordingly, waste production manifest through commercial exploitation was the genus of capital in the primitive accumulation phase, and it continues to be the central activity of capital to date.

Given the breadth of the topic, I will only selectively address issues of historiography or historicity and namely from Islamic history; rather, I will deal with the methods that assessed how the growth of the East, integrated through the trade routes passing through the Islamic world, which stretched from China to India, was brought to a halt by advancing Europe. Either in the Mediterranean, the Eastern seas or through the land routes of Eurasia, the Islamic world was the knot in merchant trade that tied the world together. Stretching from China to India and passing by Africa, relevant examples of development in the Islamic world will be chosen to address the problematic of this chapter. More pertinently, I will pay special attention to the historical events that alerted the global class balances catapulting the wasting class into the leadership of history. In particular, Spain's and Portugal's pursuit of wealth has had definitive implications upon the recentring of capital on the European continent. The many battles fought over control of Eastern trade sea routes, Diu in 1509 and 1531, East Africa 1585–1589, the Malacca Straits 1565–1571, in addition to European superiority in the Mediterranean Sea dating back to the times of the crusades, these and other Islamic defeats have cut off the East from the benefits of burgeoning sixteenth century trade. The East integrated with capital more so at the receiving end of the assaults that complete the novel production relation rather than the giving end, which Europe enjoyed. Whereas Eastern/Islamic history has abounded with merchant trade, and major cities of the East flourished or declined by the rhythm of long-distance trade (Amin 1976), European choking of major trading ports and routes, coinciding with the inter-Mongolian conflicts interrupting the Eurasian land-route corridors, necessarily meant that wealth created by capital came to be concentrated in Europe. To this date, US-European supremacy in the Atlantic, the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean still implies that the US can position its navy across most world metropolis and impose its terms of trade by gunboat policy. Capital continues to expand by its inherent predisposition to commodify and waste social nature.

The wealthier East did not obstruct the development of commerce, yet it has fallen behind Europe. Keeping in mind that the political map of Europe changes over time, and that history is not a sports race with a beginning and an end, the problematic should not be put as who came first or second. Capital

weaves itself into the way the *integrated* world reproduces. Like any historical event, capital assumed its phenomenal appearance as an overdetermined event whose time asymmetric and recursive causes coincide to resolve in the necessity of its birth. An adequate understanding of capital's coming into existence, as opposed to an understanding based on a ludicrous historiography immersed in unnecessary details, requires and adequate understanding of the balance of the class struggle at the time of its appearance in the sixteenth century. Reading into the admixture of production relations tallying or negating the development of the productive forces is the same as reading the class balance of forces as it develops into a subject of history. The objective and coincidental events coalescing in the sixteenth century were clutched by Europe, the class relation as subject. Thence, the historical subject, which converted the pre-capitalist mode of production into capitalism was the flux of the class struggle at the time with its bent for the absolute and relative destruction of Eastern development. The new production relation of private property under capital amounted to the formula 'waste to own and own to waste.'<sup>1</sup> Long before Veblen defined the right to ownership as the right to sabotage (as explained

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<sup>1</sup> Absolute private property or, more specifically, land as a commodity, emerged as the embryonic relation of capital. Private property may be traced back to pillaging activities whose purpose was to accumulate wealth. The most pronounced of such activities were the crusades, which occurred before the rise of capitalism in Europe. In that sense, the rise of private property in land or land exchangeable for money was a historical process as opposed to a bright idea. It pre-staged and institutionalised capital and its production relations, and conversely, capital's private property relation required the work of the state and similar institutions to spread. Foundationally, for land to become an identifiable commodity, there has to be monetisation, not only in terms of widespread use of money for transactions, but an economy that grows by the provision of credit and an ideology of absolute private property. Historically, the right to landed property went from feudal control often by some divine fiat to ensure subsistence, to the right of a person to exclude others from subsistence. Land becomes a commodity when its purpose to sell overtakes its purpose to satisfy human need. In Islamic jurisprudence, which is closely related to Roman/Syriac law, the concept of individually owned property existed, and it was called *mulk*. Like Roman law, in Islamic law land areas were excluded from commerce (Yan 2004). The supposition existed that land could be demarcated, parcelled, and individually owned but not exchanged for money. Many persons had the right of use of that land, which involved for instance primary harvest or gleaning (Mundy 2010); however, for a person to deny the right of use and access and exchange, that power over the land for money, is a condition that arose as the seminal activity of capitalist production relations. While rights and access to land use differ, conceptually it is the relation between dominium and land use (the right to expel) which foregrounds the emergence of monetised and exchangeable private property in land. Such absolute private property was introduced in the colonies first where the capital had a freer hand (Tierney 1997). With regards to colonial experiments, exchangeable private property in land was more advanced

in chapter 2), such systemic waste production relation was the predicate that grew into capital. In this process, Europe as the transpiration of the waste *qua* capital relation started with the advantage of having beaten its competitors. Its wars of aggression remain the primal subject relation by which the contemporary formations of US-Europe reproduce capital.

European conquests, beginning prior to the onset of capitalist relations, and direct plundering increased the wealth of European merchant capital, limited the expansion of Eastern merchants, and situated the command structure of the emerging capitalist production relations on the European continent. The thesis that European conquests positioned the command structure of capital in Europe entails the following. Since capitalist production relations promulgated throughout the globe by the leading relations of conquerors, these necessarily but not exclusively sublate or suspend all other pre-capitalist relations. They order the operations of pre-capitalist relation in ways that conform to capitalist production relations. With universal capital, the differences between European and Eastern modes of production become questions of appearances whose essence, the subordination to the law of value, is similar.

The Marxist tradition acknowledges that the exclusion of the colonies from development is the nub to the capital relation because exclusion is the nub of private property (Marx 1867; Emmanuel 1972). The slaughter of natives was not an addendum to some more pivotal step in European productivity that will later gel in the industrial revolution; the slaughter was the dynamic relation, which is capital, self-actualising – the social activity rebecomes social relation or class as subject (drawing on Ilyenkov [1974] and other writings). That so because the extractive industry of capital is also extractive of human lives. Humans commodified to have their lives extracted from them is the seminal value making activity of capital.

With much of the planet laid to waste, there is not much to be proud of in the achievements of capitalism. However, value-judging historical development by selective comparisons between East and West is immaterial to reading the onset of capitalist social relations. Critiquing the fetishism born with capital and the endogeneity *cum* alienation of technology intended for violence explicates the accumulation of waste. Moreover, to prove what has already been debated and accepted is redundant. Also, to shed light on some novel conditions by logical proof is superfluous. To highlight the observed phenomenon

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in the colonies, while changes to property in the European homelands remained more conservative (Guha 1996; Ronsbo 1997)..

of waste as the new form of value and argue that waste was by the intrinsic redefinitions of capital its ontological state or the condition for being of capital from the very start is knowledge-valuable. In the main, this chapter retraces the evolution of capital as waste and builds on the concept of waste as the new form of value developed so far.

## 1 Development Redefined

Before proceeding, I will briefly digress with three sections on the history of development and reconsider the putative assumption that capitalism was progressive and developmental. Set against the current state of a fast-decaying social nature, development defined as the resultant of the class struggle informs that labour has lost to capital. The development of the productive forces under capitalism, technology in particular, gauged against the wellbeing it could impart relative to the damage it has inflicted, turned out to be more of a weapon against man and nature than any other stage in history. Contextualising technology and progress in social time shows that with puny resources precapitalist formations were more rational in rationing resources, thence, progressive and less wasteful than capitalism. Yet all one hears is capitalism ushers progress. That is so because the comparison is dynamic time or process independent and, more so than any other discipline, the study of development is blatantly ideological. To be sure, dominant ideology perverts the facts. It instils the perversions as truth of the nature of things and in the methods people fathom their conditions of being with.

The modern study of development arose as a subdiscipline of economics. It inherited the wartime optimism about the world-changing potential and the belief in economics as a science (Toye 2012). Prior to the mid-twentieth century, the study of development was known as the economics of the colonies. As fewer and fewer colonies remained in the grip of Western empires, colonial economics assumed the name development economics. When the Cold War peaked, development studies reflected the political polarisation between the two opposing camps. In mainstream thought, development piggybacked the private sector fuelling economic growth, and through the invisible hand or trickle down, it spreads welfare to society. In Marxist thought, development amounted to improvement in the living conditions alongside a sustainable environment that the masses obtain through class or national liberation struggles. As such, development could not be compartmentalised into some disciplinary approach because it is no less than the study of the class relationships that spawn progress or the opposite thereof.

The discussion of the two opposing models reverberated onto the field of political philosophy in a tug of war between equality of condition, the equity required for equality or the Soviet model, and equality of opportunity, or the US model in which modest initial resources do not preclude vertical social mobility. In the choice between the right to food and the voting booth, the analytical approach missed the point that the vote was organised by capital and its fetishes. In other words, the voting booth itself, the thing as hypostatisation of the social will of Western working classes is in command of Western society. The debate would deliver the treatise on all-round development on the Soviet and non-aligned movement side, and the choice theoretic framework on the US side. Social choice welfare, in its individualistic-probabilistic approach bereft of historical necessity, overlooks the objective currents of imperialism that leave the majority without choices, which is practically the world. Neglecting necessity as the mediation of simultaneously concrete and coincidental social flux, manifest in the phenomenon of the choice-less majority, and selectively assembling human development indices that vary with convention, cohered with conservative political proclivities. Abstract, as opposed to social individualism, grounds the social schizophrenia apparent in the inflated 'T' of consumerism. It elevates the personal lifestyle into a state of idolatry, which overconsumes man and nature, while making idols of commodities as well as every social being. Rational choice theory formally demonstrates the blatantly impossible: individuals apart cannot build welfare. Aside from being a logical casuistry, Arrow's impossibility theorem (1950), which proves that community-wide ranked preferences cannot be determined by converting individuals' preferences (welfare is not the sum of preferences), misses the obvious point that capital is a *dictator* that homogenises people as well as standardise their choices by its very nature. Capital commodifies and renders people into automaton-like consumers. Salient consumer confidence indices serve to meter the capacity of capital to herd labour; by extrapolation, these are measures of the rate of human commodification. What the ideological bent of rational choice does is obscure class as subject of history and the social contradictions constituting the laws of development. It omits the real impossibility that the wealth flaunted by the few cannot be similarly made available to everyone or the majority.

After the defeat of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's, the triumph of the capitalist model was sealed as science. Developing nations threw out old socialist or nationalist-capitalist strategies in favour of full-blown neoliberalism. Empiricism parading as theory, the positivism of the neoclassicals, de-historicised development. The quantification of social variables without regard to their historical content removed from view the surplus transfers from

ex-colonies to Empire. A whole history of Third World and indigenous development and a wealth of knowledge that developing societies amassed in the past was discarded and replaced with a European value system rooted in racial, identity politics or cultural superiority.

The reasons why mainstream economics adopts a position of historical development as growth of markets is to conceal how changes in the underlying social structures reconstitute markets as different forms and functional contents across history. Could today's level of human and physical asset under-utilisation obtain in the feudal age with society still managing to overproduce? Not so, is the obvious answer. When so many of the poorest and war-assaulted countries in the world are Muslim countries, one must ask how their Western-comprador debilitation carried out by violent means, the relations of exclusion from development and waste, have contributed to global accumulation. Islamic historical development is not a linear process devoid of dynamism. It is presented as such by European conquerors in order to brand European capitalism as the sole bearer of progress to humanity. Comparing progress over millennia between East and West is illusory. History is read to influence the present, and the only reason such a comparison would be entertained is to justify the elimination of some version of the noble savage as the just price for progress. This elimination of the savage was the waste industry then and it is with us at this juncture in time. To re-emphasise, to bomb children in order to bring about Western-style democracy creates surplus value and trades on the financial markets for trillions, which best illustrates the endurance of primitive accumulation as the waste writ large tenet.

## 2 The Origins of Equity in Development

Possibly, the earliest places to develop into sedentary cultures with a writing system are in present-day Arab Mashriq (Although any society must for existential reasons develop a system of morality and welfare, Ancient Syria and Mesopotamia had inscribed in Cuneiform some of their thoughts on the issue). The area at the end of the Great African Rift Valley known as the Fertile Crescent was a natural gathering ground for domesticable animals; it enjoyed regular rainfall and a variety of easily cultivable cereals, and it represents an early model of the first agricultural revolutions. The good soil quality of Iraq circa 2000 BC produced about the same tonnage of barley as in early 1970s (Hilou 2004). The steady development of tools and modes of social organisations required regulation of trade and the pacification of the labouring class.

Measures for trade and laws to attenuate repression and limit the appetite of the clergy signify the first set of written rules intended to maintain the course of development: the reforms of Urukagina (2400 BC), of which fragments remain profess calls for justice and the protection of the poor, while the more preserved Code of Ur-Nammu (2100 BC) speaks of laws that promote social welfare. The latter code addresses three vital points: the ruling on weight for trade, a limit to what the clergy could extract in tribute, and a statement ensuring the protection of the vulnerable from the transgression of the powerful. These codes are at the origin of the notion 'Just Man' of the East, as distinct from 'Rational Man' of the West (al-Alawi 2009):

In accordance with the true word of Utu, set the monthly temple expenses at 90 gur of barley, 30 sheep, and 30 sila of butter ... the bronze sila-measure, standardised the one-mina weight, and standardised the stone weight of a shekel of silver in relation to one mina ... The orphan was not delivered up to the rich man; the widow was not delivered up to the mighty man; the man of one shekel was not delivered up to the man of one mina. (Ur-Nammu, c. 2100 BC) (from Real History Worldwide no date)

Stripped of mystique, justice may have been often the pretence with which class societies pacified slave labour. The codes did not relieve rulers from the pressure of rebellions; it was still an era characterised by frequent disobedience countering the repression of the polity (Hilou 2004). The recurrence of rebellion and the quelling of uprisings were events that also filtered into the myths of Sumerians. In Atra-Hasis, mainly a flood myth with a creation side-story circa 1800 BC, humankind was brought into being by angry gods to replace rebellious labouring angel-workers (Atra Hassis, as compiled by Lambert *et al.* 1999). In this myth, the man who replaced the angel is moulded from the flesh and blood of a revolutionary archangel whose ideas would continue to instigate the labouring class into mutiny. Man by godly predisposition was inherently boisterous and rebellious. Four centuries later, the Code of Hammurabi, often interpreted literally rather than metaphorically as eye for eye, further expanded the Ur-Nammu's demands for justice, the right to trade and the protection of civil and property rights.

To bring about the rule of righteousness in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evildoers; so that the strong should not harm the weak, and enlighten the land, to further the wellbeing of mankind. He referred to himself as the shepherd of the oppressed and of the slaves, and ordered

that these my precious words be written upon his memorial stone, before his image that the strong might not injure the weak, in order to protect the widows and orphans ... in order to bespeak justice in the land, to settle all disputes, and heal all injuries. (Hammurabi, c. 1750 BC; King 1915)

In comparison to the Code of Ur-Nammu, the Code of Hammurabi held the sovereign accountable for the delivery of welfare. In case the officials of the state failed to catch a thief and return the thieved items, the state had to compensate the victim for the amount of the theft. Tort unredressed by the law of equal retaliation (*lex talionis*) was state responsibility because the state was itself the law or a co-mixture of positive and natural laws. The real *lex talionis* was not an 'eye for an eye,' it was 'a sack of wheat for a sack of wheat.' To avert peasant insurrections, the sovereign had to shield the lower echelons from socially inflicted injury. Moreover, the rights of women to own property and divorce husbands – rights that women lack in some states today – became laws.

To the Ancient Mesopotamians as well as the Greeks, whose societies were built by slave labour, strengthening the home front by more equitable distribution as wealth rose, plastered over the fault-lines of their class-ordered social structures. Material circumstances and social orders were changing and, with that, concepts evolving, but to date the mainstream's voided the search for formal or unchanging truth, as opposed to processual truth, remains the platitude that safeguards the conservative order. Not to overly dwell on this, constant changeability is a condition of being experienced by one and all. As early as the myth of Gilgamesh, constancy and foreverness were only attributes of gods, 'only the gods can dwell forever with Shamash,' whereas with mankind's changeability, mortality and finitude are natural ends. Yet the notion that things do not change for some innate reason inherent to human nature, or that greedy rulers rotate at the helm of power, still holds sway in popular imagination.

Although Heraclitus denied the existence of truth since things are in a state of constant change, his contribution transpires that any concept capturing reality ought to be as dynamic as reality. The Platonic notion that change is a matter of appearance whereas reality is unchangeable and only penetrable by discerning the forms of thought, one may interpret Heraclitus's avant garde position that appearance is an emergent quality of an essence, which is itself an emergent quality as well. Not long after in Aristotle's *Politics*, a cycle of change and a schema of organic growth, defining development from birth to peak and ultimate dissolution, takes shape. However, similarly to the Mesopotamian Just Man, Aristotle's Rational Man, through policies of

legitimisation by welfare, also had a functional polity-role to avoid collapse from within:

Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons, and no government can stand which is not founded upon justice. For if the government be unjust everyone in the country unites with the governed in the desire to have a revolution, and it is an impossibility that the members of the government can be so numerous as to be stronger than all their enemies put together. (Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 7)

### 3 Equality and Development in Islam

Whether by word of man or word of God, steadyng development requires addressing inequality or distributional imbalances. The issue of equity seems to be remarkably similar, but cyclical, across culture and time (Reinert 2013). In Islam, as in any viscous theological thesis, equity echoes God's edict on the one hand, while inequity can be God's manifestation of wisdom, on the other. Equality is central to Imam Ali's treatise on faith; he was a contemporary of the Prophet, whose sermons emphasized social justice. In his *Nahj al-Balaghah* (The path of eloquence), the inherent equality of all men is established as canon. Sayings attributed to Ali such as 'people are as equal as the teeth of a comb' or, a more pertinent quote, 'people should have equal access to such resources as water, food and fire,' are often presented to display Islam's aptitude for egalitarianism (Bin Abi Talib c. 660 AD). Consistently with the necessity to fully engage people in low productivity work, the population had to be kept alive for as long as possible since production, as well as the feudal lord's share of tribute, positively correlated with the size and health of the population. Management of irrigation systems for optimal output and the right of access to common waters remain in use to date. For instance, reserving part of the *al-aflaj* irrigation system (each farmer takes his turn in watering crops) to common use exemplifies fairness in rationing water and distribution (Wilkinson 2003).

*Imam Ali* hailed from the lower tribal ranks of Quraysh (the Prophet's tribe) and his egalitarianism deflects from his class position within the social ladder (Mroueh 2008). The impact of his treatise on social justice influences scholars across time. At the pinnacle of Islamic Andalusia, Ibn Hazm (from an eleventh century *Al-Muhalla*) decreed that society would be guilty of murder if

someone dies of hunger in times of plenty. Similar decrees are also found in and *Al-Kulayni* (tenth century) and *Al-Ansari* (fifteenth century). However, Islamic egalitarianism is rebutted by just as many opposing views sanctifying inequality as the natural order. Religious intellection ties practice to the demands of shifting power structures. Thusly, Islamic doctrine is a diverse field of practice and thought, especially so, in areas influencing resource allocation. For instance, whereas most *fiqh* schools oblige *zakat* (alms) – compulsory alms to assist the poor, in the Shafi'i School of Sharia – there is no obligation to perform *zakat* (Samak 2007). *Zakat* is separate from *kharaj* (state taxation levied upon Muslim subjects), but the former is the rationale for the latter. According to al-Duri (1949), tribute regimes adopted throughout the Islamic world were multiple, region and time specific, and possibly as numerous as the many Muslim polities across time. Hereinafter, I will use the two putative tributary categories: *Kharaj* is tribute extracted from Muslims and *Jizyah* from non-Muslims.

To the many sacred sayings that tout Islamic egalitarianism, there are just as many positions ordaining inequality by divine authorisation. The case that wealth and poverty co-occur finds its roots in Quranic verse: ‘it is we who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service’ (*Surah 43, Aya 32*); In contradistinction from this point, there are many *ayas* that extol the virtue of social equality. As with any class society, the Muslim world consistently exhibited unequal living conditions.

The Quran does not proscribe privileges based on the ownership of certain assets, such as the means of production and the sources of material used for production, that confer enormous power over the whole of social life ... that is why throughout history the spectacle of a poignant poverty contrasts with the astonishing luxury prevailing at the courts and among the rich. (Rodinson 1966)

Expectedly so, the social subject draws meaning from a neutral imagery in Islam, one in which precepts calling for equality or inequality cancel out. During the cold war, for instance, there were versions of Islam that matched communism's social justice. The egalitarian Islamic progressives of Tunisia or Green Islam were confronted by Salafists and Muslim brotherhood folk who extolled the virtues of private property. Such reinterpretations are attestations that Islam, like any other ideological imagery, cannot have a history on its own

outside the manipulation of a subject conditioned by synchronous production relations. However, unlike religions that insist more on the suppression of hedonistic pursuits, Islam recognises worldly desires but ordains disciplining them – although here too there are exceptions. Islamic texts urge the display of wealth once one comes into possession of new riches, which is possibly why the courts lavished in luxury. At any rate, Quranic *ayas* draw upon specific occurrences during the last two decades of the life of the prophet. *Ayas* promoting justice are incident, or context-specific, and, unlike the asceticism of the New Testament, the Quran sees in wealth an adornment of worldly life (*Surah 18, Aya 46*).

In an obvious case of thought subordinated to concurrent social circumstances, the twisting of the meaning of Islamic justice to dominant discourse by modern Islamists assumes new heights as justice becomes equated with the trickle-down effect of neoliberal markets. Obstructions of unrestricted trade, free capital flows and market openness become violations of Islamic justice (Chapra 2014). Chapra (2001) sees that the ‘free movement of goods, people and capital accelerate development and further cement solidarity and integration, which are among the important objectives of Islam.’ The neoliberal recipe is central to development, and it is (Islam-wise) unjust to stand in the way of such development (Chapra 2001). Such recipes defy the basics of macro-accounting. Unrestrained free trade or capital flows from peoples’ unsovereign nations result in the draining of surplus to US empire. Development framed in macro-accounting terms is about the retention and mobilisation of national resources to the benefit of the masses. For obvious reasons, such neoliberal positions are commonly held by the major Western supported currents of political Islam.

The present-day hold of free market ideology was such that when economic practice was reinterpreted in what became known as modern Islamic economics, the knack for economic liberalism apparent therein exceeded that of neoliberalism. The projection of old Islamic thought upon the modern world without qualification is time incongruous at least for one immanent reason: under capitalism, commodification is phenomenal. That is a different world altogether. Matters of repression under capitalism assume a turn to the worst when overproduction and waste dislocate and consume humans.

Modern strands of Islamic economics, like neoclassical economics, falsely constructs history as a set of homogenous commercial relations continuous across time. The modern capitalist market little resembles the Islamic market of the past. Islam, in its modern economic interpretation and accent on free trade, is said to be antecedent to Ricardian comparative advantage. Noting that

on the whole Ricardian advantage is a formal bluff and only absolute advantage prevails, trade conditions in Ricardo's time cannot be superimposed upon pre-capitalist long-distance trade. There cannot be trade in essential food items (the repeal of the corn law in 1846 in order to export essential staples from Britain) when trade in basic-use items has not set in or when low-productivity produce was systemically insufficient to feed the local population. Limited to trade in luxuries, the pre-capitalist world was minimally moneyed and production for use value prevailed. To project Ricardian principles onto pre-capitalism disregards the diachronic development of concepts. It also reveals a cavalier approach to the social relationships that underlay forms of social organisation across time. It was not freer trade across time that created or diminished wealth, it was freer trade at a specific intersection in time in which the growth of merchant capital under capitalist production relations morphed into productive capital. The novel production relation is principally given in the right to exclude people from their products irrespective of their perishment prematurely, which amounts to the rule of private property meant for exchange over society. With the certainty of past historical events, without the intensification of commercial exploitation, the enslavement of whole colonies, prior to the Industrial Revolution, it would have been *impossible* to unleash higher productivity in Europe. The alienation of the labour of colonised formations, their slavery and lives ripped from them, is the labour subject in the productive forces. It is also the stock of labour that reconstitutes the means of production and the relation that establishes their development. The subject of productivity is not the machine thing, it is the complex social relationship in which the exclusion of others from the ownership/development of technology predicates the conditions for a social productivity whose substance is social labour to arise in a specific location. Productivity is systemic and social and opposed to atomistic and private. It is only under capitalism that humans organised in production relations to be wasted and ejected as waste output that the social conditions for rising productivity come into existence.

To collapse justice into free trade following the bending of Islamic edicts and to extol commerce for the sake of commerce have no bearing upon justice exemplified in more equitable wealth distribution. The class that controls the valves of the circuit of value also determines the degree of social equality. Pre-capitalist collection of tribute through *kharaj* and *jizyah*, mostly in *a'shar* (tithes), directly involves the reigning political authority in maintaining the sustainability of the population and the productive base through re-investment in the social structure. In the evolution of Islamic justice and wellbeing, welfare rationales and practical redistribution measures depended on historically specific circumstances. They rose or fell in tandem with wealth

and political stability. As an example of equity kicking in as the empire comes into new riches, Reinert (2013) refers to the work of Ibn Hussein (775-822) who wrote highlighting just taxes at the peak of Islamic civilization:

Distribute [taxes] ... among all taxpayers in a fair, just and equitable manner and make them general, not exempting anyone because of his noble rank or great riches ... and do not levy on anyone a tax which is beyond his capacity to pay. (Ibn Hussein, quoted in Reinert 2013)

Additional examples may be found in *Ibn Hussein's* introduction and to the wealth of writings on political economy at around the same time. In recent work, Noueihid (2014) lists the contributions of three other scholars whose depictions of distributive policies agree with those of Ibn Hussein:

1. Early works on money and taxation, titled Al-Kharaj by Al-Qurayshi c.750, detailed the various forms of taxation from land, and stressed egalitarianism between Muslims and non-Muslims in terms of access to resources. He put forth the avant-garde thesis that land belongs to whomever labours it, antedating modern land reform discourse.
2. Another work, also titled Al-Kharaj, of around the same period by Ya'qoub bin Youssef explores the empire's financial policies, its sources of revenue and its expenditures. Bin Youssef's principal contribution is in bestowing statutory rights upon public property. Access to public property as a right stood above the dispensation of private/individual privilege. Public property included trading routes, on rivers and over land, access to water, and to common grazing lands.
3. At around AD 850, a more sophisticated work, *Al-Amwal* (literally *Moneys*, but a more appropriate translation would be *Wealth*) by *Ibn Salam*, proposed centring the activity of finance on public works, rejuvenating old land and creating incentives to bring new lands into production, all through a desirable free labour movement to the centre of empire.

For all three authors above, their welfare policy proposed that no person should be saddled with inordinate taxes and that the caliphate should intervene to support the weak and exempt them from taxation. For *Ibn Salam*, justice went further in the sense that the burden of taxation should be shared equally between Muslims and non-Muslims. In earlier times of penury, c. 650, under-privileging the poorer strata in the Arabian Peninsula in terms of booty distribution contributed to the first Islamic civil war, known as the Battle of Siffin (Hitti 1970; Mroueh 2008 [1978]). Tribute and booty redivision marked fault lines between clans that sparked intercommunal conflicts. The above

authors wrote at the zenith of *Abbasid* prosperity. Averting destruction of capital assets, population decline and introducing some measure of equalisation payments were common sense efforts that have stabilised the process-surplus extraction.

#### 4 Expansion by Economic as Opposed to Religious Zeal

Few of the caliphs were fundamentalist zealots. Only 30 years after the death of Muhammad, the clan least committed to faith, the *Umayyad*, assumed power. They concentrated their efforts on expanding moneyed wealth rather than expanding conversion to the faith (Mroueh 2008 [1978]). For obvious reasons, in the two broader forms of tribute that prevailed throughout the Empire, *kharaj* and *jizyah*, the latter higher rate of taxation associated with non-Muslims was favoured by the caliphs (Mroueh 2008 [1978]). In utilitarian accounts, the rate of caliphate tribute would shrink with a higher rate of conversion to Islam, which logically implies that caliphs would have been averse to high rates of conversions. Evidently the nonaccounting historical process had too many departures from this static rule, since tribute/revenues varied in relation to political stability, wealth and degree of control; hence, why Islamic rule like any class rule was not free of brutalities (Sahner 2018).

There is a consensus among secular Arab historians that adherence to faith was not a strong point of the caliphates. Peculiarly, Bertrand Russell also notes that Arabs conquered a great part of the world in the name of a new religion, but they were not very religious, and their motive was wealth rather than religion (Russell 1946). Russell adds that 'it was only by their virtue of lack fanaticism that a handful of warriors were able to govern without much difficulty.' Expansion for tribute and commerce rather than the zeal of religion, is naturally eschewed by modern-day Islamists, as in Zaman (2009).

Early Islamic caliphates (the *Umayyad*) levied lower tax rates than Byzantine or Persian empires (Taqoush 2002). The Turkic tribes of Anatolia began converting to Islam only three decades after the death of the Prophet, partly on account of their dissatisfaction with the Byzantine empire, including the dodging and heavy Byzantine taxation (Mroueh 2008). The same tribes would later rebel against the last *Umayyad* caliph in Harran on account of higher tax rates (Mroueh 2008). In the North Western parts of the Byzantine Empire bordering the caliphal territory (South of Asia Minor), Umayyad caliphs shared tax collection with Byzantine Constantinople (Taqoush 2002). It is also around this time (around 100 years after the death of the Prophet) that the Umayyad extended their rule as far as Spain in the West and Central Asia in the East. In

its early stages, the official language of the Islamic caliphate remained a variant of ancient Greek, the *Koini* of the Seleucid Empire (Hitti 1970). It was not until the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik bin Marwan fought and won a limited battle against Byzantium (AD 692) that the official language and the currency of the empire began to be Arabised (Taqoush 2002).

Archaeological evidence that tribute flourishes with a growing human and physical infrastructure may be discerned from the fact that excavations unearth no or few layers of black sediment in Islamic cities. In Islamic conquered and excavated cities, few have shown such sediments or few were sacked (Donner 2011). Unlike capital, which lays to waste whole nations and continents, pre-capitalist aggression expanded with the rationale of growth of farming land mass and a growing population to raise tribute. There were exceptions to this rule, as in the sacking of *Amorium* (c. AD 838), allegedly in retaliation for the Byzantine destruction of *Isparta*, the town of Caliph *Al-Mu'tassim's* (AD 833 to AD 842) mother – the reason was to demonstrate power. In staking new territory for tribute, Muslim caliphs had preserved the irrigation systems and capital assets required for steady productivity. For societies in which productivity would decline with marginal lands, it is sensible to avoid outright demolition of assets.

## 5 The East in the Economic Backwater

While the Islamic world did not become the centre of capitalism, despite enjoying significant merchant capital, neither did China. Both were integrated in the global economy as repositories to the capital concentrated in Europe. The key thesis to recall is not whether the West was faster than the Orient in becoming capitalist or that the East failed to leap into the transition to capitalism. In a global system that became capitalist or governed by the reach of capital, all the social formations became capitalist, with most of the world joining in as inferiors to Europe because it was defeated by it. The lower position of Southern formations vis-à-vis central development cannot be attributed to their disdain of experimental science (Frank 1998; Rodinson 1966). In the epoch in which Islam was the leading civilisation, Braudel (1995), despite his many Eurocentric pitfalls, recognises that major scientific progress was recorded.

For four or five centuries, Islam was the most brilliant civilization in the Old World ... nothing less than trigonometry and algebra ... mathematical geographers, astronomical observatories and instruments, optics, for chemistry, pharmacy. More than half the remedies and healing aids

used by the West came from Islam. In the field of philosophy, the scope of this rediscovery, however, was not limited to copying and handling on, valuable as that undoubtedly was. It also involved continuing, elucidating and creating.

To attribute creativity in philosophy to non-European cultures as Braudel does is a rarity among Western scholars. Almost always, Islamic philosophy is depicted as unoriginal and as some mimicry of Hellenistic philosophy. The dominant mantra repeated *ad nauseum* is that civilisational advance copies Western philosophical originality. However, earthly existence reflexively compels societies to develop a metaphysic that investigates their state of being and knowing. Whether through written or verbal transmission, any society conceptualises its specific life processes, and thus philosophises its material circumstances with its own esoteric content. The question as to whether the construction of thought should follow a formal logical framework is an accessory to philosophical thought. Aristotelian logic altogether remained dormant until the late fifteenth century or until Leibnitz breathed new life in it (Ilyenkov 1974).

Speaking of the changing political map of Europe, at the time logical symbolism incubated in Hellenistic philosophy, modern Europe as a political/cultural category was not yet on the political map. For today's West to expropriate the culture of Greece in order to buttress its ideological arsenal and to deny the capacity for rational reasoning in other cultures is just the run of the mill cultural imperialism. The argument that modern logical symbolism associates with more rigour leaves out the fact that rigour rests on adequate conceptualisation, which must be un-Eurocentric. Eurocentrism as convention often deepens the conservatism or the subordination of science to power. Rigorous thought symbolised in forms could be adduced from all sorts of human communications, not only Algebraic-like symbols. The cultural imperialism of the West proscribes knowledge transfer to the East unless, it is meant for dulling and control of Southern subjects.

For Goody (2007), irrespective of Braudel's breadth of knowledge, his point that '*true capitalism*' self-justifies on the basis of Eastern stagnation is Eurocentric. The East was not stagnant; it was pushed into relative stagnation. However, the frame of reference of many scholars is Eurocentric and that could hardly be avoided given the lopsided power balance. For instance, the notion that capitalism is progressive is a widely held belief that is scarcely examined. The question is posed in terms of binaries of what is true or fake capitalism? false and true or bad and good capitalisms are faked questions and false dichotomies. Capital as a social relation is indivisible with its most repressive manifestation, the preponderant waste in the Global South, being a materialisation

of its essence or laws of development. European capital is not only the reified geography of Europe or the space that is Europe; it is the relation that subjugates and wastes the South. Unless capital is defeated and European colonialism is revised for its *systemic* massacres against the colonies, the Eurocentrism will linger. The way European aggression is thought of as necessary for progress is the gist of Eurocentricity. Not true or false capitalism, but how Braudel underemphasises the *sine qua non* of destructive expansion to European capital and how it stagnated the Orient, these are what accounts for Eurocentrism.

To assume that capital bears progress, is a stance, which assumes that a nation's wealth is a function of specialisation in productive tasks that follow from an increasingly discreet division of labour, which is in turn determined by the size of the market (Brenner 1977).<sup>2</sup> Even though any production process can be slotted under a neoclassical production function given the gelatinous breadth of its capital and labour mathematical forms, his is fundamentally a neoclassical production function dependent on the capital stock. In other words, it is vacuous to say that output depends on labour and technology or total factor productivity, since productivity in a year's interval is always so in conventional accounts. The productivity of every year must be related to the dollar output of workers in that year; however, over the lifetime of the worker, it is the premature death of workers that is going to determine their productivity. When productivity relates to growth and, equally, the profit rate, which in turn depends on the the rate of surplus value, then the extent to which value outlays on wasted Southern labour fall relative to the social product, the higher becomes surplus labour. Profits, growth and, implicatively, productivity, follow suit. If one were to model a Marxian production function, the rate of accumulation would depend on the rate of exploitation, which is the rate at which human life expires before its due time under capitalism. That aside, for Brenner, the concept of the market is delimited to the geography/space of Europe. It is in Europe where products fetch high prices and, as such, Europe is the market upon which productivity measured in capital's money forms and wealth expand. The market of the rest of the world is too puny to expand its production and to enhance the division of labour, and ultimately, productivity and progress. Although the same capital relation is totalising North and South, the South is forgotten. Such approach has little to do with the Marxian value relation and all to do with a combination of neoclassical production functions combined with a demand driven model and expanding production.

Underneath the wealth spatially fixated in Europe, there lurks the machine induced productivity *qua* the progress of capitalism; elsewhere there is a lack

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<sup>2</sup> Warren (1973) represents a vivid example of the capitalism imparts progress position; however, the point is shared by most Western Marxist scholars.

of progress or outright de-development. However, to miss the universal value foundation of social reproduction is to miss Marxism. When the market itself is qualified by the capacity of the owning class to reproduce its class position by reducing costs or by socialising direct producers (stripping them of their means of production *qua* proletarianisation), the space in which incipient capitalist development occurs, confined to Europe according to Brenner (1977), depends upon the space upon which costs are reduced by coercion and de-development. Moreover, when cost reduction generated by the scale effect resulting from the technology deployed in militarism is considered, cheaper but higher end products that derive from better technology and more discreet division of labour re-encourage further militarism/waste. The process makes yet more affordable all commodities and expand markets. As growth niches in demand for militarism/waste rather than growing demand for saner commodities, the dynamic is for higher profits and bigger markets to require more bludgeoning of labour. The waste domain of accumulation is the law of value laid bare. Progress is waste camouflaged by the dominant ideology or, its variegated other, Eurocentrism. Considered as such, Brenner, apart from being non-objective, as in only seeing the European highly priced market space. He bases the argument for capital as progress on changing production relations only within Europe as opposed to imperialist plunder, or the waged waste activity that sets off accumulation.

Early capitalist development in Europe is often contrasted against a lethargic Asiatic mode of production (AMP). By AMP, Marx sought to create a term of zones where land ownership was conceived as central power owned and delegated to suzerains. Broadly speaking, the AMP exhibits loosely defined property relations, self-sufficiency of village production, unity of handicrafts and agriculture, simplicity of production methods, or the conditions of stagnant growth, all conditions from which Asia could not have allegedly escaped (Hilton 1963). An AMP stays put also because landed property does not become commodified to be exchanged, or landed property as a legal category does not obtain in exchange value form, as it does under capitalism. To break from the idleness, such a social system must per standard recipe experience convulsions to its class structure motivated by the drivers of a growing world market, be they demographic, technological, organisational or commercial/industrial, or more generally, a rearticulation of capitalist production relations with maturing productive forces.

Two and a half centuries ago, in *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith (1776) refers to the East as industrious and rich. At the time size mattered to wealth because productivity per capita varied by little margins. The bigger mass, such as China or Islamic empires, represented bigger wealth simply on account of

space and population. However, Eurocentric perspectives neglect the growth of capitalist markets by violent expropriation and as legal property turns into a commodity. The dead and slaves as commodities or as reified and objectified labour, in addition to the quantity of gold and silver and the land mass acquired by the Europeans are unprecedented wealth. Europe's wealth was in the ownership and control of the global means of production and its animation of the productive forces to become centred in Europe. The re-articulation of production relations in policies amenable to surplus value usurpation has been the functional side of colonialism. In short, to omit the imperialist marionetting and 'exclusion from development,' which propel productivity growth in Europe, replaces subject for the materialness of the object it produces.

To ignore the continuity of *commercial exploitation* under capitalism, a process that had reduced subject to object, is science subservient to dominant ideology. The labourer reduced to his labour power in chattel slavery (subject reduced to object) had evolved to the labourer wasted as an object-commodity for a price. The extraction of surplus value as a result of lowering the share of wages to below subsistence income, foremost by means of war, with the purpose of lowering longevity has developed into the industry of death for sale. On account of its condensation of socially necessary labour time in production, this waste industry generates more profits than what is commonly known as *super-exploitation*. By this measure, acute or intense commercial exploitation evidenced in the unnecessary deaths in the twentieth century is miles ahead of early commercial exploitation exemplified in chattel slavery – counting the structural and direct genocides of the twentieth century. In early capitalism, the slave was useful alive for what he produced, whereas of late, the wage-slave or the excessive population is more useful dead.

## 6        The Consumption of Commodities by Commodities

In a world without an opposing socialist thought, in which object or thingified capitalist consumes the labourer as object, the macabre of such a state exceeds the absurd of the commodified world of spectacles posited by Guy Debord (1967) and the Situationist International (2021). For them, commodity abundance becomes the abundance of non-distinction (capital is responsible for surplus labour as opposed to labour). Such abundance is an artificiality, adulteration and inversion, which results in the wanderings of the fetishism of money that produces spectacular aberrations according to which people and commodities become homogenised or indistinct. In such indistinction, even anti-racism becomes part of the market mythology that masks the real

contradictions (L'Internationale 2021). Although thingification is put in a roundabout way, the situationists fail to extend the logic of commodification onto how inter-class value transfers *become* waste relations. For instance, they discern that it may be illusory to focus the struggle on anti-racist policies in support of the immigrants of the Paris Suburbs, because in the indistinction, the fascination of the young of the suburbs with money equates them with money; at the extreme end of the spectrum, the Algerian immigrant commodified is a money commodity. As such their thinginess/besottedness with moneyness situates the immigrant youth in a class incapable of developing a revolutionary consciousness vis-à-vis the potentially revolutionary white class, which enjoys some margin of autonomy vis-à-vis money. The position of L'Internationale (2021) such as in '[a] world of commodity indistinction, all reality is spectacularly reversed and the true as distinctly concealed is only what the false must make disappear indiscriminately,' also screens the indistinction between non-white man as a commodity and other commodities. Not only by the massive deaths of brown people, there is structural disposition in capital to prefer the consumption of non-white man as commodity more so than other commodities, which emerges from the feebleness of their forms of power. In other words, the focus on the revolutionary potential of white classes obscures how the white class commodifies to consume the immigrants and other colonial subjects.

Whereas advancement in machinery generating wealth for humanity to enjoy is supposed to apply under communism since national man as species-being is the social being of internationalism, necrotrophic classes develop a mode of consumption in which their wellbeing, in like fashion to a communist-like future, is realised by the consumption of non-white classes. Instead of labour stepping outside the production process and squashing the value relation, as things are envisioned under communism, white labour distinguishes itself from the international working class and 'no longer appears so much to be included within the production process' (Marx [1863] speaking of man under communism appears similar to the luxury of white classes living off the avails of imperialist rents), save the intensification of mechanised cannibalism. Machinery has so developed to the point where drones and electronic banking do all the work at the behest of the well-to-do necrotrophic classes. The necrotrophic class has created a sort of welfare state 'communism' solely for itself. To add insult to injury, value extraction allegedly applies mostly to whites being exploited because of their better machinery, while imperialist wars abroad are non-value generating processes. As such, to project Marx's onto the waste of white classes, 'in this transformation (to 'communism'), it is neither the direct human labour he (white labour) himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own

general productive power' Marx (1863), which *ipso facto* becomes the productive power of waste restocked by the flows of waste industries. In other words, white classes lavish in the luxury of a utopian communism built only for themselves.

White nations have developed a two-tier world in which theirs compares to the communist future, while others are wasted. To repropose the above: white classes watch and regulate the production process by means of war, while the economic surplus is constructed as only theirs by their right to property over the means of production. However, in a world in which the man entranced in the commodity consumes the wasted man as commodity, situationists fail to ask *how* a white class violently commodifies the immigrants and the colonial subject to be consumed – aside from the wars, there is a disproportionate number of African American and Arabs in US and French jails respectively. The consumed colonial subject turned into object is antecedently war-coerced into commodity. The consuming white subject acts as a commodity consuming commodity for imperialist-class reasons, whereas the colonised subject, unwillingly subjected to commodification, must de-commodify as a matter of survival. It is the cannibalised class that holds the revolutionary potential because de-commodification becomes its only means of survival. The definition of capital as subject in command of commodity/substance means that capital cannot be big or small by the number of commodities or industrial workers it possesses. In this day and age, a developing nation may exhibit a 90 percent unemployment rate, but that does not mean it remains in a pre-capitalist phase of history. Unless one entertains the scholastic metaphysic of 'to whom capital came first, the East or the West,' it is impertinent to processual dynamics to ask such a question because once the value relation appears on the stage of history, it prefigures the growth of capitalist markets by the commodification of the human subject. In terms of chronology, the waged-labour conducted massacres during the dawn of capitalist production relations, or as humans and resources were valued for their worth in exchange rather than use value, could be constituted as the first *factoires* of capitalism. However, for Marx (1844), capital and the commodification of labour give birth to each other to reproduce each other as capital:

To the man who is nothing more than a worker – and to him as a worker – his human qualities only exist insofar as they exist for capital alien to him. Because man and capital are alien, foreign to each other, however, and thus stand in an indifferent, external and accidental relationship to each other, it is inevitable that this foreignness should also appear as something real. As soon, therefore, as it occurs to capital (whether from

necessity or caprice) no longer to be for the worker, he himself is no longer for himself: he has no work, hence no wages, and since he has no existence as a human being but only as a worker, he can go and bury himself, starve to death, etc. The worker exists as a worker only when he exists for himself as capital; and he exists as capital only when some capital exists for him. The existence of capital is his existence, his life; as it determines the tenor of his life in a manner indifferent to him.

To reposit, primitive accumulation or the exercise of commercial exploitation, which reduces subject to object, or the labourer to his labour power, turns to dispensing with man in shorter periods of life. As opposed to sugar, tobacco, the cotton textile woven by the spinning throstles of England, etc., man slain by capital as commodity is the first product of capital. The extraction of surplus value requires the genocides as a rudimentary production process that lays the ground for the articulation of the price system with optimal value extraction – the price to value ratio. Value practiced as violence lowers the price of colonised labour, labour power and other resources. Against the cheap prices of colony products there grows the purchasing power and market of the North. Such is a dynamic conditioned by the persistence of the social crises of overproduction. Raciality and nationalism grew out of imperialist pillage in order to bestow a false nationalist character upon an internationalist production process. Imperialist societies re-cast themselves as moral and more productive. In their hands, objective value turns into a subjective category with a class-moral subtended sense of entitlement: it was their hard labour, higher productivity and ingenuity that amassed the wealth and not that of their victims. Value, the social relation that doubles as capital, becomes a thing and accords with a value judgment, which speaks of rights and wrongs. As they conjoin the glitter represented in commodities to their moral values, the richer they are, the higher the moral grounds they fashion for themselves. The natural value, which is the equally expended socially necessary labour time to reproduce labour under universalising capital, disappears and Western lives given symbolically in the price form become more valuable than other lives. Meanwhile, the glitter is waste, while cutting down a life in the South constructed as cheap in prices but of high value, is the primary surplus drainage mechanism of capital. With the South falling under the fire of US-Europe, the Southern masses may be said to be un-commodified by their degree of national security and sovereignty. However, since the consuming class or the class with more commodities is the wasting class, it is also the class with more waste to its credit, which as a form of value rebolsters the contemporary phenomenon of waste.

## 7 Involution and the AMP

The concept of the AMP is a broad category whose elements are the many different sub-amalgams of Eastern social life, but two characteristics are often touted as differentiating it from European feudalism. First, the centralised bureaucratic empires of the East exercised control over land and played a key role in securing agricultural output, including, the construction of irrigation works, which were vital to the success of the indigenous agricultural systems. Secondly, the village economy of Asian or African societies is self-sufficient and self-contained, with production centred on use value – given the standard low productivity work of pre-capitalism (Hilton 1963; Hobsbawm 1965). For Godelier (1964) and later Frank (1998), self-sufficiency in village agriculture was steadier on average for the East vis-a-vis Europe. Involution or development without growth proceeded with no leaps with marginal lands emitting lower output per capita (Huang 2002). This state of involution rested on a set of pre-capitalist social relations, principally the Asiatic feudal class extracting surplus by brutality and the exercise of preordained political power

Theoretically, capitalism enters the historical theatre as a burst of production relations that have bound together pre-capitalist class power to a non-corresponding level of the productive forces. The *resultant* of the unity of man with developments in science, technology, labour/population growth and shifting social modes in the division of labour, human skills and institutional organisation, altogether the productive forces, underwent a structural shift. At the inflection point, capital was born as a *synergising* class relation that subsumed labour and other constituents of the productive forces under a new relation of production led by private property meant for moneyed exchange. Although the debate differs on the definitive spark, whether it is increasing world trade, or some inherent impetus in European class relations, which actuated the rupture, the quasi-consensus prevails that the transition to capitalism occurred in the sixteenth century or at such juncture in time (Dobb 1946; Sweezy 1976; Abdel-Malek 1981; Amin 1977). The transition happened for all the relevant historical reasons experienced as a dialectical collision of necessity borne out in coincidence. In other words, the transition is an overdetermined event, or an event conditioned by the totality of recursive or interdependent reasons necessitating its occurrence. Furthermore, the factual/historical observations are such that all the constituents of the productive forces underwent a metamorphosis requiring a restructuring of the mode of production or the social conditions under which classes interacted together to reproduce. Exactly which of the constituents was the leading culprit, the debate remained open and reflected the biases of the times.

Within the productive forces, undue attention is paid to the substantive side of technology, as opposed to the sociological aspect or the social subject of technology – it is the better machine that ushered capitalism, but not the social relation that brought into existence the better machine. Under capitalism, technology becomes a circulating commodity. It is basis for to and an offshoot of other circulating commodities. Just like an ordinary commodity, it falls outside immediate social control; it is objective. Commodified technology is destined for exchange, and accordingly, as a value relation it is guided by the law of value – recalling, the law of value allocates, regiments and winnows labour. Technology piggybacks the objective and steady developments in science, or the stock of culture of humanity. Reducing energy consumption per unit of output marks technological improvement. This trans-historical or all time search for efficiency intensifies the contradiction between the outdated constitution of the machinery and the desired level of output per unit of input, which conjoins motor power, transmission mechanisms and moving axles and tools in a more energy-saving compact (Marx 1867). Under capitalism, competition thrusts forward an already growing endogenous process of technological advancement – the Marxian point was that production *causa sui* imposes the betterment of production techniques across time, but the replacement of living for dead labour eggs on the process under capitalism. Steady growth occurs not so much because there is a variable in an equation like human capital that through its interdependency on better machine technology offsets diminishing returns (Romer 1994), but because private appropriators submerged in their anarchic accumulation wrest technological advance from social control. Machines do not do things, and from a systemic perspective, it is *the objective development in industrial culture expropriated by capital* as opposed to the machine/thing *per se*, which represents the social agency of technology within the productive forces. Under capitalism, the expropriation of the technology-commodity from society, the ripping away of use value from labour, is the value relation in charge of technological development.

Like technology, population growth, forms of exploitation and changes in the organisation of the forms of social reproduction, all come to be subsumed in the new relation of expropriation, which is capital. When capitalism begins to take shape, the mode of production changes from use-value constrained production into production meant for exchange. The value proper, the socially necessary labour time alienated from the direct producer, which acquires a life of its own through fetishism and whose self-expansion abides by the law of value dictating resource allocation, assumes a money form that grows by the degree to which capital controls labour, namely by waste and fuelling labour's dividedness.

It would be counterfactual to assume that capitalism with its interrelated development of the productive forces and corresponding relations could have dawned prior to the sixteenth century. The anachronism could not have been because before then the coincidence actualising the necessity of growth in the productive forces along with growth in merchant capital and rising trade, and larger ownership of assets, commodification of landed property, etc., could also not have been. Marx (1877) noted that the Plebeians of ancient Rome, free peasants each cultivating their own piece of land, were expropriated; they were divorced from their means of production and became poor, yet alongside them a mode of production developed which was not capitalist, but still dependent upon slavery. Although there was wealth hither and yon before the sixteenth century, capitalism could not have been summoned into existence before that time. The genesis of capitalism cannot be an experiment applied across all times: 'events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical' (Marx 1877). Within the landscape of possibilities, there were circumstances coalescing for the capitalism event to actualise, which with the certainty of *hind sight* became the leading social relation whose universal presence is its phenomenal power and reach at a *specific time*. As to space, the globe by the sixteenth century has already been transformed into a single economy commanded by the central structure of European capital.

Aside from the fact that Islamic philosophy is replete with rational and materialist tendencies (Mroueh 2008), it would be hypothetical to theorise that the difference between Eastern/Islamic feudalism and European feudalism bars the transition of the former to capitalism before the latter. No one transited first. Capitalism is an era of dispossession, so without the dispossessed South, it would not be. Regarding the differences in the AMP, El Kodsi (1970) argued that Islamic peasantry enjoyed greater freedoms, and as such, it would have been difficult for a central authority to strip the independent folk of tools and force them into wage labour. For the Ottomans, there does appear to be something close to serfdom in its early stages, but that evolved into freer peasantry (Mundy 2004). Primitive accumulation, the forced conversion of private labour into social labour, originates with changing relations of production, or as capital connects surplus-value extraction with divorcing labour from its means of production. In the case of slave owning capital, which extracts surplus value by commercial exploitation, capital transforms humans into subject-less/commodified humans, therefore, upping the degree

of exploitation beyond that associated with free wage labour. Commercial exploitation on the African continent culminates in the destruction of indigenous formations and the enslavement of social formations whose labour was either Muslim or animistic, and freer than European peasantry. Still, when confronted with superior power, the freedom of the peasantry could be curtailed, and peasants disciplined into slaves or wage labour. Capitalism's earliest forms of commercial exploitation were not the slaves worked cotton or sugar plantation of the Americas, they were the wars of devastation in Africa and the genocides of natives. The death of natives was the earliest commodity. The personalisation of class in the inane debate, on whether it was Muslim enslavers paid by Europeans who conducted the enslavement of Africa, is a current Western academic ploy to bid the christianised African states against the equally underdeveloped and aggrieved Muslim states.

Without a law of transformation, poorly categorised eclectic conceptualisations drawn from varied observations in history may still be partially true by their own accounts. Any proposition based on describing narrow strips of phenomenon (partial occurrences) can be supported by some observed fact and constructed as truth against another proposition developed in the same fashion. Although cross-personal comparisons and experimentation advances science, it only does so when the empirics are referred back to the genus category, and in order to recategorised it. Empirics that tackle only epiphenomenal research, or that scratch the surface of things such that appearances explain appearances, cannot reclassify knowledge. Conducting research on the basis of faulty national account systems is an example of such. Hobsbawm (1998) remarked on the futility of the esoteric debate between thousands of neoclassical economists based on flawed utilitarian data, which serve no other purpose but obfuscation. These debates result in theoretical nihilism: all partial mathematical deductions referencing occurrences are true, all are in contradiction to each other, since a formal system must be paradoxical (Ilyenkov 1974), and therefore nothing is true. For instance, that resources follow the movement in the price system is an observation from fact that adds little to knowledge; however, when the price system is considered as an outcome of institutionalised class-power relations, there begins the dialectic of the historical necessity and contingency to be reckoned with.

Furthermore, the vulgar empiricist approach drops the law materialised in the activity that mediates disparate particulars into a general category. The laws of capital thrive under capitalism, and whether the peasant is freer or less free in the East, the guns of capital (the activity) may dislocate and socialise him into wage-servitude. Super-historical or trans-historical transpositions, whichever term one uses, only explain hypothetical history, especially when juxtaposed to periods preceding the development of capitalist production

relations on a global scale. How the rise of Europe to the pinnacle of power, its conquests, its genocides as its first commodities, and rising trade variety and volume integrate the planet into a single system and in a specific period, is the real history that requires explanation.

Naturally, within the AMP varied forms of political and property control over the modes of social reproduction are observed. Though multifarious, the Islamic mode of production may be defined by an unsteady central authority incapable of reaching far and applying general rules (Rodinson 1966; Khalil 1996). The ideological aspects that shape social control revolve around bonding labour to land, mostly by adherence to the many prevailing forms of popular religion. In terms of religious credos regimenting labour, the measures taken in the Islamic world varied with the many religions, sects, and *tariqas*, but coincided in terms of the repression necessary for surplus extraction. *Rationally*, it would be unwise for the Caliphs to standardise religion because a restless and at the same time unified peasant base is difficult to bring into line; and indeed, Islam was not state institutionalised until late modernity. Since capital must standardise man and commodity to bring consumption in line with consumerism, the homogenisation of the glitter of the commodity credo and commodification of man are both innate and objective to capitalism. In an order where 'new cars' are liked by everyone, central capital would also prostelise its adjunct working class in its war against the South. The contradiction is as follows, capital's unconscious side, the blind pursuit of value, homogenises labour, while its conscious side, the state and governance apparatuses, divides labour. Wallerstein (1980) comments that 'the politics of a capitalist world economy were quite different from the politics of a feudal civilisation,' in the former, the states became the key units of political organisation, rather than the local unit with the manor at the centre, and accordingly rulers were no longer dependent for their revenues on their personal landholdings, but instead had a taxation base. Beneath capitalist centralisation, there lurked the rule of the commodity expanding to commodify and monetise social activities as well. *Historically*, adherence to multi-sects or faiths in the pre-capitalist world indicated tenuous submissiveness to central authority. At the same time, disparate social bonding arrangements could always be instrumentalised to reaffirm the feudal class grip on power.

Marx paid more attention to primitive accumulation and to non-Western European forms of social organisations in his later writings (Hobsbawm 1965). Dismayed with the prospects of the revolution in Europe after the defeat of the Paris commune (1871), he turned to the study of communal forms of social organisation, (the Mir system of Russia) and refocused on the value that commercial exploitation imparts to central wealth (Emmanuel 1972). He also observed the lethargic development of the East or what Braudel (1995)

would later label as the *longue durée*. For Marx, there was a common dynamic characterising the Orient: empires with highly organised administrative structures could rise and fall in rapid succession, while their underlying economic life might continue relatively unchanged for long periods of time. One may surmise that Eastern empires' loosening their forms of social control, which results in intermittent political freedoms from bondage, cannot under such dynamic (*longue durée*) transform Asiatic merchant capital into small-scale manufacturing and then industrial capital. Eastern rebellions for social justice, or the 'variants of communism,' may have shaken autocratic control with short-lived forms of broader public representation, yet these anachronistic events do not break the monotony of Asiatic feudalism.

To say that capitalism arose in Europe on account of free spiritual development, often attributed to the liberalism of F. Bacon, is to omit the fact that in an integrated planet, early forms of European parliamentarianism effected more of the slaughter and slavery than absolute monarchism. Horne (2018) argues the chameleon nature of European parliamentarism and the rise of the commercial class (after the English revolution) intensified the slave trade. The tradition of selective democracy for the white class at home promoting slave-like conditions abroad is the quintessence of capital. Disjoining feudal social relations from their means of social control, or as the feudal class loses its grip over the peasantry, such has coincided with increased European power over an integrated global system whose growth is merchant capital governed. Once capital comes into the picture, the private property relation also comes into the picture. The transition into a wage labour system follows, while capital's industry rests on the rights of inclusion or exclusion from private property. The rate of exclusion of the peasantry from its commons or common property coheres with the response of the capital class to its rate of capital accumulation. The forms of power exercised over the reconciliation of production relations with the development of the productive forces, be they democratic parliamentarian or otherwise, are just variants of capital's power.

In debating the origins of capitalism with Dobb, Sweezy (1976) held that the roots of capitalism were only remotely related to conditions originating in England. The crepuscule of the fifteenth century witnessed developments combining advances in the forces of technology, communication, trade, rising supply of gold and silver, and growing population after a period of decline, which engulfed the planet. Estimates of the US Census Bureau indicate that World population dropped from around 1250 to 1450,<sup>3</sup> implying that the shortage of labourers made dearer their efforts pressured an amelioration of

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<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/worldpop/table-history.php>

production techniques. To amplify the scope of Frank's (1978) point, inter-relatedness through militarism, cultural exchange and trade implies that transformative conditions cannot be attributed to a specific locality within an already integrated whole without arbitrariness. As mentioned above, European supremacy at sea had already cultivated the fruits of these globally generated developments in the productive forces. Rising exchange through trade necessitated a more subtle division of labour, small-scale industry wage-work, and the subjugation of outlying territories by violent means as tributaries to central production. The process of technological innovation changed from use to exchange value as a result of a shift in the relations of exploitation from direct surplus extraction by feudal absolutism to an indirect or fetish-guided mode of production. Through the medium of commodity exchange, value as reified labour equivalated to the money form of value arose as the novel category under capital. With value came the law of value which regulates value creation by 'equivalating non-equivalents.' The law became the historically ordained measure through which social relations are to be established herein-after under capitalism (Marx 1867).

At the heart of that value relation are the super-structural institutions erected to obscure the true nature of exchange or how capital expropriates labour. As money assumes the form of value and signals the allocation of resources, the deciphering of developments under capitalism requires more than just describing the ongoing repression attendant upon exploitation, it requires an investigation of capitalist absolutism or the capacity of capital to dull the working class. Repression is innate in any class system and just detailing its degree or frequency is parochialism rather than science. Adequacy as opposed to vacuity calls for an investigation of transformations in the social relations of production. Under capitalism, a point to investigate would be the collapse of labour confronting capital, which expands commodification and enlists more social activities as moneyed forms of capital. More important, as capital changes in form, so does its content and class structure. Under the monopoly-finance imperialist class, the balance of the class struggle manifest in the interface of capital with its object via the medium of the money form has grown into the waste and the fictitious structure of finance (excess debt relative to capacity).

Under capitalism, wars of encroachment are no longer consciously commanded processes, which expand the rule of empire to amass more of the low productivity tribute. Wars are not about not having enough to eat. They have become unconscious and objective by-products of overproduction crises actuated by capital's fetishes, principally, finance. Adjunctly, with wars being primal to accumulation, the subordination of technology to war, which had comparatively improved the fighting skills of Europe in the sixteenth century

(Hobsbawm 1986; Kennedy 1987), developed into the leading edge of innovation. Since anarchic production foreshadowed the frequency of political violence, endogenous wars teamed up with endogenous technology. At an ontological level, the primacy of politics jointly with private property as reason for being to capital, its exclusionary nature in particular, estrange technology from social benefit to advance the means of violence. With war technology more alienated than other alienated commodities, and with the degree of fetishism being correlated with degree of alienation, war technology and its death products become the primal fetish that presides over social life.

## 8      England Piloting Capitalism

In contrast to capitalist relations springing up universally across sea-trading routes, a provincial approach, namely Brenner's (1977) and Wood's (2002), situates the rise of capitalism in England and its countryside. Although colonial slaughter and its productivity, the harvest of death, is left out vis-a-vis English productivity and its harvest of beats, this remains a flimsy a 'what comes first debate.' It is a scholastic *prima causa* story for a reason, which is to justify European civilisation based on its genuine capabilities. Apart from the 'better' Europeans line of liberalism, such argument is a reification of space or a turning of social subject into space – the space being Europe. When things emerge together logically and historically, and when mechanisation in Europe coincides with its predicate, the industry of slaughter abroad, to question what comes first cannot be formulated in a scientific hypothesis; questions of this nature must be left to theology. A hypothesis addressing the rise of European productivity ought to be situated within its social-global context. The context in question was butchery. This is not to argue that butchery is despicable and so is Western civilisation. These are already phenomenal. As a matter of fact, capitalism worked its way and still works its way as the dominant relation by slavery and slaughter. Most peoples implicated in war today, the masses bombarded, natural degradation, and austerity, experience bondage that relative to the times exceeds slavery. So far, the social relationship of butchery is the subject of European productivity. If US-European imperialism does not arrest industrial progress abroad, progress in machine development may be pervasive. Then again, machines double for weapons, and parity in military balances offsetting control by the North, erodes central capital, which is a relation of control. More important, as stored past labour defines the forces of production, or the unity of labour with the means of production, it is then the value relation that wasted and alienated the lives of many past generations of labourers, and which still constitutes the social subject of productivity to date.

For Wood (2002), a post-English Revolution politically-weakened English-aristocracy, relying more on rising agricultural output by innovation rather than feudal *diktat* to draw tribute, created higher output per hectare than other European formations, enclosed the peasantry (evicted from common lands) and laid the foundations for capitalist accumulation. Curiously, a recent estimate from Fairlie (2009) declares that 'from the 17th to 20th centuries, the British government passed over 5000 enclosure acts, enclosing 6.8 million acres of common, public land. Often military force was used to crush anyone who resisted.' Differential modes of legal-economic landholding would underlie the higher productivity of land in England vis-à-vis France. In contrast to French farmers who owned the land or paid fixed rents, English farmers competed for land and increased their productivity to reduce costs in order to cope with the increasing land rental prices. The rents of English farmers fluctuated with supply and demand – a condition basic to a capitalist market. Market-induced productivity raised the output to levels satisfying the subsistence needs of urban workers displaced from the land (Wood 2002). The old chestnut that trade cannot produce value, is the basis of such argument, which leaves out the fact that trade in slaughtered natives and slaves was of value. Moreover, once capitalist production relations set in, trade and circulation are not secondary to capitalist production, they complete it.

In the case of Brenner (1977), he also stresses English productivity rise. His position is no different than the neoclassical point of view. The competition to maximise profit entails higher labour productivity, which in turn involves specialisation of skill and co-operation across production units. These atomistic measures are cross-reinforcing and improve technology, and as such, the degree of capitalism could be gauged against the level of technology and rising productivity in a given country. Such is an example of the substance-inclined conceptual frame of Western Marxism. It reifies subject and equates machine development with capital.

More specifically, Brenner argues that '[t]he separation of labour power and the means of production, and their appearance as commodities in the individualistic system of private production, determines the full development of the function of money in circulation.' In Marx, however, the individualistic system serving as a functional matrix of different elements ceases to be historical agency because it is supplanted by the mediation of class, which sublates the atomism – the general represents the historical condition for the particular, or in systems language, the general bears into existence the feedback loops. Aside from this Parsonian like position, his conception of money as a functional outcome of the 'separation,' (the separation of labour power from the means of production), that too tells half the story because money as credit predication production is rather a historical twin of capital. At a first-principles level,

exchange value assuming the money form mediates the contradiction of value and use value, which means that the value relation under capitalism comes as a package. It is social time determined or conventional time asymmetric, as in not parcelled in successive stages.

For Marx (1867), money, the ultimate fetish, is inherent to the value relation, and it is there from the very beginning of capital. However, Brenner confounds the role of money for the law of value. He notes '[t]he separation determines at once the polarisation between use values and exchange values – since exchange of commodities must take place in order to make possible their use in production precisely since commodities cannot directly appear as values, 'marked' as it were with their values (labour-time embodied), but must instead find their place in production through being circulated.' An underlying bourgeois penchant for showing the usefulness of the commodity as a thing is in evidence here. He says 'embodied' as opposed to 'alienated labour.' Of course, labour is embodied in the commodity, however, the commodity presupposes the value relation, which is all about expropriation and alienation. It contributes little to understanding the dynamic of capital by pointing to things rather than the relations that determine the movement of things. Furthermore, it is the contradiction arising from the alienation of the commodity, any commodity, including technology, from the direct producer, which resolves when commodities realise in the money form. That said, it is not the metaphysical sequence of the separation of labour power from the means of production, which sets use value against exchange value, it is the degree of product alienation, or its reflection in the degree of power exercised by labour against capital. There is a unity between the logical and the historical. The value relation as such or as a rational conception of reality must intertwine with historical developments. Theorising value could not have arisen before capitalism because capitalist markets cannot exist apart from the phenomenon of dispossession for the purpose of sale. More concretely, to have the cotton garment alienated from the English worker and sold for profits contemporaneously required that the life of the native in the South be alienated from him by the imperialist industry of genocide to be sold for profits. It was the money form of value from wasted lives in the colonies stockpiled in capital, which represented the principal endeavours–events of capital. Equally, the industry of genocide/structural genocide was a significant productivity undertaking, and it remains so to this day. In discerning the changing form of value emerging from the nexus of repression-exploitation, a cross-reinforcing relation arises from the growth of gold and silver (the occupation of the Americas), and the appearance of paper money as legal tender in Europe by the seventeenth century, all of which are the extractive industry of the skulls of natives metamorphosed into capital denominated in money forms.

To recollect, Marx (1894) regarded primitive accumulation as the pedestal of industrial capitalism. Primitive accumulation not only provides the cheap cotton, it accelerates the deprivation of peasants from their land or commons and means of subsistence everywhere and not only in England. Primitive accumulation occurs on a global scale. The repercussion of the genocides and slavery upon the freeing of value is what laid the foundation for the contemporaneous social activity of alienating technology and centralising it in Europe. To abide by value and replace living by dead labour via further technological improvement, the private expropriation of social knowledge for industrial and military use had to expand.

Money is the universal equivalent that recombines all commodities, in contrast with only recombinining labour power and means of production, as Brenner (1977) had suggested. There is a reason for which he fronts the means of production and that is because he treats them as European things bereft of global working class subjects. As one watches the growth of these things in Europe, one establishes by the material substance of things that capitalism is indigenous only to Europe. Money, however, is the symbolic convention or a medium amongst other media with which a capital that adheres to the law of value, lays control over the labour process. The shares of wealth between capital and labour reveal whether money as a power symbol is under the control of labour or capital. In a world united as a single production unit but divided by political repression, the rate of surplus value must rise by the rate of premature life extinguishment in the South.

To bring out the functionalism in Brenner, consider his point that '[i]t is the achievement of capitalism through anarchic competition that brings with it, as it were – albeit in an unconscious and uncontrollable, anarchic manner – the interdependence of all producers, in a way which requires that each must produce to the hilt for every other. This interdependence is ... a product of the *class system of individualistic production* (*my emphasis*), based on the separation of the producers from the means of production and means of subsistence – the same separation which enforces accumulation via innovation by way of the exchange of money capital for free labour power and the means of production, in order to make the socially necessary rate or average rate of profit.' The *class system of individualistic production* is superseded in Marxism because the individual is subsumed in class and its institutions. Capital transforms individualistic pursuits into a higher moment whose dynamics preserve but remove from view individual agency. Furthermore, his higher productivity *qua* wealth springing from the travails of an unconscious side of capital is similar here to Adam Smith's invisible hand. However, what also expropriates, or guides resources is the command of the organised side of capital, which is

founded upon the rationale of maintaining bourgeois rule to counteract the crises attendant upon the anarchy of production. With only production anarchy taking hold (the subconscious) capital might have withered away long ago, or better yet, it may have crystallised in ultimate waste. Phrased differently, without the institutional agencies of labour aping capital, which guarantee that a wage system into which labour willingly participates to tear at itself and to restrengthen the reign of capital, the internal laws of capital would have long ago caused capital to either perish or cause the planet to perish, as it does so. The laws of capital, whether the tendency for falling profits or the AGLCA, these are all about its competitive blindness leading to its demise, while the function of conscious capital is exactly about mitigating these laws to remain intact – that conversely means social nature will be demolished. Unless of course one resorts to the sort of identity supremacy that Aryans created all theories, or the Jews won nearly all the Nobel prizes that serve to advance the development white civilisation, which mutates into better imperialising abilities and weapons, what enforces innovation for accumulation is the rate at which capital expropriates universal culture, which is at an ontological level the store of knowledge of humanity, or the labour of all cultures.

However, dialectical inversion ensures that better technology displacing labour also writes off the early tech-rents of capital by the dampening effect of rising organic composition of capital or falling variable labour upon the rate of surplus value. Another way of putting this across is as the technical composition of capital rises and ages, roughly the capital labour ratio rises and ages, more of the surplus goes to buttress technological capacities vis-à-vis wages resulting in downward pressure on the profit rate. Unless as argued in chapter three, the wasting of humans as living labour offsets the negative effect of the rinsing organic composition of capital upon profits, the initial impact of relative surplus value upon profits will fade away. Demand for wasted lives and militarism offsets the run of the mill shortfall in the consumption demand of the working class. In a nutshell, without the wasted humans, a betterment of machinery displacing labour translates into lower surplus value and profits altogether. The systemic approach may be surmised in the point that the rate of exploitation associated with waste presses against the laws of capital. For profits to rise in the centre means that more of the periphery must be wasted. It is this interdependent and systemic approach that Brenner labels neo-Smithian. Yet his reification of technology, or the point that technology is the resultant of behavioural competition rather than expropriation and the exclusionary process of capital principally mediated by imperialist assault, is to the *political-right* of neoclassical economics. When such jargon issues from the so-called left it harms revolutionary theory more than neo-con related

propaganda. Technology is endogenous to social development because science is endogenous to human civilisation. Its rate of development under capitalism rises as the rate of exploitation rises and pushes for the replacement of living by dead labour. In the thesis made in this work, exploitation doubly rises as a result of not only replacing people with machines, which is momentary, but also as a result of living people wasting other living people. Dead labour is both the machine and the many cadavers of dead people, which are both input and output of production. As technology improves by the expropriation of humanity's knowledge or stored labour, its inherent proclivity leans more to the betterment of the tools of war since its growth by the expropriation of human lives also redresses profits.

## 9 Production Relations Define Exchange

In debating the transition to capitalism, Frank (1978) observed that exchange under capitalism must qualify as different from exchange prior to capitalism because of the determining role of relations of production over relations of exchange. A little earlier, Wallerstein (1974) argued the universality of capitalism stating that 'it was only with the emergence of the modern world-economy in sixteenth-century Europe that we saw ... full development and economic predominance of market trade ... the system called capitalism.' Putting these two propositions together in relation to Marx's (1863) position that circulation completes capital, and it can continue to realise exchange value only through continued production of use value, means that the globe is the theatre of production, while the conditions of the labour process under capitalism adhere to capitalist production relations. This is not a so discreet point; slavery, serfdom, and bonded labour as forms of the labour process are subdivisions of the mon-eyed wage system under capitalism, whereas under feudalism they were unrelated. Prior to capitalism, it was use value that guided the conditions of labour in relation to the surplus. Under capitalism, exchange value universalises the reasons for the making of the surplus. This point is decisive because once capitalism dawns, the concept of class whose hypostatisation maps against universal space (it is not nationally bounded), becomes universal. Capital re-ascends itself as it reproduces via command over the global labour process. Such command is also the principal production relation. Capital is both form and content, or ruling ideas and dynamics. Although subordinate, use value necessarily tags exchange value via the circuit of capital – there cannot be one without the other. For the universal capital class, exchange value is the consummation of some globally produced use value, which incidentally must be exploitation or value related.

Discussions around the issue of the primacy of production relations pointed to how the monetisation of land rent and tribute forces peasants into a mode of self-exploitation in which more efficient producers become capitalist, while others are evicted, all the while, setting on course the unequal exchange between town and country (Lenin 1898). Frank argues that both Dobb and Sweezy (1976) adhered the primal role of production relation over exchange relation. This is unlike Brenner and Wood for whom trade abroad was not associated with value or was not of much value and these failed to situate capital as the logical relation reflective of the universal but concrete historical conditions. Concrete conditions must include not only the capitalisation of the English countryside, but also the concentration of power in Europe, and that trade underlain by saleable slaughter in an integrated globe connects with use value and value as a necessary step in the completion of capital. To take this a little further in terms of the waste thesis, the industry of extracting lives in the colonies was a value activity completed in trade. Sweezy's (1963) critique of Dobb's 'feudalism as serfdom' as too general and that the crisis of feudalism is insufficient for an explication of the transition rests on the point that growing trade was bound to influence feudalism, especially as production for the market superseded production for use. He interpreted the transition as arising from the eventuated developments of the productive forces, rising trade alongside exchange and production relations that were internal as well as external to Europe. He further stressed the importance of commercial expansion and the productive incorporation, particularly of the mining economies, of the New World.

Frank's (1978) summary dubs Sweezy's discussion with Dobb as a chicken-and-egg debate, in which Dobb was said to argue that the transformation of European internal production relations caused its commercial expansion, while Sweezy has argued that Europe's external commercial expansion in the periphery determined the English transformation. Aside from the scholasticism of the chicken-egg issue, it may be as well to mention that in relation to the transition, Dobb (1946) presumes that feudal class struggle modified the dependence of the petty mode of production upon feudal overlordship and eventually shook loose the small producer from feudal exploitation or created the free wage labourers of capitalism.

However, the argument could be put that capitalism is more decisively conjoined with waste or slave labour, genocides of natives and the idling or the bonded Asiatic labour under the guns of capital rather than transformations of petty modes of production in the European countryside. Consider the below-quoted passage from Engels (1894)

shipping on the scale practiced by the Italian and Hanseatic maritime republics was impossible without sailors, i.e., wage-laborers (*whose wage*

*relationship may have been concealed under association forms with profit-sharing), or without oarsmen – wage-laborers or slaves – for the galleys of that day. The guilds in the ore mines, originally associated workers, had already been converted in almost every case into stock companies for exploiting the deposits by means of wage-laborers. And in the textile industry, the merchant had begun to place the little master-weaver directly in his service, by supplying him with yarn and having it made into cloth for his account in return for a fixed wage – in short, by himself changing from a mere buyer into a so-called contractor. (my emphasis)*

In particular, consider the wording '*wage-laborers whose wage relationship may have been concealed under association forms with profit-sharing,*' thence, the case for wages being a share of the loot and not necessarily related to factory punch-cards has been recognised. In point of fact, one may project the waged naval labour on Venetian vessels looting the East, including Eastern Europe, back to the Crusades. However, by the rule established above, the determinacy of production relations over exchange relations, such activity was not yet value because it occurs when Europe had not yet wielded the reins of power over an integrated the planet. Exchange becomes capitalist exchange only when the industry of the butchery of natives and enslavement of Africa or the new world generates surplus value through the mining and consumption of lives, their alienation from natives and monetisation as wealth and their transfers to Europe in the form of moneyed wealth. The departure from previous modes of productions here is the liquidation of life to be of exchange value as the novel phenomenon. In the complex order, to extinguish a life in order to provide an input into successive stages of production becomes an end in itself whose inertia grows into the phenomenal waste transformed into a moneyed form of value. Of note, the trade in slaves in Roman times may constitute commodity trade, but that was not phenomenal or a capitalist market derived dependency (Emmanuel 1972). Cameron (1993) differentiates Roman slave society on the Italian peninsula from others on account of its great wealth and higher number of slaves – anomalously 30 to 40 percent of society were slaves in the first and second century A.D. There was a reasonable level of agrarian surplus production and power rested with the landowning class. Insofar as the division of labour was concerned, slaves were chained together to work a field in order to enhance the rhythm of movement and increase output (the observation by Marx and Engels drawn from the historian Appian) – similar to the chattel slavery mode of labour regimentation. Despite the fact that slaves were commodified, and their output was worthwhile, at the time the globe was not integrated, use value was the end of the surplus, and productive forces and relations were not yet ripe for the transition.

Equally important, capitalism sprung not only in Europe, but simultaneously across the many global trading posts commanded by Europe. There were many advanced centres strewn across the globe and other laggard ones as there are today. This divergence does not make the less developed formation more or less capitalist. Unlike Europe, the East had undergone a perverse transformation resulting in expropriation without re-engagement of resources. Patnaik (2012) mentions the unusual case of English labour made scarce as a consequence of populating the new colonies, Canada and Australia, which resulted in near full employment conditions and rising wages in the nineteenth century, otherwise there was plenty of excess labour even in the centre. Excess Asiatic labour in bondage under capitalism represents a global reserve army of labour and is more primal to capital on account of its potential for waste than European wage-slavery.

The metamorphosis of surplus acquisition from direct producers by non-moneyed means to expropriation concealed under the moneyed wage corresponds to the birth of alienated labour and the labour power commodity. Once in command of life processes, the estranged labour power *cum* fetish assumed in the form of moneyed capital affords a higher wage to the European wage slave and a picayune or a negative wage to the natives of the South. The point made in chapter one was that wages may be construed as negative in how workers-*become-wasted* and are underpaid relative their social cost of reproduction over their lifetime, especially as they are extinguished by capital long before their due time. The accent is often laid upon the positive wages and progress in the North, as opposed to the industries of genocide, structural and otherwise, which *primarily* reproduce capital. What the fetish of alienated labour does is to relegate historical causation to the formation of wage slavery without mention of the wasted lives consumed as labour inputs and outputs at the same time. It veneers the role of waste as the mass production catalyst that carries history over the sill separating feudalism from capitalism.

By the sixteenth century, more violent forms of primitive accumulation wresting control of resources across sea-trading corridors were already nurturing the growth of European merchants. Primitive accumulation, the transformation of merchant capitalism into industrialist capitalism, is broader than Europe and pre-dates Europe. In his *Muqaddimah (Prolegomena to Arab History)*, al-Duri (1969) points to the great recession of 1400–1401 (a combination of disease and more frequent wars) coinciding with the Tamerlane invasion of the Levant including forcing thousands of artisans to move to Samarkand and other Central Asian cities, which had cut off land trade routes and created a schism in the development of the productive forces. Such mass labour movement is peculiar to capitalism and indicative of a capitalist

dynamic brewing in the Muslim world prior to the sixteenth century. Labib (1969) as well as others note the rise of Islamic industry stirred by the bustling trade in the Mediterranean, yet these remained negligible because the acquisitioning of significant resources by means of war from around the world, which would transform merchant capital, occurred as the European fleets controlled much of sea trade. It is these transformations to which the English agricultural revolution responded. It was not some post-English civil war weakness of the English landed aristocracy that ushered capitalism (Wood 2002); it was the eventuation of development in the productive forces along with the forced wresting of value from the colonies by a global system structured hierarchically in dominance, albeit, with the European merchants readied to become contractors (as per Engels above) situated atop the pyramid.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. (Marx 1867)

Assigning moneyed forms of value to wasted lives destined for exchange is the synthesis of the quote from Marx above with the earlier quote from Engels where he says that wages are a portion of profit sharing. The broader range of commodities acquired by merchant capital, having objective value on their own and whose interrelations have replaced relations between humans, created new social forms of organisation and *institutions* that could not have existed before; more on immutable or trans-historical institutions in the section titled ‘thingified institutions’ below. In a commodity produced for exchange, value (socially necessary labour time), the useful or, dis-useful but believed to be useful form of value, (use value), and the social form (exchange value) are moments of the same expression of value inseparable from the fetishism attendant upon the production of commodities. Once more, fetishism clings to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities (Marx 1867), and it is the roadmap of the commodity as self-expanding value, which dictates its terms to a thingified society. Accordingly, it is the racism of Europe that had constructed genocide and slavery (waste) as useful products, which in a world dominated by waste had retrospectively become an affirmation that expanding waste was the genus of capital since its birth.

In parallel to European development, one ought to recall that productive forces developed by their own momentum as well. Abou El Haj (2005) argues

that Ottoman society in the middle period cannot be written off as a traditional society incapable of changing and only waiting for the arrival of the nineteenth century. Islamic values or institutions did not obstruct Ottoman capitalism *per se* (Rodinson 1966; Turner 1993). The ‘reformation’ experienced by Europe releasing private property was also budding in the Islamic world by internal as well as external pressures. Lethargic development as it occurred in the East is attributable to policies of colonisation that arrested modernisation which could countervail European ascent. For methodological reasons, Marx held to the position that social convulsions in the East did not coalesce with the necessary historical prerequisites to helm the capital system. Although favouring the impact of colonialism in earlier writings, he later posited that it was the colonial wars that fated the East to settle at lower orbits.

This draws us closer to the misconception relating to Eastern involution. The East and the Islamic world were not stagnant for inherent reasons. Capital, a relation based on private property, unlike previous ways of organising life, demands the exclusion of the other from development. The universal character of capital may also be deduced from the exclusion of labour from the means of production, which had engulfed the planet. Recollecting, capital is not the machine, it is the relation that prohibits the development of the machine in the developing world. Europe enters the scene, and it *systemically* eliminates people and devastates irrigation canals instead of rebuilding them. Such is the gist of the private property relation.

## 10 A Restless Islamic World

From its *Hijazi* beginnings through the Mongol and Crusader invasions to European imperialism, numerous internal political upheavals have unsettled the Muslim world. Of the many revolts against the Abbasid Caliphate, the *Al-Zot* tribes rebellion in Iraq, originally Indian tribes that settled the plains of *Mesopotamia*, and *Al Zanj* (the African revolt), are examples of lower-echelons bonded peasantry taking up arms against empire. Another insurrection worthy of note is the Carmatian revolt, an *Isma'ili* sub-sect with Utopian aspirations. For the many Shiite sects that governed central territories, especially for some *Isma'ili* branches, empowerment of the direct producers and communal ownership would intermittently take hold (Mroueh 1978). There was no monotony to the politics of any of the Islamic Empires. The revolts would inevitably end up in some form of crop sharing reform and land-control reshuffle. The frequency at which the Islamic Empire experienced social eruptions would have created the space in which the tenant farmers could have exercised fleeting control over their lives. Yet, in none of these opportunities did capitalism, the

relationship that socialises labour, which also severs labour from its means of production, follow. Islamic cities were sprawling urban conglomerations with significant artisanry. Taking away the commons and other means of production from English labour occurred at a larger scale in the un-sovereign colony by the diminution of life relative to historical standards. The latter activity lodges in commercial exploitation and deprives peripheral labour from its means of production and subsistence.

As is typical of empires dependent on distant suzerainties, the hand of the central authority exercising executive powers and promulgating laws was unsteady. However, the economic laws underpinning the life of society were far-reaching, changeless, and tagged the slow pace of accumulation – *longue durée*-like. Economics, unlike politics, went beyond the peasants and their communities. It articulated them to an economic structure larger than the immediate locality centred on the common material basis of society, namely subsistence agriculture (Braudel 1995) – the mode of work by which most of the planet reproduced. In the history of an over-stretched and thinning Islamic empire, successive peasant revolts only nominally reorganised the foundation of the economic structure; ordinary everyday life still depended on staple crop production meant for use, regardless of changes to political life. Insofar as it was a history experiencing a difficult labour birthing many political revolts, Islamic history, on account of receding control over trade routes, was incapable of bringing into being a new structure of capitalist social relations. In drawing from the Eurocentric historical accounts of his time, Engels (1894) commented on how the economic conditions of the Islamic world were unphased by political rotation.

A peculiar antithesis to this was the religious risings in the Mohammedan world ... The townspeople grow rich, luxurious and lax in the observation of the law. The Bedouins, poor and hence of strict morals, contemplate with envy and covetousness these riches and pleasures. Then they unite under a prophet, a Mahdi, to restore the observation of the true faith and to appropriate in recompense the treasures of the renegades. In a hundred years a new purge of the faith is required, a new Mahdi arises and the game starts again ... when they are victorious, they allow the old economic conditions to persist untouched.

Before Engels, *Ibn Khaldun* (fourteenth century scholar) had also observed a circularity in terms of the nomadic-urban conflicts sparked by degenerating urban piety, which led back to the same social conditions by a corresponding fluctuation in *asabiya* – kinship bonds (Davis 1991). Pre-capitalist Islamic history is projected as a progression of urban-rural tribal wars not leading to any radical changes in the underlying pillars of economic development. In more

recent observations, Reinert (2013) noted that in *Ibn Khaldun's* preindustrial setting, history becomes a cyclical sequence of tribal wars - with foreign supporters - fighting over the static and non-productive rents that accrue to the empire's capital. Reinert further argues that the forces that broke the vicious circle of rent-seeking violence in Europe were the simultaneous development of a large division of labour and the growth of increasing returns in industry which made capital an asset to all sectors. He traces these developments to Dutch and Italian city-states that first broke with the zero-sum game of constant and inequitable returns. Overlooked in this discourse is that imperialist rents from slavery and genocide were rising all along. Concomitantly, it was the prioritisation of European conquests and European mastery of sea trading routes and ports as the events integrating the planet into a single economic unit under the rule of Europe. What follows is the restructuring of class formations to accord with the greater booty and the novel production relations and, conjointly, the mutation of the class subject of history from feudal to bourgeois.

Irrespective of the shared vested interests in growth via a more discreet division of labour and more tech-advanced capital assets, and unlike previous modes of production, accumulation by waste under capitalism standardises the modes of control and reproduction by favouring dis-useful commodities as opposed to subsistence stuff. Violence becomes means and ends. Violence under capitalism is both systemic and objective, remaining independent of immediate control, as distinct from the more natural-low productivity causes of famines and socially exercised booty wars in the precapitalist age.

Improvement in productive forces and the concomitant deepening of the division of labour were also mentioned in Engels's account of early capitalist development, particularly in Venice and Hanseatic cities (Engels 1894). However, in Engels' version, these economicistic developments are rightly backgrounded in relation to military expansion. Production to meet growing trade via the employment of wage labour followed the collusion of states and trading companies that conquered and exploited new territory (*cf* quote from Marx above). The ascent of capitalist production relations is conditional upon the ascent of military supremacy, and/or the foundational roles of primitive accumulation (Engels 1894; Marx 1867). In terms of chronology, the period after 1492 was a time of great geographic-commercial expansion. The breadth of the market area followed the revolution in control and communication measures. At this point one may speak of merchant wealth sharply growing and transmuting into industrial capital with the militarisation of trading companies. In addition to private property emerging as the exclusion of the other to socially created wealth, the contractor who hires artisans in a single shop as in the quote by Engels above is also a manifestation of changing labour processes at the time.

Unlike capitalism, which is endowed with the scale economies to reconstruct and re-engage assets at faster rates, a strategy of pillage in the pre-capitalist age represented a one-time gain, after which the losses in tribute from ruination amounted to long-term losses. Still, the Islamic world, especially, the parts centred around the bustling Mediterranean at the end of Eurasia, was subjected to a series of setbacks in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from Mongol and Crusade invasions – these imposed a drag on the steadiness and growth in merchant activity necessary for wealth accumulation (al-Duri 1969; Taqoush 2002). In a race for time and given that rebuilding is slow in pre-capitalist phases, many Asian/Western Asian cities were hard pressed to rebuild time and again given the quick succession of Mongol, Mamluk and Crusaders wars. A little after Tamerlane's great recession (1400's), Portuguese fleets ousting the Muslims from the Eastern seas, and later, the Ottoman loss at Lepanto in 1571, evicted Muslims from sea-trading posts. By the late fifteenth century, European piracy and encroachment on global trading posts hampered the sea-trade platforms leaving Islamic merchants behind. These incursions and later European hegemony yanked the take-off platforms of merchant-wealth making from beneath the Muslim world.

Prior to the surge of Europe in the sixteenth century, many Eastern/Eastern European cities were lost to the Mongols and or pillaged by the Crusaders. The Mongols were anomalously brutal in the case of one major city, Baghdad, possibly one of the biggest cities of the East and the political centre of the Islamic world at the time. Incidentally, efforts are afoot by televised historians to highlight the point that pre-capitalist war massacres were too horrific in order to show capitalist atrocities as not so unusual. Such however is a faux problematic, since war horrors are common to class systems, while the current ecocide and the structural genocide of capital are estranged from social control and unprecedeted in scope and scale. At any rate, Academic sources estimate Baghdad's death toll to be between 500,000 and 1 million (Neggaz 2013). In *A History of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell mentions that around 850,000 people perished in the sacking of Baghdad (Russell 1946) – the population had been estimated at more than two million and the percentage of victims from the total population then may proportionally compare with the human losses created by the US invasion of Iraq in modern times. Pursuant to the fall of Baghdad, between 1258 and 1335, state revenue declined by 90 per cent, while only a tenth of the cultivable land was put into production (Abu-Lughod 1989). The destruction initially reverberated across the whole of the East. However, Al-Duri (1969) remarks that the impact tapered down, and there were improvements in certain artisan activity under the Mongol in many Eastern cities afterward. The intertwined Mongol, Crusaders and Mamluk wars in the Eastern Mediterranean weakened the Islamic world grip upon sea trade routes.

Meanwhile, inter-Mongolian wars and Nomadic interruptions imposed ostensible barriers to overland trade routes and mercantile development. Engels (1894) remarked that 'being continually interrupted by political events, just as all Levantine trade collapsed owing to the Mongolian and Turkish invasions when the great geographic – commercial discoveries after 1492 only accelerated this decline and then made it final.' In a remark similar to Engels (1894), Abu-Lughod (1989) notes that inter-Mongolic wars may have reduced capacity and trade volume via Eastern land-trade routes, with Islamic urban centres suffering setbacks. However, it was the loss of the sea-trading posts that really dealt a blow to Eastern merchants. Sea routes were manifold, cheaper, and less risky than the land Silk Road (Frank 1998). That said, Islamic pre-capitalist relations, prior to the sixteenth century, welding together political and economic rights appear to have stayed put. In terms of theory reflective of reality, two interrelated issues stood out as absent for the then retreating Islamic world, first, the world was not yet more integrated into a single system; and two, relations of production have not yet assumed the capitalist form.

That said, it was not something related to cultural or racial underdevelopment distorting institutional formation, which relegated the East to lower orbits as the world entered the capitalist stage. Asiatic stability as 'the secret of the unchangingness of Asiatic societies' reflected a constancy in the development of productive forces that was matched with torpid progress in production relations (Marx 1867). Key to the secret of the unchangingness of Asiatic societies is the stagnation resulting from the '*simplicity*' of the organisation for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in the same social form, and when accidentally destroyed, they spring up again on the spot and with the same name (Marx 1867). At first sight, such *simplicity* may resemble the immature pre-capitalist societies of Hegel whose spiritual developments are travails d'esprit that would culminate in absolute spirit, a stage where people self-realise in the arts and philosophy. However, in Marxian thought spiritual development gravitates around the ontology of social being refashioned by the material conditions of life, and *simplicity* may simply resonate with the unripe productive forces associated with Islamic defeats and expulsion from sea-trading routes. However, such is not simplicity regarding social organisation, for society is never simple at any stage in history. Simplicity here as used by Marx refers to shallow specialisation or low-tech labour-capital ratios, which were not as advanced as the West's in post-sixteenth century times.

In Europe, questions related to the AMP were addressed by European scholars to explain the European transition to capitalism apart from Eastern development (Turner 1978). Asiatic society was misconceived as a series of foregone opportunities missing private property and bourgeois institutions.

It was a manifestation in Marxism of an orientalist-Eurocentric problematic inherent to European thought (Turner 1978). Making garments in Europe was a capitalist activity but the efforts of colonialism and its genocides were not, is also the position of Western Marxism.

Although both Marx and Engels drew on Eurocentric material, theirs was not a Eurocentric position. The method of Marx cannot stop at the characterisation of facts without identifying the contradictions/relations that underlie their state of becoming. Collecting facts and moralising about the oneness of humanity without addressing class as internationalist social being reproducing by practice conditioned social consciousness is short of the mark. Understanding capitalism as a global system of class and power relationships feeding off the expropriation of direct producers by means of war traces the circuit of value from the industrial activity of liquidating life into the waste laden consumerist commodity.

The identity of dominant ideology with dominant class, their sameness, may be evinced in the unity of the European knowledge frame of reference with its ability to condition the popular methods of reasoning. It subjugates knowledge to the standards of Eurocentrism. Such class-corrupted intellect lends itself as foreplan and means for the reproduction of reality, from which one may unconsciously, consciously, or critically draw. Apart from the various mystifications that hide the value relations, the principal function of the faux knowledge of capital is to inject the symbolic and actual forms of working-class dividedness in working class consciousness as a natural power over things. In equation like fashion, opposing the centripetal forces of capital would, subject to the already seeded revolutionary thought that demystifies bourgeois imposed binaries, weaken the clout of capital.

The recognition that value drain through imperialist-financial channels at the expense of the already minimal material basis of social reproduction preliminarily rids knowledge of its Eurocentrism. However, on its own it is *insufficient* unless an explanation of class-cultural expropriation accompanies the process of value transfer. As mentioned in the previous chapter, for Abdel-Malek (1963) it is not any liberal notion of othering or otherness that earmarks orientalism, the complementary concept of Eurocentrism, it is rather the practice of severing the historical memory of a nation, which does the job. In national liberation struggles that overlap with class struggles, national history conserves the symbols of class struggle, which once mobilised may undercut surplus usurpation to empire. The extirpation of national memories in the South is a tributary of the historical surplus value. It is a step used by imperialism to pre-carve the inroads upon which nations are placed to be expropriated without showing any resistance.

## 11 The Infanticide of Early Eastern/Islamic Development

When Islamic-indigenous conditions were readied for modernisation, European colonialism consigned Islamic development to extractivism and commerce as opposed to industry. They were subject to capitalist production relations with capped advancement in the productive forces. Al-Duri (1969), Mundy (1995) and more recently Tezcan (2010) referred to Ottoman modernisation efforts aimed at the development of the productive forces, which were structurally constrained at first, and in the nineteenth century crushed through direct intervention. The Western objective was to thwart the growth of industrial culture and home-grown technology. For much of the Muslim world, the counter-industrialisation measures to which they were subjected continued after colonialism by the combined weight of Western military superiority and compradorism.<sup>4</sup> Across the Muslim world, capitalist class relationships remained locked into Asiatic-type articulations, with hereditary political power becoming the colonial-class guise that furthers exploitation. Structurally, European colonialism had become the principal political force that demolishes selected social relationships and organisations, revamps forms of property, and arrests local innovation, which might empower Third World masses. Europe preserved the repressive side of Oriental feudalism, which has by then become an offshoot of colonial despotism – as opposed to the inappropriate term Oriental despotism.<sup>5</sup> With structural genocide being systemic to capital, European despotism has also become objective and systemic. Tocquevillian

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4 The object of this section is to narrowly focus on the pressure exercised to extinguish Eastern industrialisation in its early stages. I am not attempting to rewrite an already over-exploited history. My use of terms like Islamic-indigenous, Ottoman modernisation, Muslim world, Asiatic-type articulations, and Oriental feudalism lack some specificity because the object here is not a historiography of international relations antecedent to historical events. Moreover, political designation of geographic terrain keeps shifting. By today's definition of Europe, the Ottoman empire was quite a European empire, extending into Poland and Hungary and reaching the gates of Vienna. It only became more Asiatic after the defeat of the Mamluks. Asia covers today's Indonesia, which later came under Dutch domination, and South Asia (the Raj) after conquests by the Dutch or British East India company. The Raj went from traditional domination into direct military and political control. Given the breadth of the discrepancies and the particularity of the object under consideration, I decided to broaden the content of these terms to a more abstract level for the sole purpose, which is to show that capitalist production relations, directly and indirectly, influenced development since the sixteenth century.

5 Wittfogel's (1957) Oriental despotism may be largely discredited, but the stigmatisation of developing countries as tyrannical states remains the justification for imperialist assault. Sooner or later, the class position as such becomes the moral position regardless of evidence to the contrary.

democracy best illustrates the pretence of Europe with its demands for liberalism in France alongside ethnocide for Algerians.

Through personal and impersonal agencies, colonial adherence to the law of value deployed peripheral resources in tandem with the demand of central capital (Baran 1957). Such point is upheld across the Marxist-Leninist spectrum. Chained by the colonially imposed vestigial hierarchies without the biased liberalism found in budding bourgeois forms of political relations in the centre, internally growing Islamic value relations became all the more subordinated to Western capital. The imperial state functions at the behest of capital and subjugates a peripheral formation into a production outlet of labour and raw material, a commercial entrepot or, relegates it to the lower echelons of the value-added ladder. Seen from an economicistic angle, it was not comparative advantage or a similar rationale for free trade, which prompted colonialism; colonialism is the specific form of class system expansionism under capital. Its function is to guarantee the absolute rather than the comparative advantage of the West (Emmanuel 1972). It suppresses ingenuity in peripheral manufacturing either by the privatisation of ideas, or by militarism.

In contrast to the higher quantities of gold and silver circulating in the Western hemisphere as of the sixteenth century, bullion money growth remained comparatively lower in the East until the early eighteenth century (Taqoush 2002). Also, whatever extra amounts of silver circulating in the Ottoman empire would later dwindle because of the empires' building negative trade deficit (Kafadar 2018). It may be *ex-post* discernible that with slow commodification and limited access to new mines, the Ottoman Empire would still lack the broader moneyed economy and a moneyed tax base. Kafadar (1997–1998) speaks of bad (foreign) silver in Ottoman coffers and the decline saner consciousness associated therewith, which may have signalled turmoil in the Empire. Such is an example of capital's structural pressure on still unoccupied Muslim territory. Barkan writing earlier in 1975 ascribes to rising silver and the growth of wealth in Atlantic raw material trade the reasons why the Ottomans incurred a price revolution (inflation) at the end of the sixteenth century and failed to develop industrially thereafter. In addition to sea route losses, lack of cheaper raw material and rising prices cap trade potential. In-kind transactions, rent coinciding with tribute in sharecropping supporting the armies of Empire, were the core of Ottoman fiscal policies. As of the early nineteenth century, with gradually rising volumes of money and trade in cash crops, more of the surplus product would be appropriated in moneyed taxes. As in-kind ground rent declined, the agricultural area expanded as a result of the cash flows stimulated by cash-crop growth (Kivilcimli 1987). The right to titled property was offered to peasants substituting subsistence for cash crop,

which had led to the reclamation of more outlying areas (Owen 2004; Inalcik *et al* 1995). The change in the wealth base of communities, resulting from revamping modes of subsistence into cash-crop culture, restructured channels of appropriation between various communities. With value appearing in the permeable money form, the old social divisions of labour separating the different ethnicities and sects came down. In conjunction to the competition for resources purposefully made-scarce by capital, the dissolution of the old barriers in the social division of labour between communities would become the fault lines of future intercommunal strife.

Revolts swept across the old world, shifting class structures in preparation for the birth of the allegedly more identity standardised nation states (Lutsky 1969). Yet under colonialism and without expansion on the basis of an industrial base, that is, when the product of a nation rises by rent induced wage-led demand, the task of cultural homogenisation by political violence remains incomplete. The ethnic genre or sect as conveyor belt of extractive rents was constitutionalised by the colonists as a potential state within the state; Instead of a state that moderates the cross-cutting tensions between identity and class, many of the modern peripheral states facilitated the flaring of social fissures into imperialistically sponsored civil wars.

The Ottoman Empire, a more autonomous part of the Islamic world, had experienced genuine internal progress driven by the mobilisation of its own capacities (Mundy 1996; Salzmann 2003; Quataert 2002; Owen 1993). By the mid-nineteenth century, silk and cotton textile industries flourished in both the Mashriq and Egypt respectively. Under Mohammad Ali's development project, the industry employed nearly 40,000 wage workers (al-Duri 1969). Then, by the late nineteenth century, European colonialism-imposed rules of conduct and trade liberalisation measures that eroded national industry, which subsequently resulted in the first phase of industrial decline (Lutsky 1969). In the past two centuries, the Ottoman experiments that attempted to uncap potential, for instance, the industrial southern Arab belt linking Tripoli, Aleppo and Mosul was extinguished by colonial design (the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916) after the demise of the Ottoman empire (al-Duri 1969). Typically, by wars and by hindering indigenous industrialisation, colonial suppression accentuated an already inherent path of uneven development under capitalism.

With the onset of European colonialism and the redesign of older forms of political organisations into vassal states, the history commanding the Islamic world became a sub-process of colonial history. Whereas prior to direct European colonialism, there were some cash-crop cultures (oranges), textile industries with some remaining commercial sea-trading posts, colonial assault degraded these capabilities. Silk cloth in the Levant is an example of demolished

industry (Lutsky 1969; Owen 2004). Although the restructuring of pre-capitalist production relations budded earlier than Ottoman modernization, as a result of competitive pressures, colonial forces perverted these changes in a manner destined against the interests of the Muslim masses. Records of more subtle social divisions of labour, waged work in cottage industries and waged military activities were also common to the pre-renaissance Islamic world. Amin (2017) summarises that 'capitalism was not miraculously constituted all at once in the 16th century in the London/Amsterdam/Paris triangle, as the Eurocentric legend has it. Its incubation lasted ten centuries. But, while the successive advances carried out in China as from the 10th century, in the Abbasid Caliphate and then the Italian cities did not lead to the crystallization of this new stage in the history of humanity, they nevertheless produced elements enabling this later crystallization in Atlantic Europe.' All the same, these circumstances remained tied to pre-capitalist production relations in a world whose trade channels would later become integrated by the Europeans. In other words, there was no pre-capitalist Islamic formation being assimilated by the Europeans, instead there was a slowly forming industrial momentum that was structurally snuffed out by Europeans that 'kicked away the ladder' (to use Ha-Joon Chang's phrase). At a later stage, the colonial *rapport de force* implanted itself, *de-jure* in the constitutional form of the state, and *de facto* in continuous military and diplomatic interventions. Colonial powers were the principal power brokers at the heart of the nascent states and remain so to this date through their comprador. The fact that there are so many small Islamic states, some only viable as imperialist outposts of global capital, is *post facto* proof that indigenous industry had little to do with carving political geography. With manufacturing or modern scale economic activity being the springboard to development (Reinert 2008), even the rich Gulf states that were incidentally formed by the British East India Company (Lutsky 1969), are underdeveloped despite their high per-capita income.

Colonialism reshaped the state's political form and function, particularly, its being means of class control and its role in administering distribution of income and resources to various classes. Against the growing monetisation of the tax base, which allowed the central authority to hike tax rates in relations to rising expenditures, the torpid industrial productivity, which dented the rates of wealth creation, created frictions between the populace and the executive bodies of the state, and re-articulated sects through civil strife. Growing bureaucracies and higher expenditure, which required greater revenues and higher taxes, faced off against a sluggish accumulation process. According to Gelvin (2004), the nineteenth century Ottoman state employed nearly half a million civil servants and professional personnel. The greater moneyed expense of the state to handle war-costs and greater social stresses along with

a swelling bureaucracy, were not offset by revenues from indigenous resources. State performance required more indebtedness, which as per the usual came from abroad with strings attached. What this discloses is the origin of financial dependency arising upon colonial dependency. Aside from the crisis of capital, which saddles a peripheral formation with debts, the reasons for unsustainable peripheral debts are intrinsic to a system pressured to form little wealth for itself while interlocked in a global system with rising consumption that requires more financial wherewithal.

By the late 1870s, the Ottoman Empire pawned Egypt's tax revenues to Britain, and £1 million had to be extracted from the Egyptian peasantry to service Ottoman debts to namely British banks (Lutsky 1969). Farming areas were condemned to poverty in relation to wealthier small enclaves made up of middlemen and compradors. More importantly, colonial forces set the exchange price of the local currency in relation to their own currency at levels that undervalued the output of the dominated country, especially the value of subsistence agriculture in the countryside. The process of repressing rural areas and under-valourising subsistence agriculture represents the key link in undermining autonomy and value formation in developing nations. Relegating the Muslim world to a repository of cheaper labour and material for capital and engaging it through the war industry, or by a process of waste, incapacitated its potential for autonomy and self-reliance.

European power infiltration was followed by outright occupation of many parts of the Islamic world. The conditions for resource usurpation came to be determined almost entirely by the pace at which European capital compromises the sovereignty of peripheral formations. Consummate colonialism signalled the beginning of hegemonic articulation. The colonised mode of production, sub-articulated to the dominant central mode, required increasing repression and ideological manipulation to augment the rate of surplus drain to the centre. Colonial practice bore down on the Islamic peasantry and, although the rural areas appear subsistence-like and delinked from the capitalist cycle, they were linked through the systemic policies that either dislocated or extirpated peasants from the countryside. In one World War I instance, Lutsky (1969) describes how bonded Egyptian peasant-labour was used as a human shield forced to march in front of British soldiers as they attacked the German and Ottoman armies in Gaza. The shovel-wielding Egyptians withstood the first rounds ammunitions before the arrival of British soldiers taking cover behind them.

The production of a Western commodity begins with colonial conquests. The devastation of the colonies persists in the continued global social dislocation. However, with the financialisation of waste dogging the planet, the burden will

disproportionality fall upon the weaker Islamic states,. True enough, with the advance of time and better machinery, wealth rises and unevenly shifts the level of income upward; however, in terms of shares from available wealth, the laws of capital dictate that the proportion of subsistence income must either absolutely fall or relatively rise at a lower rate than the share of capitalist-class incomes. In the vortex of waste, however, incomes discounted for premature death and pollution are all falling, for Southerners at higher rates than others. As to whether working class income will rise, or fall is contingent upon the power balance of the class struggle and the role of its related institutions in shaping development. Contra these class struggles or historically determined institutions, mainstream efforts highlight Third World failure in terms of reified and trans-historical institutions. In the below section, I discuss the vacuity of such approach.

## 12 Thingified Institutions

Apart from, but not so unlike the chauvinist strands that attribute underdevelopment to race and cultural traditions, a more recent approach based on New Institutional Economics (NIE), principally represented by the work of Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), explains the transition to capitalism on the basis of transhistorical institutional qualities. The West has good institutions and has crossed the barrier, or *made it*, while the East is locked into underdevelopment because of its institutions. Made it to what other than waste, is a question these authors do not explore. At any rate, institutions in the neoclassical NIE tradition are 'a set of constraints on behaviour in the form of rules and regulations; a set of procedures to detect deviations from the rules and regulations; and, finally, a set of moral, ethical behavioural norms which define the contours that constrain the way in which the rules and regulations are specified, and enforcement is carried out' (Srivastava 2004). In contrast, institutions in the Marxian sense are forms of capital that reflect social class balances. Under capitalism, they are social organisations and instruments that reproduce capital, whereas under any pre-capitalist historical stage, they reproduce the then prevailing mode of production. In short, they mediate materially grounded and historically determined social class relationships.

Under capitalism, instead of being rule setters at the behest of the working class, capitalist institutions expropriate social labour, or put to practice the logic of the commodity as self-expanding value. With such specific form and function, a capitalist institution is a social form that could not have come into being before a broader commodity-producing world had come into being.

Whereas every concept exhibits a shifting qualitative meaning in relation to concrete conditions, in the NIE's canon, it is argued that certain immutable qualities of institutions are anachronistic and explain contemporaneous as well as past developmental progress. Much like everything in neoclassical economics, with its concepts of market, price equated to marginal products, etc., an NIE institution is pertinent for all time and places and stands above history.

As in every concept that springs to prominence in mainstream social science, reified institutions or, institutions thingified and given a life of their own, are the theoretical subsumptions that instantiate a capital that has collapsed into its ideology. With theory subordinate to ideology, the formal idea of what constitutes a *good* institution becomes noumenon-like or a logic known to exist but falls beyond immediate experience. All practice is a distortion of an ideal that could never be fully accessible to knowledge. A good institution therefore is a god-like figure. Forgetting the monumental waste for a second, these Western-like institutions are labelled *good* because they have set rules of conduct that promoted the success of Western civilisation. Such institutions constructed from *a posteriori* phenomenon but bestowed with metaphysical *a priori* status and projected onto a past in which modern institutions could not have possibly existed, also happen to explain the failures or successes of that past, and its continuity into the present, to boot.

Apart from post-reformation Europe, the rest of the world has become a 'bad capitalist' because it failed to develop good or democratic institutions that respected property rights, etc. Yet, to this day Zionist-Protestantism, a continuation of central reformation, promotes colonisation in Palestine and feeds pro-imperialist wars by divine revelations. If anything, European reformation has proven a reflexive-adaptive mechanism, rather than cause of capitalism, whose modern extension in evangelical rapture with wars that bring back God set back much of the potential for socialist rupture. Recollecting an earlier hypothesis: save the fact that the planet has been sacked by the reformed West, in a world in which capital is the universal relation that governs development, capitalism is also a universal condition in which the capital relation intensifies in peripheral formations relegated to subordinate positions.

NIES are rooted in the neoclassical model. For the neoclassical school, capital and labour (factor inputs) inhabiting a frictionless and information/symmetrical world deliver an optimal output in which labour and capital are paid fairly in accordance with their contributions and allocated efficiently based on their market prices. Whereas prices are class-power designated magnitudes of value, and incomes are class-power derived shares, the history of the social conditions that re-found class power is missing from such theory. The beating that the developing world takes from colonialists to forge the starting

conditions, incomes and resource prices, and altogether history, is missing. Facts and events are superimposed against neo-platonic ideals. For instance, the *Ceteris Paribus* (all other things being equal or unchanging) or the reduction usually required to elucidate thought processes, purposely deselects the reality of class, which is after all the ontological condition of social being. People cannot exist and act without the mediating forms of social organisation or class forms. By nesting agency in an abstract individual capable of consumption by choice, reductionism leaves the choice-less massacred brown people, whose very death is the consumption item of choice in the North.

To stand on better grounds and bring some constituents of reality back into the model, neoclassical economics introduces transaction costs, which are the focal point of NIEs. To look less reductionist and address extra-economic institutions, which visibly bear upon resource allocation, it sets up a sub-market for every asymmetry in the system to re-achieve price-led equilibrium. Having universalised units of measure to its own interests, it paradigmatically consigns every act to its fabricated prices and quantities framework.<sup>6</sup> Any activity distorting its pristine reality of perfect foresight and competition, like moral hazards, poor property rights, and bureaucratic corruption, gets associated with a transaction cost to which there is a market and a price. Each of these institutions of property rights and corruption, etc., through the better rule setting institution is assigned a pertinent price which covers the cost of its asymmetric impact, leading of course to incorporating non-economic measures into the conventional price and quantity framework. Moral hazards or any other information related asymmetry is costed to better reallocate resources. The tautology that a good institution must be present to implement the rules, which tax bad behaviour or transaction costs, circularly generates a good institution, is blatant.

Removed from history, or the travail of the class struggle, such nomological-deductive method is true in form. Based on the selected assumptions and related selected observations from phenomenon, the hypothesis is also borne out by selective observations from reality. Since the West followed good rules, in property rights and addressed corruption or asymmetries, *ergo*, the West has developed and improved welfare. Colloquially, the West is rich, and it is so

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6 In Kula W. (1986), *Measures and Men*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, the author makes the case that since measuring opens the door to deceit, the class in power stifles the measures that would justice to the masses by the exercise of state power and its police. Such is a historical process that when measures moved from being particular and concrete or related to the human body to being abstract, as in the metric system, class authority also intervenes to tilt the results of what is being measured in its favour (Kula 1986). Under capitalism, the fetish of the money-form of capital as a proxy for the capital class also measures the magnitude of value in ways that short-change the equivalent in socially necessary labour time.

on account of its anti-corruption, or democratic institutions, and so on. Formally, nothing is wrong with this layout. However, that the West had beaten the planet through genocidal and ecological wars is not a transaction cost, nor it is included in this model as a value process or wealth making activity. The broader context of the economy is that capital must maximise the waste to maximise its profits, as opposed to maximising the production of useful goods. Corruption or bad property rights, as in the co-optation of peripheral ruling classes to shift public wealth to private US banks is also absent in these models. The phenomenal waste or, the stock of value or the core of global wealth, which characterises the quality of the capital stock built up by European institutions is forgotten. In these models, preponderant imperialism, the practice that generates waste as wealth, is not an institution whose transaction cost is dominant or worthy of mention.

The accounted for or unaccounted for transaction costs are not separate institutions on the margin, they are the fulness of reality, the actuality or what is before us by necessity or chance realising observable events. Together, these transactions costs must add up to the waste-laden wealth. However, the speciousness of neoclassical models is such that if the market model failed to reach equilibrium, it does so because there were conditions in actuality, overlooked transaction costs, which had caused the system to fail (Fine 2016; Kadri 2020). What the model neglects however, is not some bad property institution. It is much of reality propped by value relations. The exponential rise in waste and waste counted as wealth is *ex-post facto* not an equilibrium or a steady state scenario. The explosive system cannot be attributable to the equilibrating forces of supply and demand for goods and undesired transactions priced and factored into the system. If anything, accounting for imperialism as a stage in history, the activity of drawing value by wasting social nature, especially, in the South, or the fact that the prices of commodities must become relatively cheaper by cheapening man in the South relative to the North, may shed light on the issue; how so?

With the initial assumption of neoclassical economics based on one-sided abstract man, *contra* social man, to attempt an explanation of the concrete totality with such a man, or *homo economicus*, is a failure of theory at birth. Neoclassical theory is flawed way before theory becomes subjected to interpersonal comparisons and experimentations because the abstract man may exist only as a psychological trait of real man. According to Fine (2016), that man is an automaton without real subjectivity. Fine also comments that the neoclassical technical apparatus and technical architecture (maximising utility and equilibria), together he dubs TA<sup>2</sup>, are the esoteric mathematics that shield neoclassical economics from critique as it grows inwards before it grows outward

into the discipline that imperialises other disciplines. In other words, no matter the absurdity of mainstream economics, it is ideologically insulated with its positivist casuistry, and no matter how ludicrous it seems, it remains received theory.

Observably so, consumerist culture is hedonistic to the point of excessively entropic self-consumption. Such has nothing to do with the utility an individual acquires from the taste of consumables, and everything to do with capital's hegemony over culture. To measure and predict that modern consumers consume voraciously in an imploding planet that undergoes auto-consumption, is to predict the obvious. To explain the obvious, which is what science is about, is to examine the historical conditions that pervert proletarian consciousness, ripping social being from social knowing, and rearranging man into a self-devouring form of value.

Furthermore, selecting some of the real but distorting conditions that stand in the way of equilibrium, such as some transaction costs, and reincluding these as additional variables in a model is theory by convenience. Put differently, hijacking the function of institutions from institutional economics and lumping their mediatory role as an additional priced commodity is a facile attempt to fit the world into the broader category of supply is demand. Such is not too intelligent, because formally it repositis the truism that everything must equal everything. Fine and Milonakis (2003) describe how neoclassical economics searches for conceptual support in other sciences as 'imperialising' other disciplines (see also Fine 2016 and Fine and Dimako 2016) Whatever institution blocks equilibrium – unruly property rights, asymmetric information, and any other condition *ad infinitum* - would be priced by sub-markets as the system gravitates to equilibrium. The forgotten point here is that in an auto-negating process, all variables are products of their auto-changing nature and of their relationship to other auto-changing variables. Such a process requires processual concepts or, concepts whose substance is social-law defined, and which are animated by class subject. As there are no historical laws in neoclassical economics, the metaphysical mode of conceptualisation, like the concept of abstract man as opposed to social man, bears a biased reference to reality. Theoretical rigour is not about the enumeration of various variables added to an equation in their abstract and functional forms, it is rather about the historical law defining their relations to themselves and other self-differentiating variables (Niebyl 1946). Accordingly, the issue of quantification becomes one of gauging the relations of social power that underpin the rise of epiphenomenon from phenomenon, rather than an explanation of epiphenomenon with itself devoid of power/class relations. To reaccentuate, it is not predictive power to posit that people in the modern age like to consume, one must ask

what were the historical reasons that turned them into autophagic automata. To predict something that I have constructed and assigned a figure to and a unit of measure is not prediction, it is insanity. Rigour is first about identifying in the overdetermined whole the leading link in formulation to other links, the historically determined social relation, which governs the system's dynamics.

Elementally, historical uncertainty vitiates the possibility of modelling becoming theory. However, the NIE's 'add as you go from social conditions model' while overlooking social contradiction and interrelatedness also inhibits the function of models to serve as illustrative tools. It is not just that some variables were overlooked, and that theory requires their inclusion in a continuous process of *falsification* to stand on firmer grounds, the issue is that neoclassicism begins with strict assumptions, such as diminishing returns, preconceived to prove the capital system as un-explosive when exponential waste is plainly the quantitative stock of capital. This conventional theory fails to account for the class/subject of history or the dynamics of systems as in who is doing what and by means of which intermediating agency. Relatedly, it fails to define hierarchically structured social class relationships, which pre-position the relationships of various social variables to themselves as well as to each other.

At this intersection, it may be as well to recall that the encroachment wars of the sixteenth century in Africa and Asia were followed with direct colonialism. By the eighteenth century, the main reason for which European powers did not dissect the Ottoman Empire was their disagreement over the distribution of booty (Lutsky 1969). Since then, there are in the vicinity of many Islamic states, US troops patrolling the land, the Fifth and Sixth Fleet cruising the seas, various US-supported military and non-military institutions/NGO's controlling dissent, and to boot, the newly created state of Israel, which in the anecdotal words of Henry Kissinger costs the US less than the Sixth Fleet to maintain as a gendarme of the Middle East. In neoclassical formal constructs, there are no equations to capture this situation. For instance, there is no variable representing central social spending to stabilise society or, other non-defence spending, which serves constant war preparedness. Biases like these remove from view the concrete contradictions that pauperise the Muslim masses and impose upon them the class institutions responsible for the usurpation of their surpluses.

In terms of good institutions and their institutional efficacy, which delimit property rights and demarcate the division of labour, US/NATO fire and ideological power continue to enforce any contract. They also set the terms of trade, exchange and transaction costs, and define rights, including property rights and the rights, or the lack thereof, of people to own their natural resources and

use the proceeds to improve their living conditions. The institutions of imperialism steadied by military and ideological apparatuses are the institutions of all the institutions in the periphery. As a living example of the institution of colonial plunder, Iraq after the US occupation has lost control of its national institutions and resources. While it boasts a European Style Parliament, its former more egalitarian society has recently exhibited one of the lowest labour shares globally (ILO 2014). With its continued inter-communal tensions and oil proceeds parked in US treasuries, the US's National Security Council cliché 'our American oil under Arab sands' may be packed with meaning after all.

In point of fact, the market in developing formations along with its prices of production and consumption, and with nearly all of its symbolic structure, has become a by-product of the imperialist power differential. Much of the indigenous culture, which could have established, national institutions capable of halting surplus drain via barter and price terms of trade, was the object of imperialist assault and ridicule, especially, import substitution. Institutions in the NIE tradition drop the institutions of the imperialist class (particularly, the IFIs), the cross-border class integration with the comprador, and their combined weight in reproducing an ideology of subordination, notably their role in making the masses interiorise defeatism. As to the democracy and democratic practice touted by NIES, the very use of the cliche European democracy, the cover for slavery and genocide, discloses the dogma of such schools. European democracy is capital's gyroscope, or the redistributive and allocative mechanism, which mitigates an otherwise implosive capitalist system. Recalling: the distribution of wealth to European working classes from the proceeds of commercial exploitation reorganises the social order around warring national identities and colonial plunder. In a value transfer arrangement originating in the global South, any true form of popular democracy representation for the vanquished working classes would undermine the rate of waste accumulation, and hence becomes anathema to capital.

NIE proponents argue that failed systems of property relations are sustained by an undemocratic polity, which allows a minority to gain at the expense of society's welfare. Although this position inequality gaps in any class system, designating the imperialist class that benefits from the waste of social nature through finance are neglected. Relatedly, as discussed in the section above on the origins of equity and development, equity since ancient times reflects the ruling regime's desire for political stability vis-à-vis the strength of the labouring class; civil liberties and equity are inversely related to political regime instability. Less aggressed, representative of labour or more autonomous developing formations may channel their resources for their own development. The Western formations are stable by the conformity and uniformity

of their organically partnered white classes and the degree of instability they inject in other developing formations.

Acemoglu and Robinson (2010) suppose institutions, which support *irrational* property rights as a result of the narrow elite, will organise society to the benefit of such elites at the expense of the vast mass of the people. There is no breakthrough in scientific discovery here: the oddness is the word *irrational*, which discloses the parochiality of such stance. Irrational for which class, or how could such elites in command be irrational when they gain from such organisation? Up to this time, the war on terror and its trillions in revenues to the financial class have buttressed capital's rule. A 'narrow elite' expropriates in relation to the power balances with other elites. While the use of the term elite intends to relegate social class to the background, attribute agency to culture, and personalise history; an elite, just like a network only exemplifies class power at a fleeting moment in time, and accordingly, it is the operationalisation of capital whose purpose is to reproduce capital. Apart from sacrificing the content of holistic and interrelated social analysis, the concept elite serves to theoretically annul the possibility of radical change. Bottomore (1964) argues that G. Mosca's and V. Pareto's theory of elite rotation, which restores similar people back to power, is seemingly independent of class only to strengthen the rule of class. The personification of class, or the definition of class in circumspect cultural terms as does the concept of elites, obscures class as relation to and condition of social being or sub-division of history.

To elucidate while using their term elite, it is the co-determination of the 'narrow elite' with other 'elites,' which becomes the agency of capital, or let us just say, the transnational elite consortia. The momentum of such consortia organises value transfers within and from society and it reshapes the types of property (the institution of property) in ways commensurate with the rate of expropriation; under capital, expropriation is led by a commodity fetish while the wage system and its wage labour continuously evolve into novel forms of capital. Accordingly, the changing historical content of private property rights is the materialisation of a class determined history. Whether rational or irrational, private property rights are the genesis of capital and must exclude the majority. Private property is indeed another way of saying capital. In neoclassical economics, a principal justification for the exclusion and dispossession of workers from social property over the means of production is the risk undertaken by an entrepreneurial minority and, as such, its sacrifice entitles it to the wealth. To tersely reconceptualise an earlier proposition regarding history: history is impersonal and, in and of itself cannot be ethical because it is does not enjoy the state of sentience or of being a real person. Its ethicality or rationality are class-standards defined. The delayed welfare impact of the market

is postulated as ethical by capital. That is, leave the market in a laissez-faire position, and logically, sometime down the line, more people benefit. Concretely, to free capital accounts (value) order to quicken the re-allocation of resources to more efficient endeavours, imply that productivity and wealth will grow faster. Aside from the questions that wealth is waste and who's wealth is growing, the logical is not contiguous to the historical. There is so much a 'peripheral narrow elite' can consume from its excess moneyed wealth, while its savings, which are the incremental portion of the wealth of developing nations, must be stowed away in the centre. In addition to the more significant premature deaths, underpriced labour and other resources benefitting the centre, this surplus moneyed drain is not haphazard. The logic of neoclassical theory, the wait and see the wealth in consequence of laissez-faire, fits neatly into the logic of the commodity or the vested interests of imperialism.

In NIE thought, undemocratic political institutions impose faulty property rights regimes, whose transaction costs hamper the ideal functioning of a competitive market economy. The function of such institutions blocks the majority from partaking in the wealth and raises the costs of their organising against the status quo. Do such observations need to be assumed when the connection of white working classes or comprador to central ruling classes does 'rationally' all it can to exclude the majority? Anyhow, on the not so observable side of things or the side of imperialism rearing self-defeating consciousness, since every social condition must be in a state of social organisation, the NIE inspired authors do not recognise that through its defeatism, the non-benefiting majority have organised themselves into exclusion from wealth. In allegory to Dostoyevsky's letters from the underground, the workers have been inculcated into irrationality and self-torment. This majority also acquiesces to picayune benefits from meagre publicly owned assets in allegedly less competitive-efficient markets that rebreed their poverty. More important, reified institutions in the NIE tradition display no social class content as such. With class being the relation of social being to the mode of social reproduction, without relating a social condition or its corresponding concept such as property rights to its class origin, the concept becomes just a form without connection to the subject-influenced circumstances under which its counterpart in reality unfolds. Aside from the spectacularism of wealth, which vicariously deludes the masses, nearly every concept used by the mainstream is fathomed to be a tool that serves the minority to exclude the majority, including no less the mainstream's 'the rich are getting richer' remark. The true personification of wealth is not in the recognition of the wealth gap, it is in the recognition of the consciousness gap. The substance of wealth is the consent of the working classes to the gap in wealth.

Fine and Milonakis (2003) critique of NIE's postulates that in line with neoclassical economics, NIE settles on the strongest form of reductionism and determinism at the level of the individual, and the impact of other factors is acknowledged if only to be sidelined in deference to the 'pricing of principle.' Prices it may be recalled are class-power derived symbols of the magnitude of value pre-staged by capital. The principle, by which the price system hangs together to ideologically reproduce capital, abides by capital's laws of motion, chiefly, the law of absolute surplus value. Capital prices by formal principles, the equalisation of marginal quantity, risk, or a transaction cost with price, like the mundane moral hazard pricing of car insurance premiums, which bears little resemblance to historical processes. How much young adults must pay for car insurance given their higher probability of getting into an accident is different from how much countries around the world pay to ensure against war. With war being necessary to capital, the latter form of insurance is unlikely. Arguably, just like the transaction costs associated with poor property rights, imperialist assaults upon the developing world may count merely as additional transaction costs for which a risk premium may suffice to halt war or motivate it. However, a war upon a less developed country is actualised for a symbolic sum of prices gelled in the revenues of financial capital brokered in Western markets. The *activity* of war is a shaper of historical development, and unlike insurance costing, it is the predisposition of capital (its desired accident).

In contrast to being a process that will restructure the platforms for getting the most value for price, the NIE can regard the imperialist war institution as an additional transaction cost equation in a constrained utility maximising function – to derive the coefficient or the appropriate risk premium as in war insurance premiums. Following this logic, even in actuarial specification, the construed set of equations will bear little if any relation to the *activity* of war; why so? War restores capital and lays out the condition for the making of its price system, and roundaboutly, it re-founds the power base of a price system that allocates the war as a value making process for capital. In this capital desired spiral, war is more than just a transaction cost, it is the defining link of the social production totality or the rudimentary relation of value without which capital is no more. Like positivism, neoclassicism may impose the truth of arithmetic upon a partially sectioned side of reality (e.g., car insurance). However, without an absurd level of generalisation or when the world is assumed of the same quality to be quantified, figuratively speaking, the arithmetic of the mind cannot match the arithmetic of history. In a quality dissimilar world, the math of the car insurance premium cannot be extrapolated by induction onto the war business. Additionally, although endogenous to the system, war cannot be stopped by proportionate disincentives (war risk

premiums), because war in taxonomy-like classification is the phylum of capital's classifications. War and car insurance may be related but exist at two different planes like phylum and specie. Without imperialist war, cars and insurance companies may be socially owned, in contrast to private. The issue then becomes not that there is or there is not relevant correspondence between formulae and processual facts, which is always the case, the issue is the neoclassical dogma, which presents the truth of subjectively construed formulae as representative of the workings of the social production totality.

On the face of it, matters are clear in the sense that without the imperialist wars, car insurance profits or any other profits may be dampened. Also, without the imperialist wars, car insurance premiums or the cost of any other commodity in the centre may be more expensive. However, to uncover capital's subterfuge shrouded in the eloquent equations of neoclassical economics is not a matter for academic discussion. No matter the proof that counters neoclassical economics, even if one shows it to be a chimera, it will remain a system of belief rather than science. A turnaround in received theory requires a political victory of labour over capital. When labour is a form of capital that reproduces capital, labour adopts the optic of capital. The dominant thought that Arabs and Africans are lesser beings, a thought that Arabs and Africans themselves may uphold in their state of capitulation, reverses only when social being identifies with social consciousness, which is by definition the actualisation of working-class freedom. Denial of the obvious may appear as cognitive dissonance, however, it is more a class position whose impunity is established upon the concept of neoclassical scarcity. When peoples must fight over the socially erected scarcity in resources, made so by the power of capital in a planet that overproduces, the rationale for the ongoing wars, no matter how silly or how robust, is superfluous. War will go on anyways.

For the terms of power determine the terms of trade, capital must drill defeatism into society by creating the social conditions for defeat. Working-class defeat worsens its terms of trade and bears down on its negotiating power. As price signals machinate value and the money form veneers the usurpation of value, dominant theory develops in ways that rarely questions the social foundations of prices. Prices are said to be given or at best *a posteriori* and calls for their theorisation to occur as outcomes of market imperfections (like monopolies). Monopolies however are not ideas in still time. *They are the social conditions cum activities of monopoly making*, which are by-products of imperialist wars and waste. The neoclassicals stick to the logic of forms rather than the class content of *activity*. They overlook the making of the power undercurrents of prices, which are initially staged by the laws of capital, and which may be summarised in the necessity to expropriate labour. They fail to

note that every exchange is a coercive activity whose symbol in price re-sustains the lopsided balance of power from which it has emerged.

The mainstream discourse stretches institutions - only their organisational breadth and function, but omits their class content as historical subject adhering to the laws of capital. The objective forces of history and the pre-existing monolithic power-structures – that people are born into imperialist-bombed social formations without electricity and running water – are discarded from the NIE definition of institutions. As such, NIE institutions are reality-unreferenced abstracts that span the full length of a qualitatively monotonic history, or an unchanging universal across time. The peril of overgeneralisation across time is that states, parliaments, forms of property, production relations and any other institution must bear unchanging qualities for millennia. Metamorphosis is recognised by its inherent vestige, as opposed to its novel class formation reacting to novel circumstances, which had negated its past forms to become something else. For instance, it would not be the historically determined institution of chattel slavery or genocide, altogether waste, which catapulted Europe to the pinnacle of capitalist hierarchy, since slavery and genocide have occurred before capitalism and allegedly for reasons endemic to mankind. Accordingly, Europe's rise is also transcendental and rooted in its cultivated heritage of Greek democracy. Such ascendant spiritual development predisposes an entire continent (Europe) to swing to the more 'progressive capitalism we know' and take the planet with it – always with justifiable heavy costs to the South. However, these costs are 'worth it' not because of some inbuilt un-ethical predisposition of white civilisation, but because materially the costs, which are the wasted social nature, are the current rents as well as future rents. The NIE's trite argument rests against the absurdity that slave-owning Ancient Greece was democracy in kernel and would later become the genus of all future democratic development. Indeed, the record of bourgeois democracy resembles Greek democracy, while democracy is a form of class power, the former democracy, which is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, had different content. Relative to what it could socially improve, its structural massacres outweigh any crimes committed by ancient Greece. Although it is plain to see that conditions were radically different in Hellenistic times, the rationality of that time is inductively applied to modern times. To recap: markets in today's world are phenomenal. They are platforms for exchange, and more importantly, they are the principal allocative charts of nearly all resources. Markets in Hellenistic times were on the margin of society and practically irrelevant to resource allocation, unless allegorically one considers Diogenes's search for a human with a shred of humanity in some ancient market counts as the optimal resource allocation institution.

Doubtless, science and its application in technology under capitalism increase wealth. The constitution of this wealth, whether useful or wasteful, depends

on the balance of class forces – when labour organises man and nature there is more usefulness in wealth and *vice versa*. That said, the pile of waste so far remains the product of imperial armies and the ideology of victors. The case may be that the European institution of democracy or other similar institutions of social organisation, which had readily become receptive of their own spiritual changes, were the reasons for this wealth; however, spiritual changes do not grow out of thin air. They are ideological responses to the wealth accumulated by imperial wars. The rationale for native-genocides is such spiritual development, some natives were delivered into civilisation by the elimination of many, and as argued at length in this work such ‘spirituality’ is a product of capital to reinforce capital. Emmanuel (1972) remarks that it took centuries (dating back to Rome) of direct plundering to make possible a kind of primitive accumulation on an international scale in the sixteenth century. He also pays attention to Venetian looting in the Mediterranean prior to the sixteenth century, and latent Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese colonisation, which had immediate bearing on capturing sea routes and ports. Europe’s relation with the rest of the world has been an act of piracy, such that when capitalist productive forces required a change in capitalist production relations, ‘an immense mass of booty had already been accumulated in Europe’ (Emmanuel 1972).

When institutions in the NIE school are defined as a set of transhistorical rules, all of social reality conceptualised in ideal forms can fit into such frame. The logic that although all markets for exchange in medieval times were small, but only the European market institution successfully grew because of its better institutional rules, is presented as proof for superiority without the mediating massacres of Europe. However, since imperialism lays down the rules into which peripheral masses are supposed to theoretically squeeze into in order to develop, yet their state of surrender to imperialism snatches the resources with which they could develop, their institutions will be condemned to failure from the start. The institution of the market in the periphery is a sub-class of the central market marionetted to waste its own social formation. Western hegemony over peripheral cultures, along with the decapitation of indigenous class forms, which would potentially support anti-imperialist struggle, are concomitant to the imperialism of resources. Save the militarised enclaves or branch-plant economies, like Taiwan and Israel, imperialism precludes catching-up.

### 13 Islamic Wealth and the Transition

Institutions that propel development arise as forms of social organisation of historically specific production relations. To ignore historical periodisation erected on the basis of periodised laws of development and not particularise

the concepts of each historical phase, opens the way to gelatinous explanations that resemble paradigmatic thought that reduces quality to quantity. A historical period is not set against universally shared characteristics across time. What demarks periodisation are phenomenal differences and the particular laws behind the appearance of actuality. For instance, at no other period in history does discussion in environmental circles revolve around 'will the planet heat up in 50 or a 100 years.' The more hushed up debate is why has capital embodied in Western civilisation extinguish millions by war and why has nature been turned into dead labour on behalf of capital. Although science is about questioning phenomenon, the unquestionable expanse of the disaster brings to the fore the logic of development that has led to such a state.

Further on periodisation, different forms of property prevailed across history, but exchangeable title deeds holding value for individual owners beyond the land's use for subsistence could only have occurred under capitalism. Contrasted with some circumstances in the Islamic world, one finds that before the structural pressure of Europe laded upon the Islamic formations, the Muslim world supported multiple sorts of property rights (Mundy 2010). The structure of property and taxation was not so straightforward: urban *milk/mulk* versus status of agricultural land, *waqf* versus *shar'i* transmission for the former, changing doctrines and tax practices and articulation to productivity over the centuries of agricultural land use, changing legal status of cultivators, make it difficult to presume an unchangeability of Muslim institutions and to have an easy rule-of-thumb about the structure of property relations in Islam (Mundy and Smith 2007; Mundy 2004).

Private property is not to be confused with personal property; the former is the ownership of the means of production, which excludes labour from the right of use by the social imperative of permanent overproduction crises. Can this occur anywhere before capitalism? Not so, which implies that any comparison of property to times prior to capitalism must reduce the constituent elements of property relations to only their quantitative structure. If one were to comply with the language of NIE, the institution of private property as such could not have appeared outside the capitalist ubiquity of property assuming the form of exchange value. One ought to note that the falsity of this quantifying way of reasoning, in addition to abstracting from particular institutions of property, governance and trade rules that rise above the specificity of historical time, have been critiqued as bogus logic a little less than two centuries ago:

If it be the office of comparison to reduce existing differences to identity, the science which most perfectly fulfils that end is mathematics. The reason of that is that quantitative difference is only the difference which is

quite external ... If quantity is not reached through the action of thought, but taken uncritically from our generalised image of it, we are liable to exaggerate the range of its validity, or even to raise it to the height of an absolute category. (Hegel 1831)

Put differently, to prove theory by means of attributing trans-historical quantitative measures to objects, one must exaggerate, omit or distort certain aspects of the object. For instance, Islamic land ownership and forms of property were complex and varied in relation to the policies of central authorities (Cahen 1982), yet the holding of wealth derived by the favouritism of the central authority could not shift Islamic private or *waqf* property and inheritance rules or institutions of property into capitalist ones. Although the multifarious Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) schools could have easily extended *sharaka* (business partnership) into legal corporatism, given the adaptability of Islam to commerce – that did not happen because property was not yet commodified/monetised (or as discussed above, production relations were not yet capitalist). Unlike the more recent corporations in which personal liability is waived, late nineteenth-century corporations were a form of *sharaka* in which owners bore personal responsibility for their business failure; a replica of Islamic *sharaka*, but with the variant of being capitalist. To be sure, the legal property category of the pre-capitalist Islamic age, even if it shares many of the characteristics of modern property, has not yet evolved into an economic category distinguished by being a commodity under capitalism. Under capital, the legal category and the economic category represent a symbiotic unity in the moneyed form of value.

At a farther remove, Islamic inheritance rules as distinct from European primogeniture is said to divide initial wealth holdings into smaller portions, thus diminishing the wealth pie and the horizon for capitalist development (Kuran 2011). There are several logical and historical shortfalls to this argument. Logically, such is an accounting framework applied to Islamic inheritance, which is a changing institution of a changing history. Historically, wealth was not held by the same lord and his descendants long enough to be thinned down as it passes from one generation to the next. In typical management by objectives, central authorities made sure that provincial fiefs changed hands often enough such that provincial *za'im* (suzerains) do not threaten the central political order. The high turnover in the hold of suzerains upon land implies that property is less likely to be divided into smaller parcels bequeathed to a second or third generation. Land was not yet moneyed to be stored as wealth, while, a blanket proposition as such misses the obvious but persistent high degree of wealth inequality under Islamic and other feudal structures.

In pre-capitalist Islamic formations, the right to tribute and growth in wealth was more by allegiance to central authorities rather than inheritance (*al-Duri* 1969). Taking Kur'an's argument to its logical end and assuming that child mortality was not an issue, had there been uninterrupted population growth with the smaller parcels passed down by inheritance, the Islamic world could have been a haven of income equality. The hypothetical aside, or as the world turns capitalist, such redivision of assets cannot shape wealth accumulation when economies metamorphose into industrial or scale economies. Unlike the marginal finance of the Middle Ages betting on trade risk and turnover of merchant rents, finance in the capitalist age is a precondition for accumulation. It furnishes capital with seigniorage rights (the issuance of money), at low or no cost at all, for investment to be effected. In moneyed economies where higher technology and more efficient use of inputs drive the accumulation of wealth, the role of initial assets is not an impediment to growth. Many a time, the invention of low-cost technology de-valorises and disengages much of the existing capital stock.

Under the capital social relationship, imperial patents promoting monopolies in trade alongside the militarisation of merchant capital created unprecedented wealth in Europe. That growth was accompanied by a development in the productive forces and, subordinately, new technologies and deeper divisions of labour. Institutions organising particular social relationships, like Islamic inheritance, are interrelated subsets of the broader, more determining production relations, which are the conveyor belts of the development process. Within the totality of relations composing social reproduction, the whole as clarifies Baran (1961) '[c]arries with it the inescapable necessity of refusing to accept as a datum or to treat as immune from analysis, any single part of the whole.' Whence the transformation of European merchant capital into a force organising social production developed by growing demand from the world market, control of peripheral resources and ownership of trading routes and posts, the study of any institution must recognise the novel conceptual forms referencing new epiphenomena and resituate them within that broader and more determining historical context – to follow on Baran. Institutions such as the Islamic *sharaka* or inheritance laws cannot prepare society to enter into a historical phase with which they are not co-temporally re-articulated. When capitalism dawns, these institutions enter the capitalist age as anachronistic processes whose form and content are subordinate to the production relations of capitalism.

With Muslim defeat came the loss in demand for its merchant products - its export platform vanished. Its wealth was declining in comparison to that of victorious Europe. By the sixteenth century, Europe was ahead of the rest

of the world, and the standard of living of the well to do classes was high enough to sustain luxury imports from China (Emmanuel 1972). During trade with faraway China, Europe's balance of trade remained in deficit until as late as the 1820s, and precious metals flowed to the Far East (Braudel 1992). As early as the twelfth century, the rise of European naval supremacy pushed Jewish and Islamic traders out of the Western Mediterranean (Edwards and Ogilvie 2008). From around 1500 to 1800, the number of captured Islamic slaves in various Italian kingdoms was estimated between 80 and 120 thousand (Bono 1996). No supply of supposedly good institutions could have offset the cost of defeat and situated the vanquished Eastern world atop the capitalist edifice.

The market space in which pre-capitalist merchant capital operated in the Mediterranean was often violent and structured by power hierarchies. In their response to Greif (1993), Edwards and Ogilvie (2008) discount Greif's point that docile commerce as a culture for trade based on the reputation of merchant families and traditions enforced contracts. They provided evidence that it was the might behind the law or the potential threat of force that settled accounts when market agreements were not respected. Merchant capital had already been in the habit of using force for economic gains before its transformation into industrial capital. When capitalism dawned, property and wealth holdings also became subject to the violence of the market. However, instead of a 'money making more money' merchant trade circuit M-M', the new industrial circuit became an M-C-M' circuit, with C (the commodity) requiring a labour process subsumed by capital. Capital must regiment labour and hire resources by use of force to increase its moneyed returns, which more often than not meant that property changed hands by the uprooting of the masses rather than just the peaceful rule of civil institutions. As such, property laws become subsets of the laws of capital. The same market forces that were turning the feudal order in Europe to capitalism are the ones, which synchronically dominated the labour process of the colonies, and turned the colonies into capitalism through socialising by genocide.

At a farther remove, the Silk Road, a form of globalisation limited to luxury-type traded products, such as silk, pepper, spices, drugs, porcelain, glass and pearls, was a principal trade channel until the rise of Europe. That Road was by land and several sea routes, with sea routes at latent stages being less costly, less interrupted, and will afterwards prove more consequential to the consolidation of capitalism (Frank 1992). With subsistence mostly met by local means, interruptions to the Silk Road between the second century BC and the late seventeenth century did not precipitate social crises (Frank 1998). Social reproduction dependent on trade is what constitutes the sociological difference between the capitalist phases of trade in essential commodities with

pre-capitalist Silk Road-type product-trade. To be sure, capital imposes commodification, including the commodification of essentials. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and the many cases of famines, including the Irish famine, caused by cash crop substitution for subsistence crops are landmark events that underscore these differences.

NIE's transcend history cast 'other' formations and cultures prohibited from catching up as inferior for not being dynamic, democratic and white-like. In the same manner that the modern economy was subjected to supply-side economics, the Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) like-history is also subjected to supply-side historiography. History was read from the position of the victors or the suppliers of the historical conditions who set school-like rules for the conduct of the South and assign grades for good or bad behaviour, including degrees of corporeal punishment. Nothing is said about the curvatures in space and time that the weight of imperialism had carved with its military triumphs for developing nations to fall into underdevelopment orbits. In the formal-institution line of argument, history was superficially grasped. The supposed subject, or the Muslim or other masses of the South, individuated, atomised and unmediated, as in existing without social classes, were fantasised as potential makers of history as well as their own development, when in fact they were the objects of the European waste industry; however, they were subjects through waste.

In analogy, the modern Islamic world is said to not provide sufficient tax exemptions for private investment to thrive, while the feudal Islamic world did not set clear tax rules for capitalism to rise. Continuously, the Islamic tax institution is innately flawed. Islam is viewed from a Eurocentrist angle as an essentialist system of thought incapable of generating the good tax institution, neither in the past nor in the present. These tax-policies and similar fiscal institutions are absent when they are needed and, as such, they expel the prospects of sound Islamic development. Not that Islamic precepts are *a priori* forms independent of historical conditions, but to miss the point that the defeat of the Islamic world is a continual social process of de-development is to miss the submission of history to Western institutions. It is to leave out the inertia of capital, which requires a non-competitive South that either freely ships its cheapened resources to the North or acts as playground for waste. Not to forget that contemporary US bombardment of Muslims entwined with the propagation of US-sponsored Salafi Islam are subprocesses of waste comprised within the prevailing conditions of waste. With regards to the only remaining form of direct colonialism in the Arab World, European white Jews victimised by European whites were transplanted into the heart of the Muslim world (Palestine) as colonial settlers to further imperialist interest, which had put the Muslim world on war footing ever since (Dana 2013). In such process of

war to strip the Muslim masses from their autonomy, the institutional set up that follows remains within the purview of the Western conqueror. Contingently upon a rise of China that might counter the current historical trends, none of the un-sovereign nations in the Islamic world can, for instance, postulate a fiscal policy that replenishes national capital.

Once the embryonic relation of value takes hold through socialisation of labour and wars of encroachment, the formations that fall to lower layers of the integrated international structure become material, including their humans turned into material, for central capital awaiting waste or re-engagement – recalling: socialisation here is more than peasant removal from the English commons, it is the wresting of peripheral commons through outright colonial assault. As precapitalist formations fall within reach of European navies, it is no longer institutional quality that hinders their indigenous growth into industrial capitalism, which relegates them to appendages of Western industry, it is their loss of labour-subtended autonomy; whence the definition of development as the fruit of anti-imperialist struggle or, equally, the concomitant of the class struggle. Their institutions as their class organisational forms are co-governed by their interrelations with the more powerful social class of imperialism and its institutions. So obvious was the case such that Russell (1924) casually observed that '[w]hen a country is Americanised, art, leisure, and traditional culture are swept away ... Long hours, low wages, economic enslavement to the foreigner, take their place. The political government, which is unimportant, is left to natives; the real government is in the hands of American banks.'

Such hegemony was not so muddled to be discerned then, and it remains pellucid to date. What is discrete and more masked over to discern is the case of the consciousness-hollowed working class that proxies capital. Such may be *after the fact* uncovered by focusing on the phenomenal numbers of dead or defeated labourers, whose defeat produces dead thought and sterile or self-defeating institutions. In parallel with the state of Islamic world surrender, the reconstruction of Islamic history subject to the prevailing ideological power of capital influences the current development debate and its attendant neoliberalism. The anecdote, 'the past is rewritten so fast that you do not know what will happen yesterday' may be a suitable representation of the effort being poured into revising Islamic history in such a way so to create masses that self-hate, and incapable of resistance. Although history does not repeat itself, the dominant conceptual framework does, and it does so to slot historical change under transhistorical categories that do not change. Islam as a homogenous religion of a single colour did not exist. Although advanced capital in the form of Salafist ideology sponsored by US imperialism is attempting to make uniform the many versions of official and informal Islam, it is still

short of target. Islamic civilization, as a concrete historical process, reflects the manifold historical conditions in which it evolves. It is as vast and varied as the different modes of life organisation across history. Aside from the banalities often professed in current propaganda masquerading as independent academia, problems in documenting, analysing and periodising this history would best be served by open-ended questions.

What has been presented above addresses the inapplicability of imposing historically transcendent criteria upon the challenging road of historical development. The study of development must account for the historically established circumstances that qualitatively demarcate one epoch from another. As posited, the decline of the East, and of the Islamic world follows successive military defeats. Numerous setbacks curtailed the transition of Islamic merchant capital into industrial capital, and as capitalism emerged in a single integrated world system, the then universal capital relation coming under the command of Europe took charge of peripheral resource allocation. In the more autonomous parts of the Islamic world, where indigenous industrialism would later mature on its own, as in nineteenth century Egypt under Mohammad Ali dynasty, French and British assaults had put a speedy end to these projects.

There are decisive differences between capitalism, the historical phase, and its predecessors' phases. These are categorical differences. As noted above, markets in capitalism determine nearly all aspects of social life including the commodification of labour in order to wrest its life as well as its products. Less noticeably though, while the Eastern world was losing its commerce at sea, its subsistence agriculture remained untinged. A much lower share of peasants was driven from the land, and that may be explained by the much lower rate of modernisation. The case may be that on account of better weather, Eastern peasants may have had its easier than their European counterparts and would have clung to the land. Niebuhr (1792) notes that non-Muslim Arab Jews in Yemen lived better than Jews in Poland. However, better weather is no match for the better gun of the colonial when it decides to evict peasants, as demonstrated by massive twentieth century migrations. As soon as capital emerges, it was not solely the cash crops that supplanted subsistence farming, it was its endemic system of waste, which materialised in the extractivism of life before its due time and worldwide enclosures. The system of waste may be summed up in the transference between dislocation experienced under the rule of commodity as a result of self-expanding value and its reinforcing modes of consciousness. Nonetheless, from the standpoint of the unity of man and his modes of consciousness conditioned by material circumstances there inversely springs the disunity emergent in anti-systemic thought that shatters the system.

To be sure, capital privately appropriates socially produced wealth. For doing so, it power restructures the social conditions for production, consumption, exchange and circulation. Its competition for lower costs and higher profits automatically disengages useful assets or older technology, a process unbeknown in earlier times. Under capitalism, objective machine development as a result of contradictions between energy and moving parts, the need to conserve more energy per unit of output, is circularly reinforced by the competitive pressures to increase production at reduced costs. At a farther horizon, the cybernetics of energy conservation may potentially culminate in the integration of man with machine. Just as the axle movement conjoined to machine increases output per unit of input, man conjoined to machine also reduces kinetic loss. The case may be that modern work from home latches the machine to the labourer; however, the industry of wasting labour as a value generating activity vis-à-vis the dead labour of technology practically reduces the cybernetic argument to the waste of man by machine. The industries of genocides have melted together the waged soldier to his weapon-tool and to the victim. More recently, with machine effectiveness rising and requiring fewer labourers to operate, the cyborg-like machine combines the operator of say the drone with his victims as living labourers, engaged both as living and dead labourers at once and only to *become* the commodity, *ergo*, the wasted labourer. The drone operator who follows the Afghan on the ground, to have him united him with his machine/bomb in a labour of death, is illustrative of this point.

#### 14      Moneyed Capitalism *contra* Feudalism

It is not only that with competition relaying price signals geared to profit-making and allocating resources to private ends that the capitalist mode of production becomes different from previous modes, but also because the economy becomes all moneyed as opposed to moneyed on the margins. Pre-capitalist trade in luxury items on the fringe transforms into moneyed trade encompassing all sectors, including the subsistence ones. Marx's observation 'the commodity is money' has evolved into too much credit, or fictitious capital, for commodity. Money is not the equivalent of commodity – in the sense that there must be money in the functional role that resolves the encumbrances of barter trade, under capitalism, money is the form of value, or the form of capital represented in the state of becoming of the contradiction between use value and exchange value (Marx 1867). Only under capitalism are financial crises all-encompassing crises. Moneys in different material

substances existed long before capitalism as social convention to service exchange. It is capital's principal fetish whose extension in credit underlies the growth of capital. As a surrogate of capital, it governs the reproduction of society. Moneyed wealth gaps between rich and poor signify the departure of exchange from use value. The growth in waste trading for a price or in moneyed form, and waste futures, suggest that society's control over its history is minimal.

A particular economic activity in which the commodity is produced for the purpose of exchange (the concrete) ascends into the general form (the abstract) by acquiring a money or universal form through exchange and realisation – the market is the mediatory framework that consummates a commodity in sale. What it takes to support or undermine life, the use value as substance or the reified social labour embodied in all the commodities that society creates, assumes the symbolic money form of value, and just as the case with all symbols, the symbolic world falls under the thumb of dominant power. Capital in turn devises the strength of the symbolism attached to such money forms for the purpose of social control, to which accumulation and profits are subsequential. After all, it takes social control to make profits.

However, it is not just money that transpires as the universalising constituent for humanity. There are other conventional constructs, like the metric unit of measures, that are applied universally. Abdel-Malek in 1972 wrote.

The main problem ... is that of the dialectic of the specific (the factor of nationality, of national culture, of civilization) and the universal (the syncretic civilization that will emerge out of the human species through the mediation of science and technology). In the first stage, the principal danger is not that of accentuating the dimension of nationality but rather that of imposing hegemonic moulds that are asserted to be universal, and which will ensure, even more than previous ways, the denaturing of non-Western world civilisations, destined to be sub-products of technicality and productivism; economic, demographic, ethnographic reserves; an alienated underworld.

In commenting on the above quote, Wallerstein (1978) sees that the dialectic of the specific and the universal, the non-Western and Western, core and periphery, etc., is 'not pairs of two separate phenomena brought into (external) relationship with one another. Rather the terms represent positions on a continuum which are the outcome of a single process. The creation of the one was the creation of the other – both materially and ideologically.' He continues to outline how 'Western hegemonic forces ensured the intellectual

triumph of the belief in universals – universals that could be circumscribed and tested, theorems that were defined as laws, realities that became imperatives.' This, however, was a lopsided process of universalisation. It universalised the quantity, the unit of measure, but made disparate the value of human life. Put plainly, you could measure in tons, the universal unit of metric measure, then impose it upon the rest of the world, to see what or how much Africa will export, but the worth of an African life in comparison to a European life was not universalised. Thence, the dictum 'civilisation creates barbarism,' to which Wallerstein makes reference.

On the political-economy side, out of the flux and as all that is solid becomes moneyed, a new unit of analysis, the holistic system, comes into being as particular economic activities fuse together into a moneyed macro system. With money underpinning global transactions, all the practices of all sectors refract in the universal money form and are subject to the macro policies of money supply and taxation. This whole, the economy (the general condition) mediating the parts (particular and concrete activities) through the machinations of markets and their price systems, comes into being not because of *a priori* logical propositions that instantiate themselves as history, but as a result of practice in given moments co-aligning to create the *a posteriori* conditions to which a logic must be invoked in order to be understood. Illustratively, it is not the formula for profits, which instantiates as profits, it is the various beatings of labour, which reduce cost to boost profits. One may ask what are some other *a posteriori* conditions or realisations of class-determined revolutionary moments? The answer could for instance come from Frank (1978), in addition to the noticeable trends of increasing tech-developments alongside population growth, overlapping with the discoveries of the Americas and the Cape of Good-Hope, which unleashed substantive gold and silver, there were the wars that submitted the colonies to reign of Europe. Frank also notes that there was by the eighteenth century a revolution in commerce and the use of paper money began to make inroads as universal medium of exchange.

The birth of capital, the social relation with sufficient clout to impose the commodification and monetisation of the planet, albeit, by attrition, heralds a new stage in history, capitalism. Intrinsically to the system, the emergence of money is a moment in the value relation resolving successive contradictions in the process of production. These contradictions may be analysed in thought; however, they appear as a single moment, the stage at which they are objectified in the commodity. The commodity materialises before us as a historical event, the outcome of social production, or the object identifying with its money form. The moneyed commodity-object is itself real as well as being a moment in thought to which concepts are ascribed. It could be of waste

or sane to various degrees. To reflect on the determinations of a commodity coming about is to discover the activities in time that midwife its coming into existence. In thought, since the commodity is self-expanding value, its various processes synthesised in the form of value respond to prevailing social conditions of production and rates of accumulation. To explicate the history of the commodity, its ascent from its predicate social practices into successive moneyed forms, or how it came to be part of actuality by the necessary dynamics of its constitutive activities, is the question that requires clarification.

To rationalise the commodity as it assumes a money value form is to reconstruct its development by the unity between its logic and its history. The law of unity between the logical and the historical transposed against the commodity's objective development may shed light on this object *become* fetish in command of life processes. Society's products were prior to capitalism, private-labour produced and on the whole un-commodified or moneyed, but later became social-labour produced, commodified and moneyed. Such is the transformation to which a law of movement or dynamic must serve as rationale. The law in question is the law of value, which when aided by the superstructure of capital equates money/price with socially necessary labour time or the value proper objectified in the commodity, and always to meet the demands of capital. It does so by socialising direct producers. That is, it strips them of first of their means of production and of their labour power, namely by means of coercion and war. To beat the working class into waste or submission is the real history of commodity making. The capital-imposed labour process of beating/waste lays out real and symbolic power platforms that grab high value for low price from the direct producers. With exchange value being the objective of commodity making, use value assumes the position of being means to an end, which is to sell the product. To read how the commodity obtained in money-form, and equally important, why was there so much *destruction* along the path of its making are the commodity's history and its logic at once. *Destruction* is a constitutive activity of value as well as being a value process of pure waste on its own.

The laws of capital spring from the systemic recurrence and build-up of social contradictions. These laws may shape the future on the basis of shifting class power balances. History, as opposed to logic, is what resolves the contradictions piling up in the system, whereas logic or the rational is simply reflexive of a process prone to crisis. All the same, the emphasis on the primary role of money to the system does not mean that the alienation of the commodity from the direct producer comes second, and money comes first, or in any other order. To sequentially order time asymmetric events along the arrow of time in a recursive and overdetermined social production totality may serve

illustrative purposes, but otherwise its correspondence to facts is tenuous. The event, the commodification of nearly everything, is the immediacy before us. This immediacy is the necessary or chance realisation of the separate activities that create the commodity and strip it from the direct producer. Immediacy is too multifarious to grasp, and only lends itself to being understood as an actuality whose laws of development occur by necessity, and which holds the key to understanding future development. Because actuality is the mental image of world ruled by necessity, it is also a reduced mental rationalisation of the fullness of reality or immediacy. That said, changes in the degree of alienation occur by the concomitant of the time-asymmetric interrelatedness of the activities of social production in relation to their social class subjects. Whenever labour is in control of production it necessarily experiences less alienation. Moments of the value relation, the various activities of production or socially necessary labour time gelling in value and acquiring a money-form of value, operate together and are self-reinforcing processes that adhere to the dynamic of self-expanding value. For instance, Marx the historian notes the expansion of foreign trade is the basis of the capitalist mode of production in its infancy. Such trade under capitalist production relations is not value creating in itself, but also it is not unconnected to the value relation. Trade is necessary for the realisation of use value in exchange, or the circulation that completes capital (Marx 1867). However, the sequentialization of money with real economic activity is not a chicken came before or after the egg argument. In dialectical logic, the chicken is the egg in mature form. Thus, trade in commodities is simultaneously the realisation of use value in the money form, or a consummation of capital.

Having said that, Brenner (1977) declares that 'it is precisely the separation of labour power and the means of production, and their appearance as commodities in the individualistic system of private production, which determines the full development of the function of money in circulation as an agent of productive capital.' Money does mediate the alienation of labour power; however, Brenner imposes a logical sequence (teleology) upon a non-sequential reality. Insofar as the appearance of money in significant metallic form goes, it was the slaughter of European 'voyages of discovery' that dug out and thieved substantial quantities of bullion. The separation of lives from the living peoples of the colonies was *not* separate from the extraction bullion in South America. These butcheries were early activities of capital and alienations of the use value of life, the stock of labour power condensed and delivered in early death, from the living. With more dying early over the lifecycle of society, the social cost of labour reproduction sinks over time. Wasted lives have assumed a moneyed form in the imperialist loot and a share thereof paid the waged soldiery of

empire. Brenner also postulates that 'this separation (labour power and means of production) has this result by determining at once the radical opposition between use values and exchange values – since exchange of commodities must take place in order to make possible their use in production,' which is to force through the provincial point that the significant moneyed exchange of commodities occurs in Europe. The primary step of extracting resources and lives in the colonies counts for little money and, therefore, insignificant to the re-articulation of capitalism; the pursuit of money merchant capital to consolidate private property. While the amount of exchange is taken to represent capital, the means of political control over economic processes in England no longer derive from immediate subordination to feudal rank but from the relations between moneyed and objective commodities destined for exchange, whichever the sequence, the position disregards that capital is born into an overproduction crisis. In this blinkered microcosm, he forgets that in an integrated world, the crisis of overproduction is social and permanent as of day one of capitalism. Overproduction does not mean that capital produces too much of everything. Overproduction is socially defined and it implicates the planet by the reach of Europe. Capital overproduces to the market and to groups to which it sells, and to many who cannot afford to buy all its output. The output is in excess of these purchasing-groups' wherewithal. It is overproduction in concert with other crises of capital, which motivates the law of value to reassign socially necessary labour time to war, and the drive to colonise. The switch in the social relationship governing England from feudal to capitalist does not arrive on the historical scene *causa sui*, it piggybacks upon the tide of accumulation by expropriation and capital's control over the means that support global social reproduction. In that sense, capital becomes what it is, the relation that wastes the other to replenish itself. English agriculture may leap into capitalism as the lord betters machines and hires the peasant for a wage. Venetian merchants may heighten the division of labour and engage the craftsman for a wage in order to meet rising demand through trade. Whichever the case, capital emerged synchronically by the predicates of slavery and the industry of genocide. In sociological terms, its early machines were war tools and its first products were the alienated wasted-lives commodities that went for a price.

From the moment life-sustaining commodities begin to be destined for exchange, their realisation in money would 'fetish-like' stand above society and through the law of value determine the allocation of resources (Marx 1867). Prices also signal the allocation of resources in a neoclassical setting; however, in political economy, prices (the money form) tell the class in power what butchering *activity* to perform in order to jack up profits. That said, the issuance of credit, to restrict or expand economic activity, becomes a principal instrument

in allotting the share of labour from the social product. The interest rate associated with credit and its impact on the livelihood of society is dissimilar from the usury rate affecting peripheral luxury trade on the margin of subsistence society. The interest rate is the rent form of value created by undermining the livelihood of all of society by holding its future labour as collateral, while the usury rate earmarks a portion of the profits from a fringe mercantile activity that does not hold all of society in bondage. Since the generalised money form pervades the whole structure of capitalist society; the cost of money issuance and credit is itself the expansion of economic activity, and hence, an interest rate is collated against all economic transactions. Whereas '[p]re-capitalist usury exploits a given mode of production and is only outwardly related to it, credit expansion under capitalism creates it' (Marx 1894). Under capitalism, even the holding of cash involves variations in its value consequent upon the prevalent interest rate. Capitalist trade policy no longer affects single luxury-item imports but may cause the caloric intake of a significant population to plummet – as in the Irish, Bengal and other famines. Capitalism ought to be read from a sociological angle first since the activity of expropriation underlies the basis for reproduction. The economic manifestations gauged by variations in macroeconomic variables only refract the inner workings of the expropriation processes.

By the seventeenth century, the idea of credit expansion to boost merchant capital's transition to industrial capital morphed 'warring companies into warring states' (Marx 1867). '[A] system of public credit – that is, of national debts – whose origin we can discover in Genoa and Venice as early as the Middle Ages, took possession of Europe generally during the manufacturing period, and the colonial system with its maritime trade and commercial wars served as a forcing-house for it' (Marx 1867). Incidentally, there was more bullion in sixteenth century Europe facilitating demand for trade and credit expansion. Still, it is not scant money supply in its gold or silver metallic form *per se*, which may be the decisive factor that urges or curtails the transition to an all-moneyed economy. Exchange mediating the alienation of use-value from labour may assume a universal form in rare-metallic and non-metallic money forms. Gold and silver may have value in themselves and they do not corrode as a result of the elements, and as such, they offer stability and confidence as a medium of exchange; however, the abundance of Spanish gold and silver in the sixteenth century did not place Spain before the Dutch and the English in the race to full-blown industrialisation afterwards. Rising bullion resulting in price inflation may have been the cause of Iberian relapse. No matter the gold anchor, fiat money is inseparable from a capitalist market, since credit lays out the terrain for exponential accumulation. Paper money came into circulation early on in China (seventh century), but it only became putative

currency by the seventeenth century because credit based on a limited quantity of gold cannot proportionate fast-paced industrial growth. The imperialist industries of the Korean and Vietnamese wars are recent cases in point where war expands credit and, therefore the wealth of the financial class, beyond the available stock of gold. The conjecture is that although rising bullion may have contributed to rising volumes of trade, the issue remains that metallic-money quantities should not have been a hurdle to a possible Islamic transition had Muslims stayed in control of strategic trading routes when production relation turned capitalist.

With productivity fuelled by waste, profits from rising European trade equilaterally grew alongside the rising productivity of colonial activity. Terms of trade differentials favouring Europe also grew as repression cheapened Southern resources. The addition of essential commodities to previously traded luxury items stocking up for exchange became a blueprint to a new age. Capital as self-expanding value required value-forming relations that involve the extirpation of the peasantry, piracy, slavery, genocide and the expropriation of the direct producers as waste production spheres and, not to forget, as pedestals or rather predicates of other production spheres. The commodity became the genome of capitalism with credit being its handmaiden. Separate cases of trade find in state-sponsored patents and credit provision their media for growth. Trade is no longer a side event confined to long distance trade; the whole of the capitalist system, now the world system, brims with money and expands by credit. The moneyed macroeconomy having gained universal status subsumes the particular cases of exchange and trade, while credit expansion foregrounds all economic activity. Credit as such is the fiat money that underwrites capitalist future expansion, which includes the exponential growth of waste products that capital prices and/or will price at an opportune moment in the future.

In other characteristics of the new capitalist age, not only a specific line of commodities trades for money; all commodities inclusive of labour power begin to trade for money and are underwritten by credit. Future credit corresponding to the demands of accumulation weighs in on the reproduction of labour and the stock of labour power. With labour power being indivisible from the labourer, and with labour power being the commodity self-expanding subject to waste imperatives, wasting labour power entwines with wasting the living labourer. The waste process obeys the edicts of global class structure. The victorious Western world reproduces its working class as consumers of waste, while it de-reproduces through waste the defeated labour of the South. Behind the figurative phrase, civilisation creates barbarism, waste is the state of becoming of capital whose barbarism, which is not simply a poetic sounding

term, but an actual industry that generates the economic surplus. The leading Western class balances the rate of waste accumulation against its real and projected power in the class struggle.

Contemporary indebtedness in dollars hold the labour of the planet in bondage to US imperialism. In this phenomenon, 'good' institutions, the class sponsored apparatuses of capital identified with modern capitalist social relations, promote waste to offset the crises of capital. Such 'good' institutions cannot be transplanted back into an era before capitalism characterised by conservation and rationing of resources as its *modus Vivendi*. Prior to capitalism, waste for the sake of waste as an industry has not yet acquired value through exchange on a phenomenal scale. The ludicrous generalisation of institutions bereft of class from the present onto the past could be better understood by reworking Davis's (1957) remark: the reason so many confound past and present concepts in utter disdain for common sense is to downplay the role of European imperialism.

## 15 Islam's Cosy Relationship with Materialist Philosophy and Commerce

Before concluding with more open-ended questions than answers, I would like to tie up loose ends and to dispel the notion that Islam impedes trade, or that it would have required some reformation to undergo a transition to capitalism. To copy Europe's road to success, the Islamic world should have had its Martin Luther moment. In a similar vein to religious reawakening sparking progress, Western Marxism points to the failure of the colonially spawned bourgeoisie to undo pre-capitalist forms of social organisation, which suppress peripheral revolutionary potential. Insofar as ideology is concerned, Islam as ideological imagery has no substance outside the mind. Ideological Islam is constituted by subject, or as Althusser (1971) says, 'there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects. Meaning, there is no ideology except for concrete subjects, and this destination for ideology is only made possible by the subject: meaning, by the category of the subject and its functioning ... even if it only appears under this name (the subject) with the rise of bourgeois ideology, above all with the rise of legal ideology, the category of the subject (which may function under other names: e.g., as the soul in Plato, as God, etc.) is the constitutive category of all ideology, whatever its determination (regional or class) and whatever its historical date.' Ideology on its own has no history as well; however, it is consistently animated by a subject to interpellate a subject and serve a function for capital (Althusser 1971). It is capital that endows it with meaning,

and refashions history or the ensemble of social relationships around it. As such, history is not a succession of ideologies a la Weber. In a dialectical materialist interpretation, the mind processes ideas through social relations, and that is why ideas acquire social meaning (Ilyenkov 1974).

Moreover, given capital's ideological hegemony, the politics and economics of modern Islam are by-products of imperialism. An illustration on how capital instrumentalises Islam's tenets may be drawn from the gains made by Muslim women during the cold war and the retrogression after the cold war. Rodinson (1966) presumed that because of the wide latitude in the interpretation of the social agenda in Islam, Islamic ideology cannot serve as a rallying point for progress. However, Islamic or un-Islamic nations engaged in anti-imperialist struggle will adopt a social agenda in consequence to the outcome of struggles. It is not analysis as such that provides the answer to whether Islam is progressive or not; it is the historical alignment with anti-imperialist class struggle. Social agendas may be projects of capital, yet they may via dialectical inversion be deconstructed by defeating capital; thence, the necessity to line up forces in anti-imperialist fronts. To date, the Muslim state's mode of integration with the global economy remains conditioned by the presence of immense US and NATO firepower. Although all that has been globally achieved is failure on account of waste, the failure of the East is not just about the impossibility of replicating historical trajectories (mimicking Europe for no two histories can be similar), both the theocrats and Western Marxists miss the integration of the global system into a single unit of analysis, in which the US-European bourgeois class is the leading agent of capital.

Poor developmental showings are better understood as a result of political declassing, the downgrading in the international division of labour, rather than Islam's religious precepts (Rodinson 1966). Islamic history must be read from a standpoint of colonial social relations, involving economic bondage and de-valorisation of human and other assets. Collecting and cataloguing cultural similarities or differences with the West neither does East nor West any justice. It certainly overlooks the unity, fullness and interrelatedness of social life. To build a case for or against the Muslim world's underperformance on the basis of some innate fault in Islamic culture has nothing to do with reading history, and everything to do with justifying the forthcoming imperialist assaults.

With regards to Islam hindering commerce, prophet Mohammad was himself a long-distance trader before prophecy, and Islamic free-trade precepts derive their legitimacy from religious tenets. A *hadith* (a saying of the Prophet) acknowledges that profits are nine-tenths commerce and one-tenth other.<sup>7</sup> A number of scholars have concluded that Islamic law and its prohibition

<sup>7</sup> My translation from the chapter on the etiquette of commerce, at: <http://www.mezan.net/books/manlayahdraho/fakeeh3/html/ara/books/faqih/faqih-3/a62.html>.

of usury rarely interfered with commerce (Turner 1978). The freedom for merchants to travel, set prices and exchange with few constraints are central to many schools of Sharia. Injunctions against usury, the alleged Achilles heel of Islamic development, did not impede trade (Turner 1993; Rodinson 1966). Already, usury (*riba*) was practiced in Mecca, for in order to participate in the profitable caravan trade, Meccans with modest resources betting on successful caravans had to resort to usurers (Belyaev 1969). Also, the prohibition of usury was not common to all schools of Sharia. The Maliki School does not distinguish between buying and selling (as in trading commodities) and usury (al-Baghdadi 1991). Where usury was prohibited, the ruses '*hyal*', one of which is to embed the interest rate as an extra premium in a sale transaction, covered the cost of lending while appearing as a normal sale (Rodinson 1966). Rodinson (1966) in agreement with Althusser on the instrumentalisation of ideology noted that '[i]t was not Islamic ideologies that governed, they merely expounded God's opinion.'

Max Weber's point about Islamic dependency on the feudal warrior ethic, which constrained capitalism, is 'factually wrong' (Turner 1993). Islam was urban, commercial and literate (Turner 1993). At the height of Islamic-European cultural exchange, basic Islamic terms may have been conveniently translated into European languages without referencing their origins. Hourani (1962) mentions Ibn Khaldun's *umran*, which gradually turned into Guizot's civilization, the *maslaha* of the Maliki jurists and *Ibn Taymiyya* into the utility of John Stuart Mill, and the *ijma'* of Islamic jurisprudence into the public opinion or consent of bourgeois democratic institutions. In covering the linkages of Islamic heritage to Europe, Grollenberg (1980) standing in Trafalgar Square in London, reminds his readers that 'the name of the square was Arab; that the banking cheques were named from Arabic, the numbers on them Arabic; the drains (below the streets) had been developed in Baghdad; the key stars are called by Arab astronomers; the techniques of navigation used by Nelson to Trafalgar were first codified by Arab navigators; Nelson's title, Admiral, is an Arabic word; the water flowing is pure because of a science of chemistry first properly organised by Arabs.' There is no shortage of cultural exchange anywhere, nor can some specific cultural exchange be said to be more relevant than others. Culture as the store of knowledge is not weighed by the ton. However, there are systemic efforts, through Europe's acquisition of machine culture deployed in superior weaponry, to deny the masses subjected to its waste industry any cultural value or political relevance.

Current scholarship only flaunts *Ibn Khaldun* (1332–1406), as if Islamic thought was a single aberration related to his *Prolegomena*. The theoretical-materialist ferment in Islamic philosophy dates back to some centuries earlier. Philosophical debates from the tenth century onward assumed materialist

overtones and ushered in a global era of rational humanism common to the Mediterranean basin (Makdisi 1990). The treatise on faith being founded upon reason of the *Mu'tazila* and later the avowed atheism of some of the Brethren of Purity (tenth century) led to an understanding of phenomena as conditioned by material circumstance. The materialist philosophical debate peaked in Fatimid/Abbasid times (the eleventh century) with Muslim *zindiqs* openly proclaiming their atheism (Mroueh 1978). Apostates and godless folk were rarely, if ever, punished by death; then as now, punishment related to maintaining ruling class stability rather than commitment to faith or Islamic practice.

The tenth-century debate on reign by reason versus reign by predestination echoed the *Fatimid* desire for legitimacy, a status enjoyed by its foe, the *Abbasid* Caliphate of Baghdad. In a manner similar to the irrevocability/revocability of the monarch during the English Civil War, the Islamic debate on rule by reason as opposed to rule by divine predestination considers there were reasonable grounds for the caliph's absolute powers to be retracted and maintained only symbolically. The *Fatimid* sought legitimisation of their control by attempting to set up a sort of nominal caliphdom.

Weber's view that Islam did not know the communal institution or the corporation as a juridical entity but as a form of artisanal collection is due to his 'lack of knowledge of Islamic history' (Davis 1957; Turner 1978 and 2002). Nonetheless, Turner (1978) suggests that Weber's positions on Islam were sweeping generalisations; especially the point that the Islamic world was taxed arbitrarily by troops that paralysed the moneyed economy and did not respect private property. The synergy between types of social-legal arrangements and development outcomes is dependent on the articulation of classes, their corresponding powers, and the nature of production relations. It may be as well to note that Weber was one to think that objective scholarship in social science was possible. However, it was not objective on his part to neglect European militarisation of the seas and its colonial savagery, which actualised capitalism. Then again, in a Eurocentric cultural milieu where the humanity of the other is less recognised, the savaged people counted more as chopped timber than humans.

Weber's underlying Eurocentrism is not difficult to spot; however, Turner's classification of Islamic military routs as just one reason among many for the relapse of Islamic societies deflects the determinacy of power and control, or social class relationships as makers of history. In reference to this method of muddling historical reasons in social history without specifying the determining link, Davis (1957) considers approaches of a similar nature as evasive academic manoeuvres whose purpose is not to challenge dominant vested interests.

Insofar as democratic forms of representation are concerned, since AD 800, Ibadism, the principal sect in Oman, has elected its Imam (al-Mouharami

2004). Electing chiefs was general practice throughout the island of Java (Anderson 1972). Although in class systems all politics are selectively participatory as means of power exercise, the leadership of the capitalist system was not to emerge from East Africa, the Indian Ocean or anything related to models of participation similar to those later adopted on the European continent. Islamic history in terms of civil liberties reflected the varied social conditions that prevailed at different times and in different regions. To attribute the rise of capitalism to selected European democratic practices or cultural traits, such as stability of political rule or more selectively democratic forms of political decision-making, could easily be countered by just as many empirical observations from the vast East. Empiricism without categorisation, looking at particular situations without associating these circumstances to their more general condition or historical genus, becomes a banal debate *ad nauseum*.

## 16      Closing Comment

In a heterogeneous, self-differentiating and interrelated world, the issue of whether Islam, and the East more generally, have failed for some inherent cultural reasons in comparison to Europe is a misplaced problematic. European capital through its colonial savagery and class linkages extends to the East. The East through its labour, raw materials and underdevelopment by colonial *diktat* reaches the West. The lines of demarcation that set real concepts apart from hallucinatory forms of thought are the class lines that crisscross national boundaries. Where the space that defines an entity vis-a-vis another ends, is where the ideological inclination becomes visible. So, when Bernard Lewis posits that Islam has become poor, weak and ignorant, Neumann (2003) responds by showing that poverty and underdevelopment are not exclusive characteristics of the Muslim world but are shared across cultures. He adds, '[w]ith two world wars and several other wars to its credit in the twentieth century, not least including unjustifiable poverty levels in contrast to immense wealth, Christendom carries more guilt on its conscience.'

Changes in the course of development are the outcome of impersonal and objective forces in history. Islamic history is often told like a fairy-tale in which spirits remained enslaved while its innate barbarism reversed the course of progress. The world according to the mainstream discourse is fragmented into various institutions, capturing trans-historical relations and rules such that when the Southern formation meets the 'good' conditions or rules of conduct, developmental progress occurs. In the twentieth century, only a handful

of small states jumped to rich rank, and these had to meet one institutional rule: serve imperialism against China and the Soviet Union. Received theory, in particular, neoclassical economics cannot conceal the prejudice against the developing world lurking behind the eloquence of its formalism. Foremost, the biasedness removes from view the contradictions that waste the lower echelons of the globe way before their time.

History however is not the concomitant of a set of elements or variables related or unrelated to each other at different intervals in algebraic time. It is truism that every input must correspond to an output, however, such cannot be the basis of modelling history as if it were an invertible matrix of inanimate elements captured in symbols. The output of society and the allocation of resources are determined by the subject of history, capital and its dominant ideas, the spirit or dominant ideology of the times. When class reproduces by its dominant ideology, and when ideology serves the function of reproducing production relations but has no value in itself, then history can be put in a Hegelian-like fashion as the development of spirit in time. Although this sounds Hegelian, it has with a little circumvention more to do with Marx, because to say that the actualisation of the dominant ideas is class in practice, is also to say that class exhibits a spirit rooted in material circumstances, as opposed to being *a priori* to these circumstances.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour ... Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms ... Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. (Marx 1845)

The Marxist 'spirit,' if one is at liberty to call it that rather than class consciousness, is different from Hegel's. The stock of ideas or ideology represented in politics, laws, morality, religion, etc., is *a posteriori* or inferred from experience. The dominant idea for Marx is what transpires from the activity of social classes. Put in terms of the inseparability of thought from practice, the dominant idea is the dominant class. Unlike the argument for emancipation based on the Hegelian notion of abstract man and humanism, Marx '[f]oresaw that in its first historical phase, this struggle [for socialism] had to take the form of

the struggle between classes. So revolutionary humanism could only be a 'class humanism,' 'proletarian humanism.' The end of the exploitation of man meant the end of class exploitation. The liberation of man meant the liberation of the working class and above all liberation by the dictatorship of the proletariat (Althusser 1969).

History undergoes a dialectic of continuity and discontinuity. It is the state of becoming of self-differentiating social class relationships, which necessarily develop by structural ruptures. Classes, in their acts of self-reproduction, are the ontological condition of man. Depending on the weight of capital in the class struggle, an unfettered dominant class and its ideas have *post-facto* evolved into the preponderant waste. In other words, the class struggle has locked itself into a cycle of de-reproduction. Ideas representing the spirit of the time lay out the blueprint of history and are conditioned by the development of the productive forces and the way society relates to these productive forces (Marx 1845). For Marx, the principal relation mirroring capital is the private property relation for which so many institutions, including neoclassical economics, are invented to promote.

Capital's permanent crisis manifest in its structural genocides, immiseration and up until the current natural calamity, has eclipsed its progressive moment. From the outset, the motor and outcome of capital has been waste. Incidentally, the hold of dominant ideology cannot bear the thought of a metamorphosis in the developing world based on its indigenous values and traditions. That is why, the model of China's development by indigenous Chinese characteristics is the nemesis of the dominant Western idea. In analogy, China's BRI and its interruption by the US and NATO, the encirclement of China, infusing many China-friendly trading nations with NGOs sponsored destabilisation, and besieging Russia by advancing NATO into Ukraine, are the circumstances created by the West to restore the power that was necessary for its original ascent in the sixteenth century.

Relatedly, the mainstream selects a set of undesirable or anti-developmental traits found in any class system, jumbles them together and slots them in lexicomic fashion in order to show the developing world as a failed project. Although the planet has become a failed project, such is false concreteness. The comparative evolutionary approach of designating similarities or departures between developing/Islamic and European formations depends on the selection of observations and the mode of their reconfiguration. In the mainstream, genocide, slave trade and wars of aggression visited upon the developing world appear as mere outlying statistical points that should not have affected sound institutional development. Institutions are considered above history, and it is

Third World traditions rather than its defeat that had compressed its class formation with its 'bad' institutions. Such is the presumed position on the reason for the failure of developing social structures, however, different institutional structures are outcomes of a labour of history. Such outcomes are subject to the laws of history, which under capital are capital's laws. Particular circumstances of social production culminate in a general condition or the moneyed economy subject to universal laws of movement. The dynamic of movement or, the law that transforms the particular into the general, is not the same as matching selected observations from actuality captured in symbols to their variants in phenomenon, or what Ileyenkov (1974) calls the illusion of 'look, here is what we have obtained although we did not assume it.' The general law derives from the contradictions that *necessarily but not exclusively* recreate similar circumstances in a specific historical *period*. For instance, the law of absolute capitalist accumulation says that wealth piles up by piling up poverty on the other end. The rising or falling relative or absolute poverty worldwide may be measured to show this; nevertheless, the acuteness of poverty will submit to the method and inclination of researchers. In no mainstream assessment of inequality do shortened lives in the South that feed into longer lives in the North figure in the analysis. Yet, this is not all there is to this law. The law is not about proving the obvious with data derived from the same obvious conditions, which are construed by the same class for obvious reasons. The law is about unearthing the historical conditions that recreate historically specific laws. The task of science is to trace the emergence of capital's laws such that they may be abolished.

Capitalist accumulation is principally a process of expropriation of the direct producer in which institutions mediate historically specific social contradictions. Aggression, followed by the defeat of Islamic/developing formations, marks the history of the Islamic/developing world. Defeat extinguished what was left of the trade platforms and the power of the old Eastern world. The received literature underplays the primacy of this loss of power when, even to date, wars of encroachment continue to expropriate the masses of the Third World of their resources by stripping their states of sovereignty. Just as Egypt was de-industrialised when the British invaded in the late nineteenth century, Iraq was bombed into oblivion by the late twentieth century as it tried to industrialise using oil revenues. Resource rich Islamic states constitute the poorest, most war-ridden class of countries on the globe. Accumulation in the Islamic world remains centred on the export of raw material, and in particular, oil. And because war for the sake of war is primary to the global economy, Islamic states, by their very poverty, serve as fertile grounds for continuous conflicts that contribute to the exponential rise of waste.

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## CHAPTER 7

# The Absurd Is Real

As for human beings, their days are numbered,  
and whatever they keep trying to achieve is but wind

GILGAMESH

One can never be radical enough; that is,  
one must always try to be as radical as reality itself

V.I. LENIN

••

Social reproduction may differ from production for many reasons but let us just say that production is a onetime event while social reproduction is continual time production to reproduce society. Provided things with mass exist, as opposed to a massless universe, time may be roughly defined as the collection of the physical processes that have occurred, while the future is the potential of these processes. These continual occurrences require energy and are energy dissipating; whence for time to exist, entropy must exist. Social time, unlike the conventional time of math, is concrete time subjected to social imperatives. It is the time people live and are conscious of. Under capital, the time of labour in production is compressed relative to the free time that the working class enjoys because capital must get the most out of labour in the shortest concrete time measured in chronological units. Capital leaves labour little time for leisure, or to pun Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot', capital is never done tormenting labour with its accursed time.

A similar point could be put forth regarding the time of society in social reproduction. Instead of leaving less leisure time to labour, capital leaves less lifetime to society. Social time becomes the time society lives in relation to how long and how well it could live and, therefore, over the lifetime of a worker or the reproduction cycle, its shortened lifespan leaves more surplus labour for capital. Capital requires a society birthed at no cost to it, which engages in the reproduction of man and her labour power commodity, and whose life is cut short to balance the tendency of the falling rate of profit against the prematurely destroyed living labourers of society. Over the lifecycle of society, reducing the free time available to labour positively refracts upon the power

of capital in ways that circularly reduce the longevity of society. Such is the capital-labour contradiction manifest in the capital-population contradiction. Capital's unwanted fallout of objective progress in the productive forces, for instance, the antibiotics that lengthen life expectancy, also raises the lifetime costs of maintaining society. Over longer life expectancies, the share of society from the social product may rise at the expense of profits. These contradictions capital resolves by resorting to waste or by consuming and marketing more living as dead labour. It consumes resources whose input unit-cost has been cheapened namely by imperialist aggression. Since the price system as a form of value caters to capital, efficiency is not efficient use of energy per unit of output, it is rather whatever is less costly per unit of output. With a shorter than historically determined lifespan, the wasted labourer is the least costly input whose death happens to also be the valued output.

While competition accelerates an already objective technological development, and while productivity at the high-end market pressures downward the rate of surplus value, capital responds by demolishing labour to grab and use human and natural resources for the cheapest prices in a waste-laden process. Naturally, a rising rate of exploitation in the South boosts profits in the North. Of the many shades of exploitation, a specific waste-related form of exploitation similar to commercial exploitation, which rests upon the simultaneous hiring and destruction of living labourers as both input and output, best offsets the crises of capital. Capital's criterion for efficiency is thus the efficiency with which it consumes the lives of labour or (inclusive or) clobbers labour to diminish its clout and costs. Conservation and energy rationing are the least of its concern. In fact, because a polluted world shortens the lives of people, pollution plays the role of surrogate dead labour for capital.

The consumption of labour in the industry of waste is both means and end to capital. Since the rate of surplus value mirrors the rate of waste, on balance, the capital system is degenerative. The dissipation of labour and other natural resources must increase exponentially to reconstitute higher surplus value and profits. In analogy to physics, such system is highly entropic, which means that capital socialises man and nature to earmark them for waste production and, therefore, its social time crushes the concrete time left for man and the planet.

Whereas value is the social form or the relation that establishes the conditions for production and exchange, in concrete terms, the labour of society, or social labour is what produces and realises the entirety of the social product. The law of value, taking its cue from the commodities labour created, the reified labour, repeatedly transforms labour into capital. However, as waste becomes of use value by the subterfuge of capital and its attendant fetishism, the premature death of the living labourer becomes a waste commodity

to which a money form of value is attached. In the pile of waste trading on the market, inclusive of pollution and plastics, etc., dead labourers, although unrecognised as such, have also been commodities on offer. The absurd is real because waste reencodes itself into the dynamic of the reigning commodity to make more of itself. Although wasted man is visibly the ubiquitous commodity on sale, capital only shines light on the progressive side of capitalism. Such is the position of the white classes whose civilisation is the hitherto unprecedented waste. This chapter revisits many previously under-explored points and focuses on the discrepancies that call for further investigation. Connectedly, this is a postscript and a summary that address some under-explored points, and as such, the chapter may overlap with the previously established arguments, however, with the aim of adding something new to the discussion.

## 1 The Negative Dialectic

Western Marxism is selective of facts and analyses social nature with direct rapport to *measurement*. It does not refer what is being measured back to the totality or the whole, which is the history of social production, and if it does, it chooses what to consider as an empirical observation and what to consider as history. As discussed in chapter one, capital through its Eurocentrism and other ideological measures rules out the Third World as a subject and predicate of significant value. It does so by the adage that the poor do not count or by the purposeful demotion of Third World value to its state of indigence. While the demise of Southern man has long paid off for the North, the environment appears to have become a mainstream concern on account of the fearmongering that disciplines the masses, the value of waste and the financialising of future waste.

At any rate, the point of departure for the assessment of any environmental condition is *Marx's metabolic rift, which may be defined as the rate of depletion of nature relative to its rate of replenishment*. The formulaic picture as such arises from Marx's view on soil depletion. I will quote below an already over-quoted paragraph from Marx (1867).

All progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility ... Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by *sapping* the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the labourer ... (my emphasis)

On the face of it, it seems that Marx does not need to be so specific about the relationship of capital to nature to show that capital engenders a metabolic rift. The social rift was there before the modern age, but prior to capitalism, capital wasted little of agriculture. Under capitalism, man in the South, as well as nature, are increasingly wasted. Bellamy-Foster (2013) reconfirms that 'the disruption of the soil cycle in industrialised capitalist agriculture constituted nothing less than a rift.' However, man also has been part of nature and wasted – *sapped* as it appears in the Marx's quote above is a docile way of putting it.

Under capitalism, the environmental rift has been an outcome of the social class rift, which has metastasised into the current natural catastrophe. Marx was no biblical prophet and apart from positing that the future will be bleak under capital and not so under socialism, which is not much of a prophecy, he eschewed business-like predictions. The modes of damage assessment used by capital amount to what capital desires to show, and to boot, with a theory of value that projects Western values, historical causation is muddled.

To select objects and measure them is an apposite step *so long as the particular is subsumed in the universal by mediation, and the concept of what is to be measured is considered as subject-substance*; otherwise theory tracks the theoretical development of the object from a one-sided angle in a rather manifold, interrelated and contingent immediacy. To see too many things apart, but not connected to the hierarchically structured totality is to miss what Lukacs calls the 'landscape of our souls.' Western Marxism reifies nature. It considers nature as a thing and not as social nature. While nature as an inanimate thing is being decimated to waste man, social nature is the unity of man with nature in their state of becoming. Nature in unity with man reproduces man conditional upon the laws of capital. Unless man fully transforms into a thing, nature as a thing cannot be an agency of capital, while social man is both subject and object of capital.

As conditions spiral from bad to worse, the mainstream stance to arrest the assault on nature overlooks the fact that history under capital advances by the destruction of social nature. Whence destruction is a production activity, the conventional approach considers its product in waste as a by-product of value as opposed to being intrinsic to value or material substance of value. The waste momentum not only backgrounds of waste, it sells waste. Waste is a precondition for profits. Furthermore, capital wastes man and nature and constructs the resource depletion story or the scarcity artifice as part of its price markup for profits. Unlike the saner pre-capitalist subject-object dialectic, waste under capital is a principal domain of accumulation because man as well as nature are objects of the waste industry, with nature destructed to destroy man. Exponentially, man and nature become the social nature to be

commodified and reworked by labour into waste. With the negative dialectic situated in capital's hierarchical order structured in dominance, higher classes consume lower classes. Like any commodity, the very consumed man as reified labour assumes a fetish status and self-expands as it guides the process of social reproduction. While capital pockets the rents from the industry of waste, wasted people traded to maintain competitive costs, or for a capitalist to remain above prices of production, signal to the cannibalising-class to consume more of the class-cannibalised.

Value is the kernel relation within the totality of social production. It reproduces by abiding its own law of motion, the law of value. Immanently, value relations within the totality of social production become waste relations because waste is the state of becoming and logical end of value. The law of value, which gathers strength by the hegemony of capital, transmutes value into waste. Had there been no law to govern the transition from value to waste or had things been haphazardly, the pile of waste would be inexplicable or chance-ridden without necessity. That cannot be so since waste is the product of organised social activity actualising the desired goals of a social class in power. The metaphysical notion that everything necessary is *a priori* and everything *a priori* is necessary, the idea because 'things are' then 'there is a *self-reasoned* idea prior to things that is responsible for things,' or the application of verbal casuistry to reality, is not considered in this context. Ideas that shape reality are in synergy with reality, as opposed to being indeterminate or self-reasoned. Anyways, not all the different strands of logic have a foot in reality. What is meant by the necessity at the heart of the law of value, otherwise the expropriation of the social product to private ends, or the minimisation of costs for profits, is the reason for the immanence in the way waste happens. The law is the systemic mediatory framework that tears away the social product from the direct producer. It is the process that lays out the allocation for labour at minimum cost to capital, or as a natural end to this, the conditions for the industry that rips away human lives from humans.

Although other moments and saner social activities are present alongside waste, like the cavity fighting side of toothpaste or the lipstick's beautification side – lipstick is the example used by Mészáros (1995), these only exist because they are subtended by a seminal waste process whose law of waste guides development. Although Mészáros notes that lipstick is 90 percent waste, so far here I have argued that there is more to waste than the pollutants. The waste of man is the principal endeavour of capital. The shorter than historically determined death of man transposed against the retreat of socialism earmarks the waste process which is the leading vector in capital. The 90 percent waste side of the lipstick exists because there were labourers wasted to erect such

nonsensical plastics, and because the high waste of the lipstick, itself, wastes labourers.

Naturally, the industrial scale autophagia of society grows by the extent to which the estrangement of lives from the living assumes fetish status. The waste observed and conceptually adduced as substance is governed by a social relation. Implicitly or explicitly, waste trades on the market for some price. It mediates the contradiction between the earlier death of labour, which is reified socially necessary labour time, and the wasted man whose consumption is of use value to the cannibalising classes, into exchange value and its corresponding money value form. The production of waste is both profitable and it undermines the autonomy of the working class. It is a requisite of capital and does not derive from some *a priori* logic, as in there is nothing innate to man that compels him to waste. Waste for the sake of waste occurs as a phenomenon under capitalism. The extent to which the working class upholds the fictions created by capital in auto-reproduction reflects the hold of capital upon society. Although capital as waste may become perceived as an indisputable natural force, the waste process is contingent upon consistent coercion in conjunction with the introjection of defeatism by the masses. The ideological spinoffs of such defeatism sever social practice from theory, or the contribution of working class struggles to the development of revolutionary consciousness.

The metamorphosis of value into waste sheds light on the nature of social reproduction under capitalism. Waste, the waste of man and the erosion of the biological bases reproducing man, is a process in which capital reduces subject to object (man to thing) to resolve its crisis. To make the working class the object of waste is what capital promotes so that it does not collapse. Capital's culmination in waste is auto-propelled. Waste is observable and objective in real time. Relating these developments in waste to their historically definitive categories such as, the development of the labour process and its associated wage system, concretely means that the waste relation is how a waged soldier operates a drone to cut down peasants far afield. To get the most socially necessary labour time for the least-cost packed into a dead body meant for sale is the dynamic of waste, which is itself the law of motion of capital. This law is no other than the law of absolute surplus value.

The law of absolute surplus value is a subdivision of the more abstract (general) law or the AGLCA. Relatedly, Marx (1894) explains the permanence of overproduction crises as arising from a discord between conditions of exploitation and conditions of realisation.

[t]he rate of self-expansion of the total capital, or the rate of profit, being the goal of capitalist production, its fall checks the formation of new independent capitals and thus appears as a threat to the development of the

capitalist production process. It breeds overproduction, speculation, crises, and surplus-capital alongside surplus-population. Those economists, therefore, who, like Ricardo, regard the capitalist mode of production as absolute, feel at this point that it creates a barrier itself, and for this reason attribute the barrier to Nature (in the theory of rent), not to production ... The creation of this surplus-value makes up the direct process of production ... But this production of surplus-value completes but the first act of the capitalist process of production – the direct production process. Capital has absorbed so and so much unpaid labour ... Now comes the second act of the process. The entire mass of commodities, i.e., the total product, including the portion which replaces the constant and variable capital, and that representing surplus-value, must be sold. If this is not done, or done only in part, this can be bound up with a total or partial failure to realise the surplus-value ... the conditions of direct exploitation, and those of realising it, are not identical ... It is no contradiction at all on this self-contradictory basis that there should be an excess of capital simultaneously with a growing surplus of population.

To exploit more of the people, paid and unpaid, to whom capital may offload the surplus is the rationale for the negative dialectic – notice in social reproduction unwaged labour, like a mother, is productive and residually paid from the share wages. In the negative dialectic and relative to the historically determined social conditions, man transitions into a worse condition from the one he started with. In the above paragraph, Marx also argues that it is not land's declining marginal productivity (Ricardo's point), which is going to temper profits, it is the *separateness* of production and realisation; something that working class planning could fix. Marx further points to the historical transience of capitalism, its moribund state, with nature (Ricardo's point) subsumed as one of the relations under the totality of social production. As to the *separateness* of production and realisation, capital consumed social labour, but if the products of all that labour do not sell, stocks of inventory and the reserve army of labour grow together; consequently, the absorption of more labour into exploitative industries is required – *ergo*, the capital-population contradiction or too many dislocated folk faced with too many unaffordable commodities.

The pile of contemporary waste shows that waste relations in command of the social metabolic reproduction order are reasons and consequences of the capital system. Making waste out of the excess population mediates the social crisis of overproduction and its related underutilisation of resources. As it bridges the gap between exploitation and realisation, it also resolves the demand side shortfall because the institutions of capital, states and

international organisations, fund the consumption of waste by the credit they create against future waste. To bring the picture to mind, consider US militarism and military spending. US workers foot the bill for more weapons through state taxation, while militaristic demand grows. US militarism creates demand for the waste commodity, which does not support society, yet it boosts US growth and profit rates. US growth through militarism reverberates in higher imperialist rents, which offset the tax paid by US workers. However, when the unpayable debts of the US call for more control over the future labour of humanity, which must be held in bondage as collateral, then it is the South that begins to waste away at higher rates.

## 2 Waste as Entropy

The overconsumption of man and nature for a price is the real and logical ends of capitalism. Accumulation subject to the laws of self-expanding value builds by the creation of surplus value and its substantive form in waste or commodities laced with waste. Waste is neither an intended nor unintended consequence of capital. It is the actualisation of capital; that is, it materialises by the necessity of the laws of capital. The waste of capitalism, however, is distinct. Every social-natural system may be wasteful or energy dissipating to one degree or another. The universe is more entropic than the earth as it expands and cools, while the notion of time is presupposed by entropy. However, pre-capitalist systems conserved resources and energy on account of low productivity and, roughly speaking, apart from wars that reshuffle class orders, their dissipation of resources are minimal to the natural order. However, capitalism is both systemically highly entropic and induces high entropy. It dissipates the labour/energy of society and, much of the overproduced waste is consumed or will be consumed at a time in the future. The metabolisation of wasted social nature at rising rates leaves in its trail the social-natural damage that supports the exponential build-up of waste.

The capital system is explosive, constantly grows and does not come to rest. While the GDP account of the social product is intrinsically biased, novel mainstream suggestions to social product measurements, no matter how comprehensive in accounting for the unaccounted inputs into the system, do not speak of waste activity as the source of profits. New methods recognise that GDP measures are flows not stocks, or that GDP does not comprise unpaid labour, and/or that an economy could grow by depleting its assets (like oil), and as such, these economies risk faltering at some future date. However, what they do not include is the surplus value constituted by waste processes, the minimal socially necessary labour time reified in prematurely lost lives,

the socially necessary labour time invested in the wasting of social nature, and their ensuant reduction in the social cost of labour reproduction leaving more for surplus labour. They might impute the unpaid work of a Scandinavian mother, but not the unpaid and lost years of lives in the Third World and their structural contributions through value channels to Scandinavian GDP, or why some Scandinavian countries bomb Libya. In a nutshell, they do not account for the contribution of the value relation played out in the activity of war and immiseration.

The mainstream assessment of the social product overlooks the class power that permits value to determine the groundworks upon which a price system takes shape. The same class power also sets the stage for the discrete time instantiations of value into capital-convenient prices. When to factor in waste and ready it for sale on the market such that capital expands is part and parcel of capital's strategy to short-change society. In sounder measures of the social product, *the social activity of waste, the actual pounding of the society*, prior to its gelling in profits denominated in some currency unit, must be considered as the source of profits. The understanding that growth and prosperity arise upon bigger markets is the hypostatisation of arithmetic formulae. An example of such appears in a didactic on history: 'if you asked working-class peoples why they wanted Brexit when it seemed so obvious, that the larger the market we belonged to, the greater our prosperity would be. The answer was always a proud statement – or some variation thereof - of how I am British and proud of it.'<sup>1</sup> Bigger markets indeed add up to bigger moneyed amounts, but that stock is not the reason for growth. It escapes the author, and of course many like him, that these moneyed amounts must grow, and growth requires new value flows, and that new value is created namely in the industries of bombing ratcheting up the power of class – trade or bigger trade areas do not create the flows of value without the exploitation. Moreover, such understanding of prosperity is banal for the not so ingenious reason that the more markets Britain adds to its own, the bigger becomes its market. However, British fortune depends on how Britain subjugates these markets, or whether it is going to exploit them or not. The actual practice of capital in historical time, manifest in British chauvinism, racism or war on terror are examples of activities attendant upon value, which are the sources of its wealth. To continue to share in such imperialist affluence, chauvinist British working classes do not act out the historical agency of labour, they do not support African working classes, they rather carry out capital's historical mandate.

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<sup>1</sup> Wealth and Power <https://www.wealthandpower.org/contents-synopsis-preface>

The waste of labour is the social activity reconstituting surplus value. To waste labourers prematurely leaves more to surplus labour. The rate of waste exercised namely by war and other means of social coercion lays out the foundation to how profits appear in prices at different intervals of time. With the weight of history on its side, capital devises power terms behind the price terms for optimal value usurpation. It does so by keeping itself focused on the primacy of its rule, ensuring that distributional payoffs strengthen its ties to its partnered classes.

Theoretically, a commodity is the culmination of a multiplicity of value processes for which capital designates a price or many prices. ‘It is quite common for commodities to be priced in a couple of ways: its spot price and its futures price,’ says Investopedia.<sup>2</sup> It is also possible for the commodity to exhibit many prices depending on the timing in which commodity contracts are exchanged. Investopedia dubs its definition of multiple prices per commodity ‘an oddity,’ when in fact every commodity is associated with a fluid price system as well as the many prices of many other commodities or financial instruments subject to the class forces that mould them. This permeability of value in its money form allows Beller (2021) to coin the concept ‘computational mode of production,’ which quantifies, prices and differences nearly all aspects of human life. However, he does so without the primacy of militaristic imperialism mapped onto class power as foundation for the resilience of capital. Whereas the dialectic is about the transformation of particulars to the universal argued by their adherence to a law of motion, imperialism or the universal state as a concept in Beller’s work becomes just one of many historical mediations, like gender and racism. Imperialism as argued so far is the historical stage of capitalism in which capital assumes an intensity that only resolves in war. Visibly so and true to fact, the social universe appears as a spectacle of capital finetuned to reassert capital’s historical tendencies. Yet within the Debord-like spectacle that ticks like an algorithmic computer to reproduce capital, the labour that most becomes capital is quickly-wasted labour. Thus, while Northern labour enjoys imperialist dividends and commodities built by ‘Chinese slaves and blood metals from the Congo’ and internalises ‘race-based fractionalisation,’ as Beller pronounces, it is still Northern labour that refashions its social security through war upon the Third World. To highlight this distinction is crucial because it latches together working-class ideology with scientific theory. The class struggle is not a theoretical struggle against abstract ideas of say racism and gender inequality, it is an actual confrontation with the racist formations

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<sup>2</sup> Commodity Spot Prices vs. Futures Prices: What’s the Difference? <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/062315/how-are-commodity-spot-prices-different-futures-prices.asp>

of the North and their soldiers. Northern welfare and imperialist war are auto-reinforcing processes. The social crucible of such synergism is the democracy of the North, which is the bourgeois dictatorship reconstructed by imperialism.

As argued, the more financialised form of the commodity, whose fetish guides production, becomes capital practiced in high gear. In a fluid world where the physical aspect of the commodity blends into its symbolic moneyed aspect, waste unveils itself as the rudimentary building block of capital. In the symbolic world, the Debord-imagery of capital recasts the totality of real social relations between people as alienated and spectacularised relations in which humans are substituted by capital's representations of choice to reproduce the system. However, of capital's images, imperialism sits atop the pyramid producing and being reproduced by racial, national and other cleavages. Imperialism as catalyst of waste is not the work of few individuals who bamboozle the white working class. As intensified capital, imperialism stands by the extension of capital to white classes required to maintain the waste relation. It holds together by its institutions of gun toting police and ideologues, otherwise the white working class. The labour process of 'divide labour to rule,' or de-skill to weaken the working class (Braverman 1974) becomes capital incarnate in white classes to waste labour and transform the dead labour into capital. In the diversity of a complex order homogenised by money, the more money pours into the guns of capital's white clones, or the ruling class and its instruments of war, the more capital takes hold.

In some instances, especially in relation to control of Third world primary commodities, capital financialises these commodities and records several prices for them. It snatches control from the direct producer because it lists them on its commodity exchange markets and, consequently, it could influence primary commodity price formations independently of supply and demand conditions. The financialised commodity trades against other financial instruments and is impacted by the macro prices that the US has leverage over, like the interest and dollar-exchange rates. Capital chooses the accounting methods that disclose just enough to cover up the value usurpation lurking beneath the low prices paid for Third World resources. It may be recalled that collaboration between Saudi Arabia and the US to have the price of oil listed on the commodity exchange in the mid-1980's instead of being priced by direct producers at OPEC, took the loss of Arabs in two wars against Israel, and other wars (Mabro [2006] illustrates how the US sought the collapse of OPEC).

The production process cannot meet the conditions of formal consistency such as diminishing returns because beneath the growth at decreasing rates, there lies the exponentially increasing waste associated with increasing returns. The rents on better technology that wear off with time are secondary

to the underlying rents on waste. No matter the better machine, without waste that scaffolds accumulation, the rents to capital will plummet. The transformative resolution, the historical mediation of the social oppression of labour by the law of value, is surplus value. Formal logic cannot capture the social dynamic that sets the grounds for the state of becoming of the law of value because its time is an algebraic signification of chronological time but not social *become* abstract time. Contingently upon the clout of capital, the former time is the time of life compressed into chronological time and denominated in the money form.

Capital calibrates the consumption of both man along with his labour power and nature to reconstitute its economic activity. At the time of Marx, the phenomenon of waste was not generalised and one could speak, albeit with several caveats, about much use-value being internal to a useful commodity. At the current juncture, where the salient commodity is more waste, the position that society consumes waste and that capital consumes the labourer as well as his labour power, is a more adequate conception of capital's activity. The formulation developed so far posits that the rate of surplus value is the rate of waste or the rate at which life is snuffed before its due time. On the flip side, mainstream economists eschew the concrete, the lost years of life either spent in the drudgery of work or years cut short, which are the substance of surplus value. What they do not admit into their models is why making someone not just unhappy with the disutility of labour, but also dead, whence the act of decimation itself, is the source of profits. The activity of waste is the activity of capital. It is the labour process and labour played out in real time, much of which capital does not register in the form of money at the time it is carried out. Anyways, labour is too beaten to assign a moneyed form of value to its own premature death. The clobbering performed upon labour as object is socially necessary labour time with ramifications that reduce necessary labour in absolute and relative terms. The wasted lives reduce the number of workers, as well as reduce the costs of the necessary bundle of labour's consumption by the dual impact of working-class defeat and the technology developed with the purpose to perform the waste. The idea that better machines make commodities cheaper, or the machine as subject, is utter reification whose purpose is to show that white classes deserve the higher incomes.

In social reproduction, all of labour is productive including the labour of birth and the labour of the trenches, and the many ways of condensing the socially necessary labour time of society, which constitute value by squeezing life out of society. From a holistic perspective of social reproduction, the factory unit of English political economy is bypassed. It morphs into a global factory that reproduces humanity. Society exchanges its labour as well as its

life in return for wages. The reproduction process includes the order of war and enslavement amongst other plunders, realised subject to the rulings of social or abstract time, the time wherein labour time becomes the time of life condensed and readied for consumption by capital. In social reproduction all social activities are commodified and monetised. While labour collects a social wage, capital through its state institutions redistributes the wage bill amongst the members of the working class aided by the symbols of social division it foists upon society. One is reminded that even though inanimate things, like land and machines are taken to be subjects of production by the mainstream; however, it is not the reified labour of man that produces value, it is living society. Social man or society produces to be reproduced in a system led by dominant ideology and its prevailing symbols. Society altogether earns and redistributes to its members via the state, whence the priority of state capture to the working class. Some members of society are unpaid, some die off with negative wage when calculated as a share of their personal wealth over their lifetime, and some simply pass away in infancy for otherwise curable diseases related to hunger. These unnecessary deaths are ends and tools of imperialism as it regiments the labour process. Down the line, as capital turns nature into waste, it also harnesses sickened nature as its dead labour and an adjunct in its regimentation process. Ailing nature reconditions society. The social metabolic process, the dependency on waste, spearheaded by Western capital emerges into the civilisational forms on display today.

Equally, in an interconnected and uneven structure of global production, the West requires the Third World to deplete its resources, including human resources, and convert them into value flows that cover the downward pressure on surplus value resulting from steady growth in the organic composition of capital. Let us just say that profits taper down for many reasons and with overproduction, the negative impact upon income from the salient commodity stocks unrealised in consumption for lack of demand, is redressed by the waste commodity consumed through state sponsored demand – figuratively, ‘bombs not bread’ is the algorithm of capital. Informally, regular commodities do not sell because the masses are short on money; however, waste commodities bought by the state and funded by the masses through direct and indirect taxation sell. Waste is paid for with a given price or with the price equivalent of shorter lives. To expand on the example of militarism, such would be demand for bombs supported by state credit funded through taxation. Connectedly, instead of propping up wages to better health and education and increase the commodity bundle of the working class, a process that may empower the disenfranchised strata, the state borrows from the financial sector, invests in waste, while the Third World masses foot the bill in money and shorter lives to

pay off the waste. Since capital cannot survive without its adjunct classes, the tax paid by the white classes for militarism is an investment in future imperialist rents. The rents from the growing waste create a two-tier class system split between the rent gobbling white class and the wasted global masses – systemically the white structure supports war for rents. Although maintaining profit rates requires consistently lower costs and more waste-unpaid and marketed to society, lowering incomes of the bottom class tier reinforces the auto-waste process, as opposed to growth by demand management.

### 3 Waste in Social Reproduction

Social reproduction is a dynamic process. In it, elements connect to other elements and reconnect to the structure of production, which reproduces/de-reproduces man by recreating basic needs or constructing waste as a need to de-reproduce man. In analogy to wasters being productive, Marx (1859) posited that criminals and police may be thought of as redundant, however, seen from the vantage point of reproduction, these produce and rebolster the legal superstructure through which capital further exploits labour.

The criminal produces not only crime but also criminal law, and with this also the professor who gives lectures on criminal law and in addition to this the inevitable compendium in which this same professor throws his lectures on to the general market as commodities ... The criminal moreover produces the whole of the police and of criminal justice, constables, judges, hangmen, juries, etc; and all these different lines of business, which form just as many categories of the social division of labour, develop different capacities of the human mind, create new needs and new ways of satisfying them. Torture alone has given rise to the most ingenious mechanical inventions, and employed many honourable craftsmen in the production of its instruments ... The effects of the criminal on the development of productive power can be shown in detail. Would locks ever have reached their present degree of excellence had there been no thieves? *And if one leaves the world of crime, would the world market ever have come into being but for the national crime? Indeed, would ever the nations have arisen?*

The crime itself is a product. In social reproduction, waste activities, especially wars, are the pillars of the value relation. Frank (1982) gets it right when he noted that capitalist accumulation would be difficult, if not impossible if

societies do not accumulate profits through non-capitalist production relations; however, two qualifications are called for. First, the activities of the supposedly non-capitalist relations of production are productive because productivity under capital is social and waged through the fallout from the social wage. For instance, the livelihood of a tribal mother in the countryside of a peripheral region depends on the policies of capital – whether she will starve or not. Secondly, as argued in Kadri (2020), production activity carried out by what appears as non-capitalist production relations is not anachronistic. Traditional relations contributing to production constitute a practice of the value relation just as any other type of modern factory work. The descriptor ‘non-capitalist’ appraises social relations by their form rather than content. Capital is a totalising relation.

In relation to waste, mass crimes carried out by self-distinguishing strata on the basis of identity or ethnicity co-aligned with imperialist objectives prop up the imperialist superstructure. These strengthen US-Euro supremacy and other afflictions that imperialism casts against the Third World. In social reproduction, the law of value reorders not only the factory floor, it reconfigures society to the ends of capital. The activity of global society in the act of self-reproduction becomes the factory floor. The illustrative labourer engaged in production in *Das Kapital* volume 1 is henceforth the working class or society carrying out the task of self-reproduction. The labour process does not only discipline people into a 9 to 5 job, it additionally creates a surplus population and instils measures of relative depopulation. It may be as well to recall that when comparing longevity over the same historical phase, the shortening of lives in relation to prevailing life expectancy realised by the subjugation of man to modern technology, is relative depopulation. People who live fifty years on average when they could live ninety because they are being decimated by war and neoliberalism are murdered by capital. Capital as history through its agents *intentionally* condemns a child under ten years to death from hunger every five seconds (Ziegler 2013). The depopulation is *historically* purposeful – the laws of capital increasingly create a reserve army of labour whose very waste is industry. Within the system of capital, living longer in advanced societies without the imperialism faces off against living shorter lives in the South under imperialism. Such structural genocide is a systemic measure to reformulate a society in ways to meet the conditions of minimum socially necessary labour time and/or to increase surplus labour by reducing surplus population.

Waste interlaces with every other constituent of social reproduction. Within the social product assessed after the fact, distinctions between productive and unproductive labour disappear. Logically constructed designations, such that the person on the assembly line is productive while the secretary is unproductive, do not figure in the post-production social product. The dichotomous distinctions deployed to analytically illustrate the political economy of value

creation, such as productive and unproductive, fuse into the interdependent social labour responsible for the emergence of the social product. With waste acquiring value in markets, the wasted lives and the labour performed to waste lives are social and productive. However, mainstream trivialisation of the input of the Third World to global reproduction presumes that the developing world is not as productive, and its masses are something of an unnecessary lump of flesh. In one of its facets, such position does not consider that developing nations are targeted with war and neoliberal mantras, which are a European industry transplanted to the South. Against the refugee migration to the North, there exists plenty of military and NGO personnel from the North migrating to the South. Their purpose is to extract resources cheaply, including the extraction of human lives. Illustratively, not only garment industry in Bangladesh is a step in outsourcing Northern jobs, military bases, Northern academics on field work and NGO's fomenting war are also outsourcings. The propaganda upshot of such NGO's hollowing of the state and fomenting war is the catchphrase Africans/Arabs kill each other with US guns is a magnification of the US gun lobby maxim, 'people kill, not guns.' In a blatant annulment of history as the domain of class struggle, or otherwise the class order that transcends national boundary, the policies of war and the suppression of Third World development in real time are also crossed out. 'Barbaric tribes' are said to act barbarically against one another in the scuffle for limited resources, but the real time history of why resources have been made scarce by imperialist assault is forgotten.

For mainstream economists, all that exists are prices and quantities. However, these do not appear out of the blue. They are the market-mediated symbolic expressions of social processes, the state of becoming of value by adherence to the law of value. Social immiseration, the law of value at work, follows from the edicts of markets and contributes to markets by its feedback loops – market competition by cost cutting pressures reshuffle various circles of capital to suppress the socially necessary labour time. Only capitalists whose production prices ensure profits survive. However, the concept of surplus value, a concept alien to old and modern economics is a historical concept, which cannot be handled by formal tools; it must be properly defined in terms of class power relations before being modelled and quantified. Surplus value builds by transforming the defeatism of labour into wars and modes of reasoning that impose upon nations a path of self-debilitation. Historical surplus value amasses by cramming the real time of society or the social time necessary for its reproduction to the unpaid time foundational to profits. Since waste is essential to capital, then it is the money-costed de-reproduction of society that ensues from the application of the laws of capital. The historical ingenuity of capital effected through its historical surplus value was to deploy the surplus population in self-wasting processes that earn it profits. In social

reproduction, there is no longer any idle stock of capital or labour. In the age of Kidney sales for transplants, nothing is left un-commodified, unused, or waiting to be used. In the continuum of time, obsolescence, depreciation, and corrosion reappear as waste commodities to willingly be used by society or shoved down the throat of society. In the capital complexity, all that exists is twirled in the vortex of prices in time or gestating to be realised.

The origins of this waste process originate in the practice of genocide and looting, in which European soldiers of the sixteenth century were waged when partaking in the looting of the colonies, and which assumes the waste process of this epoch. As argued in the previous chapter, despite the significant size of some Islamic urban centres, and although some Islamic merchants may have turned their artisanries into institutions redefined by an enhanced technical division of labour and/or wage labour, these stalled as a result of European power supremacy. Unlike Europe, the pursuit of money parked in tradable private property did not transform the merchant class to pursue rising productivity to meet rising trade; plainly because trade was controlled by Europe. In the Islamic world there prevailed a steadiness, up to the twelfth century, and then a stunting of advancement, especially as the growth of mercantile wealth came to a halt. As such, the grounds for the transformation of merchant into nascent industrial capital arrived at the scene as pre-capitalist production relations mutated into capitalist production relations under the thumb of Europe. However, that is not to say that the East entered the sixteenth century as un-capitalist. The East's capitalist industry was not cotton garment making. The East was integrated by European sponsored pillaging expeditions, which were the pedestals that created commodity wealth. Although, the debate of East or West came first or second is scholastic, analytically a pedestal is an industry that predicates all other industries; the industry of colonial slaughter integrates and engages central and peripheral labour. These pedestal industries coincided with exchange value superseding use value and then achieved progress in the development of the productive forces. In addition to the point made earlier about European supremacy at sea, when capitalism began to take root, the Portuguese in the sixteenth century had already occupied Muscat, Hormuz Island and displaced the Arabs from much of the southern seas – later the Dutch took over Hormuz Island from the Portuguese. Europe was in the lead when the world adopted capitalist production relations. Since then, systemic genocide and the waste industry expanded into the current stage of near planetary collapse. Since then as well, socially necessary labour reified in value had created value by consuming and producing the commodified human who also consumes the waste as use value. Fabricated scarcity reasoned by the ethic of class consequentialism became what is best for capital is moral, or equally, what is best for capital is best for society.

Mészáros (1995) observed that advancements in productivity along with underutilisation, 'profoundly affect the nature of productive activity itself, determining at the same time also the ratio with which a given society's total available time is going to be distributed between the activity required for its basic metabolic interchange with nature and all the other functions and activities in which the individuals of the society in question engage.' Mészáros further follows up by noting that as a result of the absurd reversal of productive advancements in favour of quickly 'used-up' products and destructively dissipated resources, 'advanced capitalism' tends to impose on humanity a most perverse kind of 'from hand to mouth' existence. However, as production transmutes into consumption under universal commodification, the capital system commodifies what it dissipates, especially the labouring class, its potential and unused stock of labour power. More so, as posited in this work, the financial turnover cycle expedites the frequency the economic cycle not only forcing capital into ephemeral or speculative activity, but also wasting more inputs per unit of output to compound its gains against the future waste it creates. Perverse existence as such not only starves labour, it sells the corpses of the labourers. By capital's efficiency criterion, the potential value, the stock of social labour time available to capital's system, will all be used up, principally, in waste.

Requalifying the proposition that the destruction of resources, foremost the human resource, is the frame that holds together the capitalist edifice implies that wasted humans realised as the austerity and war commodities are the start and the final realisation stages of production. Labour produces for capital and is finally consumed by capital. An analytical schema imposed upon the circuit of capital is best done by opening and closing with labour, from birth to death, rather than a commodity that sells in capital's referenced time (like the GDP year). The stock of labour reified in wealth, the physical form of the social product arrived at by social production activity, is not only waste because of the continuously evolving human deaths and pollution components of wealth, it is also immanently so. Immanence here means that waste must, necessarily but not exclusively, happen because of the rule of capital or the coinciding logical and historical reasons inherent in the contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The social-natural metabolic rate, or the interchange between labour and nature as per Mészáros above, is the rate of intake into production relative to its cost to capital. How capital imputes visible and hidden costs in production over time is foundational to the rate of profit. The rate of profit rises as society bears the costs of the waste commodities that capital produced across time. The more entropic, wasteful of people or value engaging and dissipating per unit of output capital becomes, the more the rate of profit rises.

Behind these rising profits there must have been a substratum of rising rates of surplus value or, oppression that de-subjectifies and expropriates the social producers. Such dynamic cycle, once fitted onto a GDP or value-added account within say a year, disappears. GDP in the US does not for instance factor in the death of social nature it causes at home or abroad, which are social time priced value-added activities. In equation form, the waste rate is the growth rate, albeit in social time. Aside from the earlier mentioned problems of the GDP, all income spent on buying commodities within a year is just an identity that does not inform about the wasted social sources of growth; it also omits the power exercise as an industrial value-added process. Profits are driven by the rate at which lives were wasted in the past and the potential for wasting lives in the future. Such is not the putative Kondratyev cycle or the long-wave cycle of technological development. When the historical subject of technology is considered, the productivity of technology becomes its capacity to waste. The waste cycle that underpins growth or profits must be captured in how much is invested in waste, including the ideological strength of capital, to generate profits. In quantity terms, past and projected differences in longevity relative to the synchronous advancement in science foreground accumulation. The rate of profit would still be grounded in the rate of exploitation, however, with exploitation under a waste cycle becoming dominated by the rate at which the cannibalising class consumes the cannibalised class. What is consumed for a price during a year of GDP is not just the chocolates and apples, it is the earlier death of the South.

A falling rate of utilisation follows a falling rate of profit or a crisis of overproduction. These crises dialectically intermediate, cause each other, and overlap. The expansion of markets for exchange value is riveted upon the expansion of surplus value, the factual double of which is “sell more for profits with low costs.” Exchange for higher profits is the goal of capital rather than use value. For capital, the usefulness of the commodities is means to an end, while waste production and consumption becomes both means and end. Capital produces in a way that expands value; a value whose substance is reified labour created by socially necessary labour time. It does so subject to market arbitration and private ends as opposed to social ends. Unrestrained, or as exchange value trumps use value, value proper or the socially necessary labour time, objectified and alienated social labour time, transmutes into waste because minimum labour time in social reproduction subjected to profits becomes the shorter than expected lifetimes. Value financialised, the self-expanding category, accelerates the expropriation of the social product in shorter periods. The self-expanding dynamic of the commodity, otherwise the repulsion

between use and exchange value, gains momentum by consuming cheapened humans and nature in shorter turnover cycles, including once more, collapsing the lives of peoples before due time. The assault on nature and the interlacing of the run of the mill commodity with the deleterious components doubly benefit capital because they shrink the life of labour. Unless the agency of labour fuelled by revolutionary consciousness kicks in down the line, labour's share from the social product must fall.

Hegemonic imperialism is a constant scramble to control space as well as time. Conversely, the well-being of society emerges from the balance of the class struggle and the way it manages its surplus population or potential time, specifically, whether it is to be wasted or to be paid or enjoyed as leisure. The struggle to manage potential time may free labour from the shackles of abstract time. Capital fits into production so many hours of labour and pays correspondingly minimal wages, but simultaneously it engages the time of people supposedly unpaid, namely, in waste production. Labour as a form of capital automatically involves itself with wasting itself. Abstract or social time, the state of becoming by mediation of the many concrete or particular times of society's productive activities in social reproduction, is real time or the time of life that people experience at work or in leisure determined by capital's drive to minimise necessary labour. Capital, by reason of the contradiction between rising productivity and excess population 'seeks to resolve itself through expansion of the outlying field of production, but the more productiveness develops, the more it finds itself at variance with the narrow basis on which the conditions of consumption rest' (Marx 1894). Thence emerges the constant crisis of overproduction and capital's inherent knack to manage the demographic side by the labour process and with measures of depopulation, which are saleable waste. Marx is blunt about capital's unconcern for human beings. He critiqued Ricardo's concern for the decline of the rate of profit from two angles.

Hence the concern of the English economists over the decline of the rate of profit. The fact that the bare possibility of this happening should worry Ricardo, shows his profound understanding of the conditions of capitalist production. It is that which is held against him, it is his unconcern about 'human beings,' and his having an eye solely for the development of the productive forces, whatever the cost in human beings and capital-values – it is precisely that which is the important thing about him. Development of the productive forces of social labour is the historical task and justification of capital. This is just the way in which it unconsciously creates the material requirements of a higher mode of production. What

worries Ricardo is the fact that the rate of profit, the stimulating principle of capitalist production, the fundamental premise and driving force of accumulation, should be endangered by the development of production itself. (Marx 1894)

In the above quote, Ricardo appears as capital personified for worrying about profits, but unconcerned about humans and unaware of the fact that blind accumulation endangers capital. Since then, however, every commodity has become in great part waste. The elemental relation of capital gelled in ubiquitous bomb-like commodities. Since then, as well, the rate of accumulation has steadied; the growth in real and financial wealth alongside inequality is testimony to rising rates of profits. The defeat of socialist ideology is *ex-post facto* discerned from the preponderant waste. Capitalists may have been endangered by the degradation of nature, they contract cancers just like the working classes, then again, to thingified capitalists, the damage they incur as an objective and impersonal social class is irrelevant. Anyhow, waste is disproportionately visited upon the South.

The concern of Western Marxists with central crises in which the business cycle dips for two consecutive quarters causing central unemployment to rise, while being oblivious to the centrality of war and starvation in the South, is similar to Ricardo's position critiqued by Marx above. Like waste to capital, Western Marxism appears to benefit from relegating the schism between South and North to the backburner. Although the pile of waste shows the blindness of capitalist accumulation, capital's co-optation of Western Marxism culminated in the corruption of the intellectual body of Marxism. Most rigged is the concept of value. It was reified and instead of the theorisation of international class relations, especially imperialism, materialising in the social-natural disaster, it became a theory of things making things and essentialist nations that make things. Is there nothing national and is everything really international is as far as their inquisitiveness goes. Evidently, once the analytical partition between national and international is hoisted, the issue boils down to the scholasticism of who is first and who is second. Obviously, the West ends up first because of the power of class apparatuses behind it. However, the partition of value by national state boundary is unfounded. Such is a compromise to Marxist theory. Value is a class derived relation whose material substance is waste. Its non-material substance is the destruction of labour's potential as historical agent. Thence the development of the productive forces, the unity of labour with the means of production, becoming the historical task and serving as justification for capital's ownership of technology, has emerged

as the unity of man with waste. Capital would lean more to waste production as the material requirement of its more evolved mode of production turns it into a *waste mode of production*. The *waste mode of production* is a different way of life in which organising and remaking life centres on the production and consumption of waste. Capital's unconscious, its cost minimisation at any cost, and conscious activity, putting the primacy of its political rule first, collided in the phenmoenonal waste. Obviously, there could not have been so much waste if it was not for the weakness of a labour, whose revolutionary consciousness should, under better circumstances, be translated into a material weapon against capital.

#### 4      Self-Reinforcing Waste

Capital's civilian-end use commodities whose production dispenses pollution and illness are namely spinoffs of war generated class-power and war technology. In terms of waste, the activity inflicting premature deaths amounts to condensing socially necessary labour time in production in ways that diminish life expectancy relative to the historically achievable level, or in the production of commodified death. Destructed nature as a form of capital reddestroys man and remoulds his consent as the substance of capital's power. It may be recalled that waste in its actual or potential state goes on sale. For capital, the destruction of man becomes an end in itself, while the destruction of nature is subordinate to and serves as means to waste man. After all, social man in his symbolic world – the class power – creates new value and assigns the symbolic magnitude of value in prices. Capital replaces the subjectivity of labour for its own, erases the memory and clout of the working classes, or smashes labour and its potential, as the premises of surplus value. As capital accumulation further veers toward waste accumulation, waste foregrounds the reproduction of labour by the reproduction of waste commodities. With the value relation as the chart of history, waste is then internalised and reappears in wars and civilian-end use commodities, which are mostly waste. The belief that capital is 'the best world out of all the possible worlds,' and the dictum that war is necessary to 'protect the Western way of life,' are some of the cultural facets of the waste mode of production.

Before Malthus and Ricardo, the contradiction between capital-controlled resources and population growth was assumed under arithmetic forms. Formulae of 'growth in population exceeding resources' applied to a self-negating reality are considered relative truth by the degree of departure of

the real from the ideal.<sup>3</sup> Deaths from famines are attributed to fecund people over-multiplying their numbers. The formulae of numbers are ideal, while the actual deaths from famines are real. As opposed to the ideal or form being an instrument to discover the processual truth of objects, this approach to population is theoretically and operationally Platonic. Like Plato, it looks at objects in reality as variations upon an *a priori* form. Garrido (2021) describes this as the purity fetish, which 'can be traced back to a Parmenidean conception of truth as unchanging permanence which has permeated, in different forms, all throughout the various moments of Western philosophy's history.' Such *a priori* forms exist only as logical entities in thought.

*Apriori* forms may also be drawn from experience as per the heuristic approach of neoclassical economics in such a way to only relay some fixed and unchanging quality of experience. If something is observed often enough, like people like apples, then liking apples qualifies as an *a priori* form. The utility gained from the pleasure of eating apples is transformed into a mathematical symbol that is just as *a priori* as any Platonic form. However, as an isolated abstraction unrelated to social man as subject, 'liking apples' becomes a form antecedent to or biasedly referenced in experience. Aside from the pesticides consuming man, the liking of apples is a product of a social context in which the demand for apples is constructed by capital to be of benefit to capital. Variations in the demand and function of apples depend on the relations spawning social needs and desires in relation to income. Obviously, consumption is defined by working class income, which is in turn defined by the power of capital over labour.

To employ an *a priori* or a formalised supposition devoid of laws of capital mis-conceptualises the reality to be investigated. The apples example above considered liking apples on physiological grounds apart from the remaking of people who like apples. To refer findings from an *a posteriori* condition back to a one-sided formal hypothesis will inevitably refer the facts to themselves. That people like apples because people consume apples is tautological. Of the mainstream's many mis-conceptualisation, one may recall that the concept man in the mainstream *corpus* is construed as an automaton-like abstract without a real subjectivity (Fine 2016). Whereas man is social being, or a relation to other social relations in the process of production, man is forced to comply with the subjectivity of capital whose genus is a culture of waste. Man's

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3 The notion that geometric demographic growth exceeds the arithmetic growth in available consumables precedes Malthus and was a common point of debate in the late eighteenth century. For instance, Robert Wallace in 'Various Prospects for Mankind, Nature, and Providence, 1761,' says that '[u]nder a perfect government ... mankind, would increase so prodigiously that the earth would be left overstocked and become unable to support its inhabitants.'

subjectivity is a derivative of social consciousness, which is also a reflection of his social being. Thence, the interchangeable usage of ideology or the conduit of consciousness with the social being premissing the ontological basis of class (Marx 1845). In a class society, the identity of social being or class with capital's forms of consciousness tallies with the power of capital exercised through the function of its fetishes over labour.

Not that any frame of thought boasts it could identify theory with reality; mainstream theory, however, tests its formal hypotheses based on the law of 'identity and non-contradiction' against a process fraught with 'divergences and contradictions.' The only reason its suppositions may be borne out by empirical observations is because man has been reduced to a thing by the power of the fetish, and the statistics used in tests are concocted in ways that could only bear out the initial assumptions. Capital created the man and the measure of man. Reality is what has been assumed in the mainstream model, while capital forcefully had already moulded reality, by the exercise of violence, to its assumption. When in reality most people consume only what is necessary for minimum subsistence and pay in years of their lives to consume waste, in utilitarian national accounts people appear to pay for what they like. Accordingly, the GDP or the total value added in a year can only be synonymous with the social surplus *qua* welfare. Depending on what is counted as a component of production or what is omitted relative to the state of mass amnesia, capital's accounts show the best world of all the possible worlds. While the real world exponentially grows with waste, a world of social alternatives becomes an impossibility because truth is in the unachievable non-contradictory world. People live the truth of an explosive system from day to day, yet truth belongs to mathematical equations and not to what they endure. Depleted social conditions and environment head from one explosion to the next, yet the mathematical models, the forms that hold truth (like Parmenides above), show a planet that experiences steady states in successive equilibria moving to higher welfare platforms. What is in the mind is true or accepted as received truth, whereas what is truly lived is a departure therefrom. Such excessive solipsism is capital in its state of perfection.

Moreover, in a utility-based national accounting system in which masses have absorbed capital as a result of defeat, the results will repetitiously prove the obvious or that the class, which earns more and consumes more, enjoys more welfare than the class, which earns less and consumes less. Apart from the fact that those who own more have demolished those earn less, capital's handmaidens predict what had already been postulated. People, however, are not permanently thingified. Labour's potential cannot be fully smashed. In their relation to each other and through the institutions that mediate their differences, they could altogether fare worse or better. The poverty of one

class impacts the welfare of other classes, and more so, because society is autophagic, the whole of society goes down together at rates commensurate with class level.

The point here is that there might be nothing wrong in probing with formal *a priori* thought an *a posteriori* condition to gauge its developments. That is standard modelling. The economy grew and had to be measured, so concepts like consumption and capital formation must be created and measured. Still, the measurement must be based on an adequate conceptualisation of the object under consideration, of say consumption or production. When, for instance, the concept consumption includes the act of auto-consumption as a domain of production, the measure is sturdier and contributes to theory. It would inform how much of production is auto-consumption and, better yet, what is the weight of the perpetrators of such cycle. When consumption is about the pleasure of eating the apples or the displeasure of spending time at work (the mainstream), then the only purpose such concept of consumption serves is to tap the development of a narrow strip of reality that reveals how delimited tastes are moving. It would not however disclose the tastes associated with utility arising upon the consumption of waste and death, which circularly boost accumulation. In contrast to capital which fashions the condition for social reproduction, the theoretical development of such utilitarian account is to say that reductive atomistic tastes define the course of history and, since each chooses what to consume, the masses are to blame.

This begs the question why does mainstream economics fail to assess a capital relation to which the population is the overpopulation. Capital exchanges the constructed excess population on the market, and consumes it. Is it not the case that expenditure on militarism and austerity institutions shortens lives, while the expenditure itself is the revenue of capital or the magnitude of the value of lost lives in the money form. At least in one aspect of the equation (investment in waste and militarism is the revenue of the financial class), the issue is intricate since the structural and the systemic genocides are industries with ramifications upon the cannibalistic mode of consumption and the price system in general. Wasting an 'excess' population relative to spare capacity is an industry whose surplus value hypostasises as the incrementally accumulated premature dead people. Just like the scalping of Native Indians in the US, there has been a price on every head since the dawn of manifest destiny. Marx (1867) was aware that scalps transfigured into commodities on sale.

In 1703 those sober exponents of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England by decrees of their assembly set a premium of £40 on every Indian scalp and every captured redskin; in 1720, a premium of £100 was set on every scalp; in 1744, after Massachusetts Bay had proclaimed a

certain tribe as rebels, the following prices were laid down: for a male scalp of 12 years and upwards, £100 in new currency, for a male prisoner £105, for women and children prisoners £50, for the scalps of women and children £50.

Like other forms of capital, death on sale and the culture of death consumption lodge in the amassed historical surplus value. Periodic ideological production in tandem with the hegemony of capital also restore the historical surplus value and the systemic component of ideology. Systemic ideology may be traced back to Lenin's (1902) characterisation of bourgeois ideology, which was described as far older in origin than socialist variants, more fully developed, and has at its disposal more imperialist support and immeasurably more means of dissemination. Ideology overlaps with the historical surplus value. In terms of genealogy historical surplus may be discerned from Lenin's (1920) point that '[t]he stubborn force of habit in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force and is a thousand times more difficult to vanquish than the centralised big bourgeoisie because millions of petty proprietors *through their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralising activities produce the very results that the bourgeoisie needs and that tend to restore the bourgeoisie*' (my emphasis). Rethought over once again as aide memoire, the historical surplus value is the weight of history to whose edicts society reflexively abides. In its developed state, historical surplus value captures the auto-development of peoples' thingification or how social activity as a value form recreates capital. In line with the argument, it is the mirror image of the progress in the objectification of man or how unconsciously people reify themselves into novel forms of capital. Seen from such angle, historical surplus value is the terrain upon which capital plants its ideological apparatuses to re-erect its rule.

A thingified society whose potential has been squashed willingly buys/spends on waste-laced commodities. Capital re-spreads the moments of realisation of value resulting from waste activity across time in ways reconfigured historically to recompose a balance between profits and the stability of its rule. Capital pre-arranges the historical terrain to synchronise its rate of accumulation with least-cost combinations while making society produce, consume and pay for the waste. Pollution may be marketed for a price, or imperialist-war dead may be arrayed against the complexity of price; however, only so when such commodities are projected onto the circuit of capital as moneyed funds to steady capital's rate of accumulation. There is a right price at the right time for people and nature that capital had wasted or is going to waste either as realised items *ipso facto* or as countercyclical injections redressing slowdowns in the business cycle. Green bonds and technology investment opportunities in green industry are examples of the latter case.

The waste processes require and are the result of socialist ideological retreat. In likeness to humans getting used to the horrors of prostitution in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, as labour surrenders, or as exchange value subdues use-value, or the private overtakes the social; the defeatism reconstructs waste as use value. Self-expanding value transmutes into self-expanding waste, while waste becomes the essence (the law) and the substance of value (the material of value). To requalify an earlier argument, a flagrant example of waste is the bomb commodity and its assigned money form. The bomb realised, consumed in the act of explosion for a price, also realises with it the alienated lives of many people cut short and encapsulated in a thing (the bomb) that sells alongside its efficacy in killing. The bomb, inclusive of the expropriated lives associated with it, exchanges for a price and, through its signalling as a fetish, adumbrates the nature of social reproduction. Fetishism, the act of exchange between things supplanting exchange between people, inters in the money form the surplus value generated by its labouring victims, which is comprised of their socially necessary labour time compressed in the production of their own deaths. The victims are the labourers employed into ending their own lives prematurely. The social activity of dying in the trenches or in the hut under the million-dollar missile is part of the productive labour that reproduces the North by de-reproducing the South – always in relation to an autonomous rise in wealth *become* waste. The capital-imposed self-annihilation constitutes the value activity, the commodity of death on offer, and the input that interlaces with other commodities on offer.

For mainstream economics, the concept of surplus value is non-existent. It simply cannot fit into a 'supply equal demand' identity. Engels (1894) posited that as supply and demand balance, the sum of their prices balance, and to handle 'the concept of value in such a fashion,' not the slightest trace of value will be left. In such identities, the social activity of labour unpaid and pocketed by capital disappears. Surplus value is the relation whose practice sets the stage for the formation of profits. As opposed to being discerned from an identity of supply equals demand, real knowledge of such value activities is found in the conditions of production. The immiseration of labour is the surplus value hidden beneath the money form. Marx referred to this as 'the demolition of the theoretical chains which bind us to the monetary system, the concepts and social constructs which reflect the fictions of bourgeois society' (Marx 1894). In more straightforward terms, it is shortsighted to spot the money in circulation and not spot the clubbing of labour or the industries of immiseration that underlie the appearance of the profits in money form.

With Marx's immiseration proposition further extended, what poisons consumption is also an industry of immiseration. To make labour miserable or waste labour requires a labouring activity. More so, the money form that veils the real activity or the socially necessary labour time, realised in the commodity

as objectified/reified labour, could equally be applied to all waste products. The emergence of waste products in their corresponding money form may be implicit in other prices or delayed, but that does not mean that waste making did not exchange on the market to conclude in value. As per the hypothesis examined in this work, the waste activity is *predicate* to all other production activities and its moneyed form of value is intertwined with the money forms of other commodities. Consider the investments in imperialist wars, in the permanent US military bases, in foreign aid and loans to developing countries (these are also investments in waste), and in ideological indoctrination through Western NGOs, universities, and modes of learning, etc., altogether these are waste requiring socially necessary labour time. They are Northern industries and labour that migrate South. Not only sweatshops, but also white migrants, expats, settlers or soldiers of empires work in the South to extricate resources, primarily excavate lives. These Northern activities in the South do not solely register into the accounts of the developing countries. These value processes are relayed by power mediation tailoring price to value ratios into the incomes of the centre. The war on Iraq and Afghanistan costing trillions does not mean that the GDPs of these aggrieved nations are in the trillions. The trillions go on the balance sheets and or filtrate in the value-added activity of the North. What did these trillions spent by the North in the South produce? Their products are not only the oil flows, or the cheap labour movement dislocated to the North. Their products are also the wasted social nature in the South. Moreover, the military costs of the North, or the destabilising aid masquerading as official development assistance, and NGO spending, rebound to the North and reconstitute the white working class into better fighting shape. As formations reproduced by militarism, Northern state welfare spending, the health and education, etc., cements their national fronts. Welfare legitimates the Northern formations into more militarily capable nations. With social spending buttressing military prowess, the Western economy would be generally constituted of a single sector, militarism. Military bases, wars and pollution count as 'FDI' in waste sent to developing countries. Together with the underlying unequal exchange and the power to impose value transfers from the South to the North, these flows of wasted lives from the South stockpile as dollar denominated wealth in the North. In the power imbalance engendered by the wasting of Southern man in war and austerity, not much strength will remain in the South to retain its resources, or to negotiate a higher price for its products.

## 5 Waste as Essence-Appearance

The contradiction between the implementation of surplus value and realisation of profit translates into the repression it takes to produce a commodity

(essence applied) and the sale of the commodity for profits (appearance actualised). Theoretically, essence and appearance do not resolve in a Hegelian absolute because such absolute does not exist for Marx – the harmonious identity arrived at by the auto-negation of the spirit prevalent in Hegelian contradictions cannot pertain to the Marxian system. The Marxian contradiction at the heart of development, the essence, actualises in an appearance with which it does not identify; nonetheless, essence is knowable from appearance. An example of essence applied: capital oppresses to obtain the use value and re-oppresses to conquer the channels of exchange value, while facing unfavourable demand conditions attendant upon the repression already exercised; thence, the appearance of essence in a crisis of demand. If less is paid to labour as a result of repression, less purchasing power results in less profits for capital. The process surfaces or appears in a crisis of demand whereby capital may continue to pauperise people such that they cannot buy what it produces. However, in state financed waste, the picture changes. More demand is created indirectly by state funding or by indebting current and future generations. Although transforming social reality to create surplus value and support or unsupport the reproduction of society requires uneven development imposed via imperialism, the system veers into an auto-destructive mode the more waste demand spins into profits. Creating bonds for green energy or technology attendant upon the difficulty of producing sane resources in the future, which marks up prices, or financialisation of future waste, altogether lure capital into the production of more waste.

Waste production re-actualises surplus value in profits and attenuates intermittent and permanent crises. Militarism and wars, the pure forms of waste, domains of accumulation on their own, carry most of the burden at the behest of capital. The more the process of exchange obscures the waste as a value process, the more private the social product becomes. Colloquially, people are bamboozled out of their social product. The more control over the labour process and its associated socially necessary labour time capital exercises, the more surplus labour turns into capital. Laterally, since waste is saleable or the system monetises its resource dissipation, then the more social entropy the system undergoes, the higher will be the surplus value. Death sells and, and to restate the proposition in relation to appearance, there are less people to feed over the turnover cycle, leaving more to surplus labour. Conveyed in formulaic language, surplus value mirrors the metabolic rate at which social nature perishes by the *diktat* of capital. The social or real time that people experience becomes the time of life conjured by capital to expand exchange value.

Unbridled capital is the capital that embodies the vested interest of each individual capitalist represented in the unmediated form of capital-class politics. Capital's organised dimension mediating the various desires of individual

capitalists and the desires of the single capitalist classify as one. There is no need for mediation and what one capitalist wants, all of capital wants. Hypothetically, it is as if the single capitalist firm with its accounting scheme, which minimises labour costs, rules. With no one to tame capital, the neoliberalism advocating 'small government' becomes the closest condition to the point where the social class of capital expresses the sum of the desires of each capitalist. Capital acts as the political expression of the capitalist individual whose political strategy is fully mirrored in his class and its institutions. As posited above, such extreme capital class drastically reduces the living wage, suppressing demand and, logically down the line, deepening capital's crisis. Although ethical behaviour is not a norm to which history conforms, the freer the rule of capital becomes, the more irrational or unethical history appears and the more it will approach its gory end.

Then again, capital is not society, and capital engrossed in waste has been performing 'healthily' for itself despite global indigency. Although capital forces the wages down and then discovers that its wage deflation crushed demand – as in it cannot sell what it produces – it has ingeniously created waste as a consumption item that emaciates the worker for a price in his act of producing his own auto-consumption. Still, it so seems that with the current social-natural crisis the gory end is already upon us. That is so because the alternative ideology to capital is yet to take root. Marxism has been corrupted. Western Marxism has theoretically compromised Marxism to vulgar empiricism, which undermined its revolutionary potential. Forgetting for a moment that the reason of white classes is the reason of the commodity; this compromised Marxism knows that for white man imperialism is invisible (Beal 2022). Sort of like the West left Africa a long time ago and these African peoples are subjects of their own history, so where is the imperialism. Beal also argues how an imperial aggression against Russia launched from Ukraine is seen only as a territorial war between Russia and Ukraine, as opposed to being an imperialist expansion. Diverting blame from the white class for its imperialism by the outright omission of imperialism is a class position. Also, while ignoring imperialism, Western Marxism panders to the existential fears man. Figuratively, to halt the degradation of the environment, it suggests that the world needs zero profits and green energy. Obviously there has to be green energy, however, within the pandering, the gist of revolutionary theory is sacrificed. Unless the South rises to tilt the balance of forces, no profit or greenery scheme will alter the course of events. The white class cannot be swung away from its addiction to imperialism because it is the imperialism that reproduces it. Its function as the whip of capital meets its form replicated by partnering with capital. Like capital as well, its auto-thingification is the realisation of its essence. In a similar manner to South-African white settlers, there is no potential in white labour

to untap. And just like Apartheid South Africa, the white class is phenotypically white but not exclusively white in colour. However, while its structure is mainly the Northern formations of imperialism, the white class as a historical relation of social reproduction structurally breeds capital's offspring namely in the constructed colour white counter-referenced against Western Europeans with white pigmentation.

On the institutional side, white institutions of consumption are also institutions of excessive auto-consumption. To reinterpret Davis (1957) and Veblen (1899), these white classes are locked into the recognition for status institutions whose microcosms are inward looking to the point they accept their own earlier than usual demise if their consumption stays higher per capita over their lifetimes relative to others. As per the prevailing conditions, Westerners do not mind dying earlier so long as peoples in the South consume less and perish at shorter life expectancies. The rationale for this remains the farcicality of scarce resources that grips the imagination.

The financial bourgeoisie not only hired Marxists to do its bidding, it also hired them to turn Marxist thought into a liberal discipline. Snedeker (1994) goes further and suggests that 'the very notion of the left in the United States is little more than a gloss. It is close to a meaningless term ... There is no organised left to speak of, so the term left can only mean ideas left of the mainstream. The mass media calls moderate democrats the left so how can the term left mean anything to us? When people attack leftists they are imagining a group that does not exist.'<sup>4</sup> The intellectual corruption of such left surfaces in its vulgar empiricism. It only weighs the pros and cons of any particular situation without the deciding role of 'the levers for the capital class' forming the pre-grounds for any pros or cons. For instance, Western Marxism even-handedly condemns violence, even the just anti-imperialist wars, when violence is elemental to capital while being delivered by its more imposing structures to protect its way of life *qua* the commodity. It does so by quantifying imperialism, such that anyone can be a lesser or bigger imperialist. More concretely, in the case of Iraq, some Western lefties (Fred Halliday and company) considered such starving state a fascist state that US imperialism could save the world from. True, variations in quantity matter for scientific analysis and measurements are a must, but variations of degree are only comparable within the same type. Western imperialism, or the class in charge of history, is the weight of history, the massive culture or stock of human knowability instrumentalised by the Western hemisphere to reproduce capital. No force compares to the strength of Western hegemony over the reproduction

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<sup>4</sup> Snedeker G (1994) informally comments on the volume he edited: New Studies in the Politics and Culture of US Communism, NY: Monthly Review press.

of knowledge. It is that hegemony that fashions the consent of the masses to auto-repress. Fabricated knowledge is the substance of capital's power.

Such ideological leverage applied to the making of consent differentiates US imperialism from earlier forms of political control and rebolsters its financial control over the value circuit. Since the onset of neoliberalism in the late 1970's, the Keynesian demand side management exercised by organised capital retreated, and crises have sharpened. Inequality and pollution rose as if it is the single capitalist firm, which commands history. Yet, labour remains in disarray. That begs the opportune question: why is revolutionary consciousness not peaking when the historical subject, here capital, guided by its pursuit of profits conspicuously surfaces as the responsible party for the structural genocide and intoxication of the planet?

There is no ready answer to such lacuna. Referring to standard theory for a solution, '[t]he fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being ... the worker does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind' (Marx 1844). To rebel a worker must find himself outside work or has to de-commodify. Lukács (1919) in similar vein says that '[a]bove all, the worker can only become conscious of his existence in society when he becomes aware of himself as a commodity. As we have seen, his immediate existence integrates him as a pure, naked object into the production process. Once this immediacy turns out to be the consequence of a multiplicity of mediations, once it becomes evident how much it presupposes, then the fetishistic forms of the commodity system begin to dissolve: in the commodity the worker recognises himself and his own relations with capital.' Lukács is about the necessity of exposing unfurling history and its mediations before the masses as prerequisites for the development of revolutionary consciousness. That is not an easy for nearly all the mainstream's effort is about falsifying history – since history is a class complex, a flux of personal decisions governed by an impersonal context, dominant doctrine only points to its series of unwanted consequences by mis-informed governments. However, white classes reproduce by imperialist dividends, and as such, they cannot de-commodify. Classes that reproduce in their struggles against imperialism explore their history as the arsenal from which to draw in the fight against their commodification. Such ontology holds the potential of labour. Just like class, revolutionary consciousness cuts across continents. So far, labour's platform weakens when it apes Western Marxism and white classes as vanguards of labour. White classes impersonating labour combined with capital's reconstructions of history are implacable weapons against the global working classes. The power differential between capital and labour is steadied by capital as it stabilises its rule via sharing more with white classes in times of crisis. The recreation of the white class keeps labour's potential at bay.

Referring to recent history for an answer, capital acted at a time when the masses' revolutionary ideology and internationalist anti-systemic organisations were at their historical nadir after the fall of the Soviet Union. While China had not yet crystallised as the alternative model of development, Soviet collapse had set on course socialist ideological retreat. The inertia of the breakup of the Soviet Union trails to this day. At possibly no other time in history could NATO and its Neo-Nazi proxy in Ukraine war against Russia (in 2022) without significant opposition in the West. In analogy, Stalin's address to the 1934 Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union foresees that Europe is planning to defeat the U.S.S.R. and divide up its territory but adds that the war would be waged not only at the fronts, but also in the enemy's rear. Stalin states that 'the bourgeoisie need have no doubt that the numerous friends of the working class of the U.S.S.R. in Europe and Asia will endeavour to strike a blow in the rear at their oppressors who have launched a criminal war against the fatherland of the working class of all countries.' The Western Marxists of current times have adopted capital's reason in support of NATO, especially as the assault on Russia targets China. Bohne (2014) attributes such revisionism to how the US hired German ex-fascists and Western Marxists to boost imperialist positions. She reinterpreted Allen Dulles's justification for promoting Western Marxists 'he's on our side, and that's all that matters' with the quip 'any bastard, so long as he's anti-communist,' meaning anti-Soviet. Just as their white classes did, Western Marxists have sided with the weight of history and the source of their imperialist dividends. They have co-aligned with the torrent of the ideological war against global labour, which is incidentally the same subject relation that decimates the planet that capital ostensibly wants to green. There are no shortcut explanations to why revolutionary consciousness lapses; however, with theory recreating pro-imperialist practice/dividends, the reason may be found in Western Marxism's false theorisation of value.

## 6 False Value

Mainstream science kowtows power even in its interpretation of Marxian value theory. No matter how decrepit social conditions become, the decisive reason for the failed struggle of the international proletariat is in theorising Marxian value theory on the basis of attributing agency to capital for the wealth created by labour and, subordinately, truncating concepts by the fictitious national boundaries drawn by capital. Such indistinction, the reversal of subject, rests upon surplus labour and its associated money fetish. However, the notion that white man has created the wealth he deserves, and that he could have done

it without the South does not remotely relate to value. The Western Marxism of aristocratic nations (aristocratic nations in line with Emmanuel [1972]) has sown submission to capital into working class consciousness. Instead of the Marx who advocated criticism by the weapons of class (Marx 1844), or that armed struggle is the necessity that coincides with freedom, one sees a Marx for whom literary criticism is sufficient to dislodge capital. As such, it so happens that the Marx of the Western *corpus* became an imperialist Marx for whom the Western working class focuses on getting higher pay from the sphere of circulation rather than struggling for equal pay across global production. From a Marx whose theory has to '[d]emonstrate *ad hominem*, radical, and that grasps the root of the matter, which is man himself' (Marx 1844), one observes a Marx for whom man is only white man. Marxism loses its revolutionary zeal because the concepts of value and man are both demarcated by the political national boundaries that capital has laid.

Equally, rather than pointing out that the better machinery of Europe makes the death of man in the colonies capital's first commodity, Western Marx's argument justifies imperialist ascent by the ingenuity of initial technological advance of the North. However, machines as constituents of the productive forces cannot be agents of history without a corresponding subject and under specific production relations. That is the rise of Europe cannot be incidental and unrelated to the structural genocide of its ruling classes. Moreover, technological innovation resonates as a supplement of the ideology of capital whose objective is to waste or to mould man into a waste consuming social being. In addressing the role of the printing press as tech-innovation under capital, Marx (1871) noted that 'up till now it has been thought that the growth of the Christian myths during the Roman Empire was possible only because printing was not yet invented. Precisely the contrary, the daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spreads inventions over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (and the bourgeois cattle believe and enlarge upon them) in one day than could have formerly been done in a century.' One may juxtapose such to today's media and social media to the point where nearly all these platforms are capital-monopolised. The production of myths has multiplied several folds. Apart from social media being an intelligence trove, it has also become a medium where people act out their lives vicariously through the daily spectacles choreographed by capital.

The capitalist apprehends that the war of ideas is the crucial war to fight. He also understands that ideas on their own are mere words if not backed by sufficient firepower. Not a single work of the mainstream possibly appears that does not calculate the prospects of power to US imperialism. Whatever accuracy conventional social science boils down to predicting what is certain, or

which war should the US foment next for the US to stay ahead. For instance, in a work addressing US tensions with China, Beckley and Brands (2022) suggest that for China to retake Taiwan by force would leave China much weaker, as Russia is left weaker after fighting the Neo-fascists in Ukraine. Short of the folly of pinning a specific time and place upon the future war event, which many in the mainstream scramble to do, such positions imply that egging on China to retake Taiwan by force is rather a bonus for the US. In the same manner demographers under fascism insinuated the thinning down of minorities to achieve full employment, the mainstream's congruence with imperialist ambitions recommends wars far afield to keep the US atop the global order; meanwhile, the unmentioned depopulation is the waste production carried out by history in the larger shadows of what is spotlighted.

The exclusion of the war phenomenon is routine to an empiricism that quantifies what it wants to measure with its own constructed units of measurement. Add to that the exclusion of international finance as an integral determinant of the war under capital. The tenets of such faux science are constitutive of the premise that things as they appear are absurdly not what they appear. When an actual assault upon a weaker nation occurs, the post-modern Western Marxist or liberal stance would posit that there are equally two or many sides to every story. Against this banality, the fact remains that bombing defenceless people in the Third world is an actual event, and the 'two sides to the story' argument is, within the overwhelming bias in the balance of forces against the easily defeatable nation becomes justification for imperialist aggression. Not a word escapes the ideological torrents. To question the reasons for event of imperialist aggression by the selected facts of 'the two sides of the story' the camp-ism, or nuances in between used by Western Marxists, is to refrain from the judgment required to translate thought into anti-imperialist activity. The un-avowed objective of vacillation is to cancel out an adamant anti-imperialist position on pressing historical issues.

Regarding the origins of value, or that alienated commodities acquire value through trade on the market had its origins, as pointed out in chapter 6, in the systemic genocides of the colonies. The lives of natives alienated and sold are amongst the first commodities of capital. The process continues as systemic and structural genocide in the neo-colonies. The difference between colonialism and neo-colonialism is made clear by Losurdo (2019) as follows.

First, we can cite Lenin, who with a very clear vision made the distinction between classic colonialism and neo-colonialism. He said, at the start of the Twentieth Century, that colonialism, in the classic sense of the term, is political annexation ... However, Lenin said as well that

there's another type of annexation, that is, economic annexation. That is neo-colonialism. We have today an example of classic colonialism, that is the situation of Palestine. There we see classic colonialism. It's clear, we see Israel expanding its settlements, expanding Israeli territory, and we see the Palestinian people like the natives of the American west: they are expropriated, deported and sometimes killed. This is classical colonialism ... But there exists another form of colonialism: neo-colonialism. And these days I like to make two references. Mao Zedong, after taking power, said: If we, the Chinese, continue on dependent on American flour for our bread, we will be a semi-colony of the U.S.; that is, political independence will be only formal, without substance. And I cite another classic of anti-colonial revolution, Frantz Fanon, who was a great champion of the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria, and he said something very important: When a colonial and imperialist power is forced to give independence to a people, this imperialist power says: 'you want independence? Then take it and die of hunger. Because the imperialists continue to have economic power, they can condemn a people to hunger, by means of blockades, embargoes, or underdevelopment.

Partial depictions of miseries in the neo-colonies ought to be traced back to their holistic contexts. The class hierarchies, which extend from the centre to the developing world, do so as political and economic sub-connections. The economic subjugation of neo-colonies translates into structural subordination to imperial powers as the comprador classes transmute into more vociferous backers of imperialist ambitions than the imperialists of the centre (Petras 2014). Capital's theory hangs together by emphasising how it excludes the masses from development, technology, and the overall social product. A stronger capital rises by a 'free to move around' value relation and a sturdier private property relation. Reflexively, the abolition of capital is the abolition of private property.

Against this background, enters the Western 'progressive' with his teleological stagism, and the pragmatism of gradual politics as the art of what is possible. While he did not demand low growth rates to save the natives from genocide, he so demands to maintain a degenerative system from which it reaps a comparatively higher share of income. The intellectual corruption of such approach huddles in the omission of the metabolic basis of social reproduction fuelled by the overconsumption of social nature, wherein *nature is being destroyed to destroy man*. Such is the condition that premises the value relation since day one of capital. Capital began by overconsuming man, when man after all is the source of new value. Whereas the life of labour conditioned by the labour process

recreates capital through its own act of production *cum* auto-consumption, it is the production of commodities by means of commodities, commodified man producing commodities and over-consuming himself as a commodity, which redresses capital's crisis. True enough labour power is a commodity that weaves itself in the production of all commodities; however, Western Marxists miss the point that to consume labour power, the labourer must be consumed. Man becomes a variant of private property, and in a world where commodity is financialised, the premature death of man is marketed as a commodity.

As soon as Western Marxism conflates a rosy picture of capitalism side by side with its barbarity, or as soon as it adopts the liberal stance that there is a little of this and a little of that in everything to cloud the leading link of value reconstituted by waste in capital, it reveals itself as a force of reaction. Meanwhile, with such perverse thought occupying the waves, the ideological defeat further reencodes into the historical surplus value, adding weight to the weight of history. Relatedly, the abominable knot or the apathy of which Gramsci (1916) spoke in 'I hate the indifferent' may grow beyond the capacity of any sword to cut through.

The fatality that seems to dominate history is precisely the illusory appearance of this indifference, of this absenteeism. Events are hatched off-stage in the shadows; unchecked hands weave the fabric of collective life – and the masses know nothing. The destinies of an epoch are manipulated in the interests of narrow horizons, of the immediate ends of small groups of activists – and the mass of citizens know nothing.

Aside from the assertion that all class politics are conspiratorial, it is not just the apathy of the working classes, that has grown since, it is the class symbiosis between white classes and capital. White police unions suffocate the Native or African Americans of the North, while imperialism asphyxiates whole countries in the South. Such is no longer William Saroyan's (1936) adage that, surviving is not living, or life is exchanged for survival according to Perlman (1969). It is capital subjecting the surplus population to early deaths by the ready-made signal of corpses already exchanging as fetishes that command social life. Such fetishes surge in power with the rate of the alienated dead, which are simultaneously the merchandise of waste.

Capital alienates labour power from the working class and turns it 'into an independent power, a ruler and buyer of its producer' or a social force, which confronts the labourer (Marx 1894). In the war/waste process defined as value, capital alienates life from the living – life is the commodity – and also the prospective labour power of society ruling over its shortened lifetime. Shorter

lives also cramp the potential usefulness of labour to society, and contingently upon modes of consciousness, the potential of labour. In waste therefore, it is the alienated wasted life as the product of labour, which then confronts the labourer. Labour's own death is the product that labour produces for being a form of capital. In that sense, the labourer competes with another labourer through engagement in the wage system to produce the other labourer as a corpse. Conversely, the proletariat de-alienates as it reclaims its social product, which is to regain back its life or longevity.

Whereas finance funds militarism and earns a price for premature deaths, the Western Marxist concept of value overlooks the lost lives as products of the industry of war. In the run of the mill production circuit M-C-M' (money-commodity-more money realised), capital invests and hires cheaper workers and machines, better machines produce at increasing rates, its commodities sell in a market for those who could afford their costs, while profits materialise, underpaid labour reproduces through the wage system because the demand side must be kept vibrant. Teleology is useful as an illustrative tool. However, even if there are stages of development in the value story leading to a final realisation stage, when account of power differentials between historical subjects and their varying states of consciousness are considered, the value story changes course. What happens when capital hegemonises the cultural sphere is that the production cycle becomes a waste cycle. M-C-M' may read as investment in the better machines of the Northern hemisphere whose subject is a history that decimates the South, also hires Northern workers paid dollar wages determined by imperialist rents who cannibalise lower strata, dollar-denominated commodities become more waste-laden, and the consumption of waste perceived of use-value de-reproduces the global society. The point is that labour in the end of the former circuit may reproduce itself to some level at or below subsistence, whereas in the latter circuit, it de-reproduces itself by being gulped in the waste industry. In the latter circuit, labour's contribution to surplus labour is a twofold outcome: first by the usual reduction of its consumption fund (Marx 1885), and secondly, the wasting away in shorter intervals of life, which becomes a commodity that reinforces the reproduction of capital.

In relation to the consumption fund, the conversion of surplus labour into capital amounts to the 'forcible reduction of wages below the value of labour power ... transforms, within certain limits, the labourer's necessary consumption fund into a fund for the accumulation of capital' (Marx 1867). Marx also speaks of the hypothetical zero wage or that 'if the labourers could live on air they could not be bought at any price. The zero of their cost is therefore a limit in a mathematical sense, always beyond reach, although one can always approximate more and more nearly to it. The constant tendency of capital is

to force the cost of labour back towards this zero.' However, what if labour dies early instead of 'living on air' or that capital suffocates labour and sells the corpses, it is then possible over the lifecycle of society for the wage share to sink below zero – In terms of stock, the forgone wealth of labour resulting from dying early exceeding labour's actual wealth, the sum of wages over time may be less than the accumulated debts of labour. In the de-reproduction cycle, the consumption fund of labour over a generation is negative. One is reminded that capital can offset intermittent demand shortage by borrowing against its control of future labour, a labour which will be reified in degraded environmental conditions. Residually, cutting lives short below the longevity potential or the lower necessary labour resulting from society consuming itself contributes to more surplus labour.

The case of negative income becomes clearer in militarism considered as a domain of accumulation and a surrogate of demand at the same time. Militarism replaces the wage-led demand process and undermines working-class autonomy. Wage shares over lifecycles fall to sub-zero because the sum of wage shares is smaller than the sum of national dollar-debts, in addition to the comparative depreciation incurred by the national wealth structure. The dollar value of the destruction and or depreciation in the national capital stock suffered by the imperialistically aggressed developing nation and its foregone output, plus the dollar value of shortened lives registering as the profits of finance resulting from their investment in militarism, exceed the wealth of the national working class. In commenting on similar conditions in Africa, Cabral (1970) suggests that '[o]nly the smelting of man and nature in war, the depopulation, at times the liquidation of practically all the culturally resisting population of the dominated country are the state of affairs.' This process holds not only in many war-torn corners of the world but could also be extrapolated to a planet whose wealth is waste. The current and discounted wealth of the planet, its present value in relation to future income tainted by waste, is negative. The notion that use value was useful to society is a chimera upheld by the blinkered masses. Society consumes and pays for what is harmful to it. Operationalising Marx's approach over the time of social de-reproduction exposes the reduction of man to his labour power commodity and his realisation as a waste product. Such wasting of man by the practice of imperialism is the magnification of commercial exploitation, which is in turn the consummate surplus value.

An evolving imperialism requires an adequate definition that captures its laws of development rather than annotating on cascading events in chronological time. Since capital-inflicted repression is constant, the point is to locate the law ascribed to the permanence of repressive activities. The laws of imperialism are the various adaptations of the law of value concentrated in the practice

of aggression and waste. These laws ought to correspond to the dialectical laws of thought, principally the law of ascent/descent from the abstract to the concrete and the law of unity of the historical and logical. The law of value at work in different places manifests in varying degrees of dislocation. It must dislocate labour, cheapen wages, and extend the effort of work in longer hours subject to varied balances of class forces. The concrete application of the law, the deracination of labour to reallocate labour, ascends into the AGLCA, the abstract or more universal state of the law of value. The concrete practice of the law of value actualised in particular occurrences interfaces with the abstract or more general law (AGLCA) to mature into the unequal global development. Whether in its particular form, as in the law of value, or in its universal form, as in the AGLCA, these laws operate as aggressions against society, local and global, which mediate the demands of accumulation. In the intermediation of the concrete and the abstract, the comprador of a small dependent country may abuse the workforce and nature (the concentrated form of the law of value); However, this in turn provides feedback to the international organisations of imperialism, which reset the stage with their macro policies to increase rates of exploitation in the dependent country (the abstract of dominant macro policy evolving into a new concrete). This loop from the concrete/particular to an abstract/general, which then transforms itself concrete, implies that while it is implausible for the US to engage in constant war to redress declining rates of exploitation/usurpation, US imperialism is also re-adjusted and borne out as its own negation in the practice of its many wars; whence, the scope for imminent system failure.

Nothing unusual here; however, while the historical subject in value making under capital is the social class, its proxy, the money form fetish, automatically regiments the labour process. Money is needed for sustenance, so the pursuit of money governs. The money form of value camouflages the value making process and, as a substitute of capital, it lays the social groundwork that sketches when and what activity is or is not to figure in capital's books as priced and marketed. Although the victims of imperialism/waste are realised and priced in structural influences and implicit transactions, the premature dead labourers remain invisible in capital's accounts because those remaining alive in aggressed communities, to which the dead labourers belonged, have been beaten into submission and cannot speak out. The Afghans cannot keep a log the massive US bombing of their impoverished villages, and if they do, such will become a forgotten issue unrelated to the trillions spent on war. Yet, in the sum of prices of all commodities, the price of dead humans intermeshes with and is contained in the formation of price as a magnitude of value. The small ratio argument, that the traded products of the developing world count for little in comparison to the products of the developed world, misses the point

that the ratio is small because of the pounding the developing world takes. The ratio reflects the autonomy or lack thereof that the developing world working classes obtain in anti-imperialist struggles. If in any way that ratio is indicative of so-called dark value, it is not so *causa sui*. *Low paid* and harsh working conditions in the Third World are a symptom of imperialist practice or intense value. As discussed in chapter four, value is the product of labour, yet through capital and private property, equally, the rule of the commodity fetish and its attendant reifications, exchange value smashes use value. Value becomes price through a violent social process of robbery, in which prices symbolise the theft of value. Of the superstructural edifices, the war process is the leading form of violence that transforms value into price. On the surface, prices may deceptively appear to be decided by competition and its representation in supply and demand activity. Beneath the surface, it is the class struggle and the powers that control supply, which determine the foundations upon which prices form. Markets are exchange platforms, while prices are not decided by markets. Mediated through the superstructure, prices are decided by the owners and suppliers, or the leading actors at the heart of the class struggle.

Imperialism extinguishes life. The aggression culminating in premature death foregrounds the harshness of work and its low pay. It may be as well to recall that the labour-time socially necessary to produce a commodity remains value proper or the substance of value in a commodity (Marx 1867). Commodities requiring the same labour time in production are of equal value. A com-modified life in the South and a life in the North require equal social effort, but the Southern life becomes of lesser moneyed form of value by the suppression exercised by capital. When the cost of life in price terms is forcibly reduced, so follows the cost of labour power in the South, and so follows the prices of the commodities belonging to the vanquished South. The small ratio argument is more about the ratio of the cheaper moneyed form of wasted lives in the South in relation to dearer and longer lives in the North than about the little mon-eyed signification of the South to the North.

Put differently, low prices are made low, and the small quantity ratio reflects a life to life's worth ratio. The worth of life is determined by capital's hegemony over the reproduction of society. Recalling the point that surplus value in social reproduction is the rate at which lives are wasted to reduce necessary labour and leave more surplus labour for capital, then the rate of surplus value is highest when increasingly a Southern life is extinguished and realised for little prices in relation to the super gains of the North. The wealth created in the last instance is decisively about the value created by wasting additional lives in the South. Sitting longer hours behind machines producing salient commodities in sweatshops may cut lives short, but it does so because the dilapidation caused by imperialist assaults disarms the masses into working long hours for

little wages. In analytical terms of absolute and relative surplus value, the value created in the last instance is equivalent to the necessary labour time invested in the wasting of life and the spinoffs that a lost life in the South exerts upon the prices of commodities in the South to fall below value. The secret to understanding value is to understand that the act of delipadation is the predicate industry.

Contributions to wealth making are fluid processes in which past and anticipated future production flows determine capital stocks at present. Yet capital dissects time and space. The centre is said to have some wealth at the present, and it relegates that wealth to the sum of the productivity of each abstract worker within its nation states. However, the abstract worker does not exist; what exists is the real social worker who happens to be a product and the delegated power of social class. Society produces and capital integrates many societies through imperialist intervention into one global society. Alongside the integrative power of the imperialist gun that potentially reaches any corner, the demand for imperialist currency globally valorises all commodities in the currency of empire. For instance, the global supply of credit in the dollar, not only prompts more wars, it also lays out the grounds for commodification and waste in addition to policies of inflation, hunger and sanctions. The Bank of International Settlements (BIS 2020) addresses the strains upon central banks around the developing world as they must continuously scurry to secure dollar funds through the Repo (repurchase agreements) and other money markets to maintain stability. Yet, by adhering to the ethic of neutrality and nonideological science, the mainstream discards any reference to the global nature of war and finance. It overlooks waste production and the history of waste effected by the hierarchically structured cross-national financial class and its reigning mainstream ideas. It ignores ongoing wars as domains of production, over-determined production processes (time-asymmetric and interrelated investment commitments that pin down production processes), and their contributions to the historical surplus value – ditto for Western Marxism.

Of the historical surplus value, which establishes Western ‘civilisational’ superiority, academic institutions operationalising ideological production to meet *ad hoc* concerns of accumulation spearhead the counterrevolution. Although the international working class is interwoven within capital’s forms of social organisation, Western Marxists romanticise the proletariat of the South but assign historical agency to capital’s adjuncts in the North. While not recognising that every Northern wage hike is founded upon imperialist aggression, they promote white unionism as the conduit to socialism. To mis-theorise value is to forget that permanent imperialist wars in the South are the primal value making processes. The consistent gap between what is expected of the Western working class and what it does, or how it should tear down the

imperialist centre by all means necessary and what it actually does to promote that centre, is *ex-post facto* proof of its organicity with capital rather than just complicity with capital. The activity of hiking Northern wages by the imperialist dividend recomposes capital.

In the neoliberal phase, the proportion of Northern industrial workers in the labour force has declined. Whether large or small in numbers, that industrial working class, treated as an 'isolate,' is not the potential subject of history (Niebyl no date). When labour reproduces itself via imperialist channels, no matter the job profile or ups and downs in the incomes of its members, whether industrial work or service sector work, the pursuit of imperialist power will increase white wages by the expropriation of South. The variations in the incomes of workers are not the class. The conditions and forms of social organisation by which workers relate to reproduction are constituents of class. When in the overwhelmingly lopsided balance of power, war abroad lifts the white classes, the potential of these classes as emancipatory labour becomes non-existent. Its historical function is synonymous with that of capital since it reproduces by the central rent sharing between itself and central capital, on one side, and the rents from the South, on the other.

A proletariat is a living social process whose transformative activity is the negation of capital. It is a working class imbued with revolutionary consciousness. The immediate forms of the proletariat are not white industrial workers and their likes. The proletariat is the broad anti-imperialist class alliance, whose strategies prioritise armed struggle to tip the balance against imperialism. Structure-wise, a proletariat may include all types and skills of workers, including the unemployed, the poverty wage workers and the peasantry. Unlike Notrethern classes that are invested in imperialist war, the proletariat is de-reproduced by imperialist aggression and, as such, its potential may be untapped by its struggle to reduce the imperialist rents that dereproduce it. Rooting the definition of the proletariat in concordance between its social being and social consciousness implies that it is no longer the outsourcing of modern industry to the South in the 1980's, which proletarianised the developing world, it is rather the long stretch of colonial and imperialist wars since the long sixteenth century, which did. These wars were the first big industries that moved South. The masses were in a struggle for survival combined with a struggle for de-commodification, which melded revolutionary resistance to dire material circumstances. The vanquished masses were deprived of their resources and turned into propertyless social labour, or a proletariat whose revolutionary potential lends itself to actualisation because their very existence was war-threatened. Their pre-capitalist or not fully eroded communalist mode of life became the repository to conduct anti-imperialist struggles.

The wars of colonial plunder tainted central languages with the racist vernacular. As the Europeans discovered their whiteness, the women of the native Americans became squaws, and the Arabs sand niggers. In this process, Eurocentrism and its subdivision, the Orientalism, emerge as refractions of imperialist production relations whose function is to reproduce the imperialist class foundations. In hindsight, Orientalism was not just the post-modern amending of the language to fit into some barrage of derogatory words against the Orient (Abdel-Malek 1963). Orientalism accords with the materialist pursuits of imperialism, in particular, the theft of cultural history from the developing world in preparation for the theft of resources. The rich histories of nations were rewritten to void both theoretical and practical resistance. Plainly put, the West effaces the memories of the masses, symbols and modes of social organisation, which could otherwise establish their material and cultural autonomy. Such theft undermines the continuity of organic intellectual development needed to restore the identity of a working class with traditions immersed in the national liberation struggles. Capital succeeds as it reconstitutes history with re-constitutive lies.

## 7 Class Cannibalism

In addition to being a cemetery to hundreds of millions of prematurely lost lives, the planet has become a toxic dump. The IPCC (2022) reports ‘the scientific evidence is unequivocal, climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and the health of the planet.<sup>5</sup> Without labour’s counteroffensive, such alarms as well as the toxins and the inopportune dead promote capital. The defeatism of labour permits capital to admit its wrongdoing and to designate it as inescapable under the circumstances. Ideological defeat reinforces the negative dialectic of subject-object such that labour as estranged subject objectifies itself in a process of self-consumption: a worker ‘*[b]uries himself or starves to death*’ (Marx 1844). Framed in a context of retreating socialist ideology, instead of arresting the wage system and its associated superstructures, the IPCC warnings augur the scarcity of sane future resources. Less potable water, for instance, further commodify water and raises the costs of scarce water at present. Strictly on account of fabricated penuries in unpolluted future resources, these alerts become calls for scarcity-constructed future prices to rise and, subsequently, current price-mark ups that boost profits. Water however will become expensive only to those who cannot afford it.

<sup>5</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Climate Change: 2022 Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

The mainstream's 'what is to be done' speaks of remedial measures to bring capital back to health. Keen (2021), says 'he regards neoclassical economics as not merely a bad methodology for economic analysis, but as an existential threat to the continued existence of capitalism;' saving capitalism for whom? Unless capital is abolished, nothing eliminates the waste at the heart of value. Non-communist alternatives to neoclassicism research green investment opportunities for capital, which as per the law of value may only rise by wasting more of man by the degree it saves nature. Such strands of thought attribute productivity to land and things, but never solely to living labour and the relation which excludes labour from the social product of labour, *qua* private property. That is so because once labour features in the analysis as the sole creator of value, one must ask, which labour whose organic tie to capital reproduces capital's aggression and imperialism to deprive the masses of their wealth; here, blame squarely falls upon the white capital structure, which is subject of history adhering to value.

The position on waste and the environment is a class position. Unlike the working class that self-devours, a capital class whose *raison d'être* is to generate profits from waste does not commit suicide. Capitalists may perish before their due time on account of increasing pollution, but the class as an ontological condition of being embodied in forms of social organisation and an associated system of thought that reproduces society does not perpetrate its own demise. The ideas that govern social reproduction, the class in motion, fade or peak depending on the counterattack of labour or anti-systemic struggle; ideas are not human-like to die. That said, the capital class with a rosy monocle sees in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions a beneficial side effect. When mixed with nitrogen, CO<sub>2</sub> increases the greenery per square area. Such is the class for which capitalism has borne fruit over time and to which the resilience of capital overcame central economic depressions time and again – depressions, however, are the permanent state of social circumstances in the South. Apart from this camp, which may include climate change trivialisers, the savvier capital class raises concern for the environment only to a point that shrewdly frees capital from the traces of socialism to shackle labour. Its view of the world is limited geographically to the international community, which is the white world. These are the investors in green bonds and their white class affiliates for whom future technology is panacea, or rather, pie in the sky. If technology turns out to be less than a universal cure in a world that inevitably grows by waste to sustain profits, it will at least provide better oxygen, water and health services for the selected white folk of the future. For the majority in the South to whom daily sustenance is conditioned by the proximity of the US military base to its national territory, along with its associated comprador and US-led ideological stranglehold, global warming is an issue contemplated only after getting

through the daily subsistence crisis. A pun on Anton Chekhov that people must deal with their ‘crises of everyday life’ rather than global crises delivers adequate meaning of social conditions. Such is a working class whose quotidian horizon, or the scramble to meet necessities in an unfavourable balance of power, limits the scope of its transformative power or potential. It is a working class that does not, as Cabral (1974) said, ‘[f]ight for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head, they are fighting to live better and do not fall back on clichés of the struggle against imperialism and colonialism in theoretical terms’ – or interjectively, they explore the grounds between their daily requirements and the possibility of emancipation with a calculus of history that requires a good dose of sobering up by a vanguard.

The standard literature recognises that ‘natural resource extraction remains an important focus, the processes, and conditions of extractivist practices have been abstracted and applied to entirely new areas, from the digital and intellectual realm to finance and the global economy’ (Chagnon et al 2022). What it does not recognise, however, is that mining for the life of man was the earliest sphere of production under capitalism and continues to be so to date. The extraction of any other resource from the developing world must first extract lives. This practice at best registers as an inhumane activity in the English lexicon but is unmentioned as an economic process. The ascending momentum of capital in which capitalists thingify themselves and thingify their integrated working classes builds into the imperialism that heightens waste. The imperialism of the monopoly-finance phase commanded by an imperialist class intensifies the capital relationship, war, and the assault on social nature. It demands more living people objectified and realised as prematurely dead people, and other living people adopting the mind of a commodity to consume the wasted people; hence, imperialist classes are cannibalistic classes that mine the lives of the politically neutralised working classes. Imperialist wars steady the rate of capital accumulation because they metabolise socially necessary labour time at higher frequency by the very consumption of human lives. The dynamic of capital rests on waste and the realisation of commodities subject to the fetish of waste commodities. It begins the moment labour power sells as a commodity whose extraction requires the decimation of the labourer. Such is a process that transforms the potential of labour held by society into reified labour, or literally by transforming living people into dead people, which sell as commodities.

The reproduction of labour power, which is itself of value and use value (its productivity is its use value) and whose development is dictated by the law of value, entails the consumption or the setting aside of its sources of value, which happen to be people. When crisis deepens, the regulation of social reproduction further makes of waste an end in itself. The process unfolds in direct

and indirect ways. War and austerity directly thin down the population, while indirectly as labour produces commodities and as it is also consumed by the very commodities it produces. Imperialism reinforces social de-reproduction, and it does so by lessening necessary labour or the share of subsistence wages through the elimination of labour. Now capital does this to create surplus value from waste and non-waste production and to socially rest on firmer grounds to recreate more value in the future. Surplus value is a historical category. It is as Marx (1967) says, 'the part played by the direct robbery from the labourer's necessary consumption-fund, and, therefore, of the accumulation of the accumulation-fund of capital.' Surplus value involves the orchestration of the activity and policy steps required for the re-enactment of the robbery. Circuitously, the received theoretical system justifying the robbery rests against the historical surplus value or the weight of history. Events experienced or ideas co-opted by capital since the days of colonialism/imperialism, even those belonging to revolutionary Marxists, may become a weapon of capital that translates in the retreat of labour. The case is especially acute when capital builds the Western Marxism to nab the Marxist-Leninist heritage and deploy it in justification of aggression against the Third World. Capital's theoretical frameworks synergise with the *many US military bases* to foreground value and underwrite the money form of value, especially, the US dollar as the conveyor belt of world wealth to empire.

I said 'many US military bases' above instead of providing some semi-exact figure as mainstream scientists do when they count the tanks in order to abide by academic scrupulousness, which is in any case absurd given the US-NATO vastly superior power against smaller developing nations. True science must investigate the obvious, but the obvious is not the ludicrous, meaning the additional details about the number of tanks do not provide addition to meaning. If the US had one or one hundred fewer tanks or military bases, to that effect, it could still pound any small country like Iraq or Granada to nothingness. Such mainstream practice is more of a service to intelligence centres, such that the Pentagon calculates the risk to its troops when they assault security-exposed nations.

Insofar as what identifies as value in terms of its magnitude in price or what is of use value, it is the cultural hegemony of capital that decides so. In other words, value is a social relation underpinning the many forms of exploitation (Marx 1867), rather than a universal inherent in nature or a transhistorical axiom intrinsic to the proclivities of man (utilitarianism). The culture that buoys with the practice of imperialism creates and assigns the identity and the magnitudes of value. Bombs or any other commodity, which in its pollution acts like a bomb, are considered of use value. As to an alternative accounting system to that of capital, the systems that reflect the cost of labour reproduction,

or what it is required in sane commodities (natural value) to maintain society, alongside an assessment of class power relations in the formation of value, such are more concrete working-class assessments of value. Western Marxists assess value in US dollars and assign smaller amounts to the developing world because their imperialism renders the worth of man in the South lesser than his counterpart in the North. They assume as given the initial balance of power between capital and labour without its history and without quantifying how the successive wars and waste processes undermine the Third World's ability to mark up its prices. They overlook the power relation in control of time and space, the imperialist power that lays the historical grounds for actors to act upon. Northern firms may exercise monopoly power to depress Southern prices at point of origin, or that in every step of the value-added process there are small prices paid in return for high value. However, the juxtaposition of value-added stages upon the value chain to earmark the dark value misrepresents the surplus value. What is meant by surplus value is the relation of value exercised or the interface of the particular repression activity with the overall repressive structure of capital. A monopoly firm cannot exercise power over workers in a specific factory if did not have the nexus of capital's guns with its cultural hegemony to back it up. Monopolies are social forms created by the exercise of imperial wars that do not spring out of idealised corporate power. In other words, it is history making powerful monopolies that requires an explanation, and not the power of monopoly over the price system, taken for granted.

The successive wars and their representations in the hegemonic superstructure reconstitute the reason for being of surplus value and its development in the moneyed form of profits. For instance, the developing world free trades with Europe under the World Trade Organisation (wto) umbrella, while at the same time Europe provides hundreds of billions of Euros to its agriculture in subsidies because food sovereignty is a constituent of its power structure. It would be much cheaper for Europe to import food from the developing world; however, Europe cannot compromise its defences by becoming strategically dependent on Third World countries for food. Its aggression exercised in coercion and structural genocide forks the surplus value into picayune prices paid to the direct producer of the Third World and huge prices captured by European capital. Monopoly is a sub-representation of imperialist power.

The social product produced by labour to reproduce society, the actual material side of value, acquires a money form of value subtended by the prematurely wasted lives of labour in the South. Naturally, with waste leading capital, the actual material substances of waste commodities that de-reproduce labour and, the act of wasting labour, augment the accumulation rate, especially, as the North consumes the wasted humans as well as the waste commodities they

have produced. This axiological turn, the liking of commodities harmful to society, is not a novelty to capital. Capitalists pursued the slaughter of natives early in their historical careers. The perverse taste for the death commodity follows the growth of fetishism and the thingification of man. Metrically, the rate of replenishment of man, or that on average people live to the historically determined life expectancy, is synonymous with the rate of development. Equally put, the rate of sane development is synonymous with rate at which the law of absolute surplus value phases out of social life.

## 8      The Analytics of Resistance

Past as well as present empires practice expansionism. Empires subordinate masses and nations and exact tribute from them. The reason and means by which tribute is wrested change with a changing historical context. At this juncture, the US empire prints valueless paper, its US dollar, and extracts much of the wealth of the world through that dollar. The dollar as a widely held symbol of value, which stores savings, also bears down on weaker nations like a weapon. As the financial debt noose around developing countries tightens, the US imposes conditions that demand the surrender of national autonomy, which further reshuffle the class order into a self-wasting mode. The US may be thought of as unusual empire because it has a tribute system without the usual tax collector of past times. In a nutshell, its debt is its wealth, and its dollar engorges the value created abroad and returns it to the US's financial market. The system holds by the strength of its military and ideological hegemony. Its dollarization of the world economy reflects its control and *de-facto* ownership.

However, when the historical surplus value or the growing weight of history that conditions peoples into automatic submission to capital is considered, the US's case becomes not so unusual. Imperialism assumes new forms in different historical contexts, as it should, and there are many ways to define it, as there should be as well. Each definition depends on the angle one takes or the level of abstraction one assumes. In his revised Law of Worldwide Value, Samir Amin (2010) addressed the being and function of imperialism in the capitalist age as follows.

Historical capitalism, as it has really existed, has always been imperialist in the very precise sense that the mechanisms inherent to its worldwide spread, far from progressively 'homogenising' economic conditions on a planetary scale, have, on the contrary, reproduced and deepened

the contrast, counterposing the dominant (imperialist) centres to the dominated peripheries. In this asymmetry is affirmed, with violence still greater than that contemplated by Marx, the law of pauperisation that is indissolubly linked to the logic of capital accumulation.

At an elementary level, imperialism may be defined by departing from an understanding of capital as that relation which 'vampire-like' since it violently strips away the social product from the social producers (Marx 1859). The 'vampire-like' mention is not a hyperbole. Blood or wasted humans sell. Unlike past forms of imperialist barbarity, the violence of capitalism is innate to the system and determined by signals emanating from the commodities that labour has created. Just like the objective commodity, stripped of its direct producer and falling outside the sphere of society's control, violence is also objective while its objectivity is overseen by market determinations. Violence, specifically war related violence, trades on the market and it is no longer just means to an end, it has become a domain of accumulation, or both means and end. It may be recalled that before capitalism natural calamities as well as crises of underproduction and underconsumption augured war, whereas under capital it became crises of overproduction necessitating underconsumption signalled by the market, which constituted the historical context for wars. At this late stage, socially abused nature, including the prematurely wasted people are products of structural genocides marketed as waste. Being of value, the waste commodity by-produces and is produced by its own fetish. It vests itself in a mode of self-expansion, which makes it increasingly independent of working class control. As such, the objectiveness of waste reaches its zenith in the optimal state of waste *qua* the event of imperialist war.

The balance sheet of war is straightforward. Imperialist wars destroy wealth stocks, indenture natural wealth and labour, reduce the number of labourers, or force more people to become refugees, and through its impact on the power of labour lessen the wage bill. As can be seen, such is the pounding that reconstitutes the terrain for new value. Imperialist spending on wars exhibits positive returns and crowds in the private sector. War spending absorbs and redeploys excess accumulated financial and monopoly profits that would otherwise not generate much in returns as fictitious capital (credit without a corresponding counteractivity in the non-war economy). Militarism and its war spending are also stopgap measures to redress power imbalances, which pull a central market out of its slump. Credit emission in excess of real activity, being indicative of crisis, augurs war. Successful imperialist wars tip the balance in the class struggle in capital's favour. Just as it colonised nations in the past, imperialism in its neo-colonial mode rips apart states. Its invasions in Libya,

Iraq and elsewhere are testimonies to that effect. It hijacks weak state sovereignty. To take away the living security and autonomy of the masses, the substances of sovereignty, is to enslave them partially or totally. To re-emphasise: exploitation assuming forms of slavery, that is commercial exploitation, regenerates the crucial relations that are surplus value. Moreover, just as in any production process, waste *qua* militarism realises a commodity, as an object, which reconstitutes the subject. The commodity consumes humans and the environment, and it reshapes the ideas that promote its own expansion. The imperialism of ideas is conjoint with the imperialism of resources. Conversely, the highest forms of anti-imperialism are armed struggle conjoined with the war of ideas. The symbols and memories of the working class must be set against the power symbols of capital.

The power of capital stages the policies that the Third World pursues to drain itself of wealth. Emanating from the historical surplus value, capital's symbols of power lay down rails onto which Third World development sets off. Against such megalithic capital, the repeated failures in Third World development may be understood. Although history appears to repeat itself when the mainstream motto that some can never develop for cultural reasons is used instead of saying outright because of their racial inferiority, it is capital's conceptual frameworks, which are reimplemented time and again in different guises to trap developing nations. When imperialism intervenes to crush developing social formations, it forces their production relations to coordinate with the fast-changing productive forces of the centre but not theirs. Resources under capital are legal and equally economic categories, and in the developing world, they are the property of the masses of the Third World. These are set to be exchanged in socially decided time or set aside or destroyed by the exigencies of that time, which is under the thumb of central capital. In developing formations, imperialist intervention locks property or production relations into more authoritarian forms of control and in the hands of a comprador vested in the Western financial market.

With consciousness emanating from conscious existence and experienced life-processes, it is the justification of class cannibalism arising upon imperialist loot, which endows the Northern classes with a sense of entitlement with which they war against or sanction whole nations. By now, it is safe to say that there is more of an impact to the symbols of capital than 'the ideology men and their circumstances which appear upside-down as in a camera obscura' (Marx 1845). The upside-down optic of white classes has become inbuilt into the systemic process of their reproduction. Theoretical production coordinated to manage capitalist crises, the learnt experience of capital, has added to the weight of history. Although dominant ideology is means to perverting reality,

the perversion has become so engrained such that it has become a natural part of things, or a natural force on amphetamines. The lived-life circumstance is the social reaction of capital that has gradually matured into a Northern state welfarism shouldered by imperialism. The imperialist loot redistribution via the ballot box of bourgeois democracy objectifies the power of capital. It has raised the voting booth to divine status. It has solidified the integration of capital with its white working class. Meanwhile, the democratic process as the choice theoretic framework put consummated in the construction of waste as useful to humanity, or at least as a necessary evil – sort of ‘we the West did what we did because it is a matter of survival or to protect our way of life,’ yet absurdly capitalism has destroyed much of life.

The personification of the capital class is not just the few rich folk, it also includes capital's ideological affiliates. The white class fights for and tax-funds imperialist wars. As Western capital wars against the South or escapes to the South for cheaper wages and inputs, some low skilled jobs may be lost to the North, but at the same time higher paid parasitic jobs are created in the North from the rent fallout of higher exploitation in the South. It is not only the inventions of the North that are construed as the private property of the North, capitalism as a historical stage altogether is also conceived of as the intellectual property of Europe and a product of the genius of its civilisation.

In the imperialist stage, war became the inevitable solution to capital, while the stimulus for imperialist wars has risen in tandem with the crises of capital (Lenin 1916). The principal contradiction of capital, the capital-labour contradiction, has structurally further moved into a North-South divide. Accumulation depended on the degree imperialist countries oppress and exploit developing countries. Class-to-class exploitation assumes the appearance of workers articulated with their Southern social formations facing a Northern bourgeois class, structurally garrisoned in NATO bases across the planet, and growing by wars of encroachment. As of the early twentieth century, the command of finance over industrial capital introduced a change in the content of the bourgeois class, its transmutation into an imperialist class, and hence Lenin's sub-periodisation of modern capitalism as monopoly-finance imperialism.

At a phenomenal level, one more related to the current crisis, imperialism metabolises more of social nature to meet higher profit rates. Capital commands commodity production, and it has more than proportionately produced waste construed as use value, which lodged within or against a price in the universal and interconnected money value form of commodities. Waste sold, sells, or will sell for an implicit or explicit price at some point in time. Such waste, the human loss or environmental degradation, is the product society pays for

to self-harm. For instance, humanity invests in peoples and war materiel that war wastes, and it pays for the cure of diseases that polluting elements generate. It also pays for the excess toxins and trash to be removed at a cost to itself. The Covid pandemic is one disease that has arisen as a result of man's infringement upon nature whose wastage is still being recorded at the time of writing. Interwoven into capital's price system and the *publicly subsidised* profits of corporations benefiting from the pandemic are the prices of the premature deaths of man.

The working-class method of payment for waste may be grossly slotted under a two-pronged system. The first method of payment is the straightforward way. The working class pays out of its wage share in clean-air taxes and defence bills. The second way is not so straightforward; it pays for waste by living on average shorter lives. In intertwined fashion, very low wages decrease life's quality and expectancy, while the pure waste of wars, all on its own, precipitously ends life. In value terms, these modes of payment reflect the reduction in the necessary labour or, from a social reproduction angle, the social cost of the reproduction of labour borne by capital falls. Waste is a mode of accumulation by which capital simultaneously expands by the efforts of the population and disposes of the population before its historically due time by engaging it in an industry of auto-waste. Money exchanging for waste shows that people pay for the wars and the erosion sustained by nature from the living wage required to sustain their day-to-day livelihood.

Furthermore, the irreplaceable and combined loss to life and specie since the onset of capitalism and its wars is un-compensable. Any amount that neoclassical economics fathoms in compensation will be arbitrated by capital and its funding bodies. In recent times, the Zionist settler state declared with impunity that it poisoned the water wells of Palestinian natives. It is in a position of power vis-à-vis the natives such that its admission is of little concern to its stability.<sup>6</sup> However, just as the losses to nature have acquired prices after a long gestation period, it is possible for the masses of the Third World to rise and reassign higher costs for their past imperialist-inflicted human losses. Beckles (2012), for instance, calls for several trillion pounds in reparation for 200 years

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6 A story making the news at the time of writing exposes how European settlers occupying Palestine in 1948 poisoned the water of the natives, while at the same time trendy Israeli historians say that similar acts were necessary to create the state of Israel. 'Such is history' is the witty remark spoken as rationale for ethnic cleansing, which is to say that since Europe was fitter and has built its wealth on genocides, a nation can only survive by its actual and potential ability to commit genocide. See 'Historians reveal Israel's use of poison against Palestinians' in Middle East Monitor <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221011-historians-reveal-israels-use-of-poison-against-palestinians/>

of free labour and native ethnocide in the Caribbean. However, Fanon's (1967) point that the wealth of the imperialist countries is literally the creation of the Third World is closer to facts, with the caveat that the wealth is rather waste valorised by a capital whose symbols are grasped as truth depending on class power balances. The waste issue, however, will not be resolved by compensation, but rather by the abolition of capital. Imperialist nations when powerful, may print money, compensate and reconcile, knowing very well that weaker formations will recirculate the printed money back to them.

Still, the case may be that the losses to nature, unlike the losses of the fallen in the Third World, present a window of opportunity to drag into the mainstream debate the uncompensated past victims of imperialism. However, such is not an issue that could possibly swerve the Western working-class from its alliance with imperialism. Paying more attention to trees and pets instead of humans dying under their bombs may be the catharsis of white class. More to the point, the avalanche of theoretical Marxist work in the West has created more capital out of labour than capital could have done so otherwise. It is fashionable for Western Marxists to adopt a moral stance inculpating both aggressed nation and aggressing imperialism, or to outright call on NATO to bomb and regime change the developing world. Given that accumulation proceeds by destruction and the imperialist hold much superior firepower, then by consequentialist-ethic, it is immoral not to arrest imperialism. Peace as an end justifies the retailoring of dominant symbols into the just working class war against anti-imperialism. However, even if Marx's thought was not corrupted by the dominant Western currents, and even if radical Marx was rediscovered and aired on public TVs day in and day out, there cannot be a revolutionary rupture in the Western hemisphere. The Northern working class reproduces by imperialism. It is a settler-colonising or neo-colonising working class. Its extension in the Americas and Australasia is history alive in the present and which is a pillar of its reproduction by the exercise of destructive power. The North sustains itself by class cannibalism, a process without which it would cease to exist in its present shape. Rupture requires a de-imperialisation of the West precipitated by a shift in the global balance against it.

Meanwhile, some lost species may be irreplaceable. Excessive pollution, a supposed externality in neoclassical economics for which a hypothetical capitalist bears the costs for the damage he perpetrated, is just that, hypothetical. What exists as social subject is not the hypothetical capitalist, what exists is the mediated social *differentia*, which is the social class tucked into the class struggle. Waste may be better costed over time; however, it is impossible for business to be socially responsible and pick up the waste since its profits emerge from its social irresponsibility. Set against the high level of tolerance or

adoration of waste that society exhibits to accommodate profits and its short-termism, an unopposed capital in charge logically takes the planet to some bleak end.

While the cost of a commodity whose substance is namely waste is preset by the power of capital, the outstanding war losses or the enormous damage sustained by nature within wealth, remain un-costed. These costs do not appear on financial ledgers or capital's system of accounts when it tabulates its profits; however, they are already paid for by society now and will emerge in costs to nature and social ills for society to handle in the future. When costed by labour, or when capital's symbols lose the function they serve capital with or when the bourgeoisie declines, the loss of hundreds of millions of lives under capitalism since 1500, in addition to the already incurred natural losses, these will be deemed money-wise significant. The rationale for trivialising the dollar amount of the losses may be the fatalistic expression 'such is history,' which is recited upon the cadavers of the weak, or similarly the racist expression 'Europe builds gardens amidst jungles,' as per Josep Borrell (EU foreign secretary in 2022).<sup>7</sup> A more credulous widely televised trend similar to Christian apologetics argues that pre-European civilisations, like the Mongols, were more barbaric, and therefore, the current stage is an ascension into a more humane world. Under capital, which is the alienated process of the war of each against all, the logic of history develops into a protracted environmental end-game or, with the development of weapons of mass destruction, into annihilation.

The current waste costs to society may be envisioned as the trade-off between the longer non-waste time of life against the shorter-waste time of life. As argued in this work, this gap is the dialectical measure of departure between necessary and surplus labour, or surplus value. If a person could live to a 100 years in socially sane conditions but lives to fifty in excess-waste conditions, the difference shadows the losses due to waste, which are simultaneously the grounds for profits. How capital's social or abstract time compresses life in conventional time says much about society's metabolic dependence on waste. Capital seeks a higher frequency and rate of return per quantity of investment, or it wants to produce things cheaply and pay least costs to society over its lifetime, forcing it to live poorer and shorter lives. As against the commonly held view of *externality*, waste may be described as the *internality* of the capitalist system. Dropping the internal versus external analytical dichotomies, waste is the system, the organically interdependent whole whose inputs,

<sup>7</sup> Massad J. (2022). Josep Borrell's European garden is built on the plunder of the jungle, Middle East Eye, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/eu-josep-borrell-europe-garden-built-on-plunder-jungle>

whether realised in waste or set-aside to waste away, equally obey capital's predisposition of blind accumulation. It may have taken a while for environmental waste to make its appearance in exchange (like carbon trading now); however, imperialist war has always been central to the category of waste and wasted lives exchanged for a money form of value (the share of the loot or the price of a scalp). Capital's metabolic order was established by its early dependency on genocide, while war's value manifestations in money form, the many gains from colonial campaigns, are foundational and time asymmetric insofar as their contribution to European wealth down the line.

In reproduction subjected to capitalist class forces, it is the resultant of these forces that determines when and which of the constituent inputs or outputs of social production acquire an explicit money form in the price. The theory that prices converge to value, natural prices, long term average costs or prices of production, is a contingent and formal account rather than an adequate depiction of correspondence between moments of value and price. The elemental relation between prices and value is the balance of class power, through which capital's superstructure decides on the remaking of the social preconditions, which drive a deep or a shallow wedge between value and its magnitude in the money form. Value transforms into price by the activity of capital, which is smashing labour by the edicts of the superstructure. When the revolutionary consciousness of working class is pulverised, then capital makes labour pay for the supposedly useful waste it consumes. All one has to imagine is to acquire a commodity for cheap prices, beating the direct producer of the commodity into submission must be the first traded activity before the commodity exchanges hands for a price. To invoke an adage from the souks of Mount Hermon, the cheapest product is a product whose owner is dead.

The neo-Keynesian omission of the value category altogether and its examination of profits originating from the side of the trinity formula (capital, labour and land) is an omission of history and the organic interconnectedness of social production – in the trinity, profits are adduced from revenues minus the costs of capital, labour and land. Capital and labour are social categories and activities mediated in a money form brokered by the superstructural institutions of capital. Capital writes off the value provided by the Third World, especially the lives consumed in either war or decommissioned by imperialist policy, by paving the groundworks of power that assign a lower magnitude of value in its money form. Of the many activities ordained by the superstructure, class struggle realised in armed violence transmute value into price. Such is a magnification of primitive accumulation and its commercial exploitation, which confine the developing world to a status of pedestal for the industry of the 'more advanced Northern formations.' In an un-interrelated, ahistorical and asocial neo-Keynesian world, value disappears because each stage in

production has no contiguous mediation associated with it. There is no smashing of labour at every step of production with labour fighting back, which is the trade/exchange of waged violence that trades lives for prices and, which supersedes trade in other commodities.

The interrelated complex of social production whose social relationships of class are structured hierarchically does not feature in conventional analysis; classes and their institutions as social forms do not exist, and if they are mentioned, they appear as an arithmetic operation, similar to summation, of individual prerogatives. For the mainstream, values and prices are isomorphic with some qualification to account for market imperfections. More so, these prices and values are only analytical categories devoid of real existence – they can be mapped against each other like variables in an equation, but conceptually they are put together as tools of capital. Value is what one likes, and price is what one is willing to pay for what one likes. Value's transformation into price does not require a war to turn the value encased in the commodity into exchange value or a corresponding money form that meets capital's profit-making objectives. Unlike the Marxian capital-labour relation as subject of value in its state of becoming, represented by a wasting imperialist class and a class beaten to be consumed as waste, there is nothing to transform here because prices are already values.

To follow through on this, the genocidal wars or war for war's sake are not un-transformed value without a money form. No matter how lowly or negatively priced the efforts or lives of the peoples in the Third World become, they are still value because they may trade for a modicum of price, influence a price, or are embedded in a price. The question is then why such lives are of such low prices, and furthermore, is their value, the effort that went into rearing them, or their social cost of reproduction, trivial. Should these lives not be considered like the primary commodities whose prices are lowered by the power the North exercises over the South?

The contribution of class power to price formation may be convolutedly recognised by neoclassical economics when the issue of market power or monopoly is discussed. Monopiles, which demonstrate a deviance from an otherwise perfect and perfectly competitive world, are shunned because they generate welfare losses, or what first year textbooks label as a deadweight social loss. Neoclassical signification of welfare is given by adding profits to hypothetical consumer gains – consumer surplus is the difference between the price set by competition and someone's maximum willingness to pay, while profits are the producer surplus, which is the difference between the going price and the production cost. Although profits must grow at the expense of wages, neoclassical economics counts the US comprador with the African primary school teacher as one social entity that draw from the same welfare pool despite the fact that the welfare of the oligarch is converse of the welfare of the school

teacher. Waste and premature deaths also pressure down the global wage bill. Waste ought to be factored into wage bill calculation – disposable income minus waste over life-cycles is negative. In the neoclassical framework, however, welfare grows if profit rises, and it does so even as the wage bill declines in absolute terms but is more than offset by the growth in the profit share.

Nonetheless, the perfectly competitive world cannot exist, while what exists is the positioning for power in a market whose practice immiserates for profits. However, in the mainstream's fictional world, either there is no value category altogether, the neo-Keynesianism, or if it there is subjective value as in neoclassical economics, it is nominal because consumers make choices depending on their tastes and pay for as much as they value things, and influence welfare accordingly. There is still a theoretical advantage to neoclassical theory over neo-Keynesianism because at least the former claims a social motivator based on subjective values, whereas to the latter, the sum of prices of various components of output are taken as given in the macro picture without investigating value as a social activity that conditions the background for the terms of trade. Keynesianism neglects the imperialist assaults that are foundational to the macro accounts with which it analyses the economy. Anyhow, the subjective value theory starts from a fictitious *homo economicus* instantiated by the gun and ideological apparatuses of capital, and whose instantiation of value is his taste. Thus, to consume whatever commodity for a price, even waste, is rather rational under the prevailing constraints. The state of the world allegedly chosen by individual tastes is the best amongst the available choices. Subjective value theory shifts blame upon the victims of capital who voted into existence the world they live in. An individual like the *homo economicus* makes the choices he likes, so whatever happens is attributed to his willingness to do so. The positivism of such science only addresses the status quo without addressing the forces behind the status quo. Things are what they are (positivism), but how through violence the masses submit to the binary choices imposed by capital, is not addressed. For instance, although unemployment is a permanent condition under capital, the conservatives whose creed is neoclassical economics may attribute the cause of unemployment to laziness and folk who desire to live off welfare; massive choiceless numbers are socially condemned to unemployment at birth. There is not a single indication in such formal thought that planetary descent implies that some people make history against their will or as 'they do not please.' Strictly speaking, subjective value implies that 'tastes' make history, while these tastes are individual choices made under an inexplicable income constraint.

However, the world mirrors the proclivity of powerful capital in command of impersonal historical forces whose adjoint classes consume the lower classes. Imperialist aggression, eased through the justification provided by the apparatuses of the superstructure, is the principal activity, which transforms

value into a given moneyed magnitude. The control it establishes sets the US-dollar as the world principal currency, as well as influence the global prices of commodities against the US dollar. The dollar, through its exchange-rate re-prices value to price at every step of production in the interest of capital. The speedily spent lives are slotted under constructed low prices. The production price is the actuality of value by necessity while price is value's manifestation as immediacy by coincidence obeying necessity. It is the dialectic of necessity and coincidence that reasserts itself time and again as the uncertainty of the price system. However, what is certain remains that the social power of capital, through its practical symbols and functions exercised, will orchestrate the departure of value from price in ways that serve capital. The transformation of value into price problem does not exist, and if it does, it only does so on the pages of scholarly work investigating the input/output tables of *Das Kapital*.<sup>8</sup> The frontlines of anti-imperialist struggle define how prices relate to value. The relationship between the rate of exploitation and the degree of oppression refracted onto a rate of surplus value assuming a moneyed form is what expresses the circuitous value to price relation. In relation to waste, the transformation of values into prices rests upon the premise of transforming people into commodities to be wasted.

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8 The transformation of the real into ideal or value to price is attendant upon the power of the state and other superstructural institutions. The superstructure quantifies qualities to the demands of capital. Such is the sociological approach to the transformation. In the transformation of value to price, Marx exposes the contradictions accumulating in the system through this imposed equality (value to price), which when enforced by the workings of the state and other ideological apparatuses further alienates labour from its product. With market prices forming based on the prices of production, Marx emphasises the contradictions building between the law of value and the average rate of profit. Value made to correspond to the price of production contradicts market price, since the latter contains surplus labour (profits) emerging during production. There is pressure on various capitalists to reduce necessary labour to meet a price of production that lets them float and earn profits. With necessary labour falling vis-à-vis surplus labour to meet the pressures of competitive prices, the tendency of the falling rate of profit becomes arithmetically inbuilt into the system. However, the arithmetic is not what Marx is about. In fact Marx's dialectics is about how to subsume formalism to historical process. Marx's originality surfaces in how concrete totality or the economic base becomes subordinated to the abstract power of the law of value, which transforms all use values into exchange values, and all concrete labour into abstract labour. The mediation within the economic base between man and nature results in further alienated and exploitable labour. Both the law of value and the tendency of the falling rate of profit are positions derived from this initial perspective of society as the dialectical contradiction nesting at an ontological level in the economic base. The superstructural institutions may conceal but not eliminate this contradiction between values and prices, or the law of value and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. No matter how skewed the balance of forces against labour, no measures by capital's superstructure can definitively resolve this contradiction because of its ontological state: that capital must de-reproduce labour to the point of wasting it is the dynamic in question.

## 9 Back to Basics

In work, or the purposeful activity of labour, both subject and object, man and nature are metabolised, to produce additional value. The profit motive, however, imposes a production for exchange value that draws on the intensity of work and on products that undermine the sane reproduction of society. In such a cycle, man is both the initial stage of capital's production and the culmination of capital's activity – labour must be hired to produce, consume, and be consumed. Under capital, the consumption of both man and nature is means to private ends signified in money form.

In war, the metabolic social order kicks into a higher gear of de-reproduction. The war industry mitigates the dampening effect on the rate of surplus value, which ensues from the rising organic composition of capital. More than neoliberal markets, imperialist wars disengage supposedly unproductive resources, namely, idling labour. Wars are characterised by their own wage system, which as other wage systems do, they also reduce the social costs of the reproduction of the working class, or they reduce the wage bill of labour over its lifetime. Although through improvement to military technology, once realised, war accelerates the replacement of living with dead labour. In its de-reproduction cycle, it would at the same time forcibly hire the living labour, the already fallen war-dead, and any the future dead fallen to its subsequent austerity. The financial burdens of war may place the future generations of the centre in debt bondage, but the debt burden may be alleviated as credit issuance incentivises wars and augments imperialist rents. The dead labourers whose labour is robbed to become the dead labour of the North boost surplus value as capital requires more living labour to be consumed in order to reboost the rate of exploitation. War increases the rate of turnover of living relative to dead labour and mitigates the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. In the course of war, the to-be-dead and dying are the commodities observed as self-expanding value. The realised value or the labour power of the living objectified over their shorter lifetimes in the production of death for low wages leaves more to profits.

Expressed straightforwardly, the rising efficiency of the war machine may require less personnel to operate but, on the battlegrounds, it also engages more indigent labour commercially (slave-like) exploited as simultaneous input and output. War industry is comprehensive and not just about the US soldier-worker pushing a button to decimate a hut. The hut inhabitants are bonded co-workers whose labour of death is input, while their death is output. Through the increasing number of war-workers or living labourers dying in shorter time and in due course from the after-effects of war, more surplus labour becomes capital. Although the case can be generalised onto the accumulation

of civilian-end use commodities laced with waste, war related forms of exploitation overcome the demand constraints associated with other forms of super-exploitation. State funded militarism switches wage-driven demand for credit/debt supported demand, while long-term future risks require more future lives be held as collateral, requiring further aggression and war.

As discussed in chapter three, alongside imperialist wars, the erosion of nature undermines the material and spiritual support platforms of working classes. Western Marxism pedantically searches for the word metabolism in Marx to establish a the degenerative process of nature (Harvey 1996; Moore 2000), whereas capital unopposed is an *a priori social* negative dialectic. In other words, the metabolic rift is social first and natural second. It is the private-social rift, which evolves into the waste phenomenon. Jointly, the climate calamity, austerity and wars uproot people from direct production everywhere. In a continuation of primitive accumulation, these aggressions deracinate and socialise labour and resources on a massive scale. Imperialist wars disperse the human and physical assets of whole nations. Just as the conditions of primitive accumulation intensify in response to the crisis of capital, so does their key form of exploitation, commercial exploitation. At first, commercial exploitation assumed the forms of ethnocide and chattel slavery (as shown in chapter 6). Later, it progressed into the enslavement of whole nations as war and defeatism strip weaker nations of sovereignty. In particular, the decimation of autonomy in food production and the imposition of unserviceable debts target the sources that support the security of working classes, which is the backbone of national sovereignty. In concert with war, the cultural offensives detach labour from its history, or de-subjectify labour, and undermine the foundation for successful working-class struggles.

Moreover, nature degraded by capital doubles as means to regulate the reproduction of labour. The erosion of the social and natural support platforms of labour reduce labour's share from the social product equilaterally by the years of life prematurely lost to capital's onslaught. The more the productivity of dead labour robbed of the dead labourers dissipates, the more living labour must be consumed in waste. A negative correlation sustained by capital's historical momentum may be established between shortened quality and length of lives and surplus value. As a measure of variations in surplus value, an index of the reduction in the quality of life, life expectancy and the deaths in wars, echoes the conditions of social production – how peoples that capital could feed but are disappearing early because capital obliterates their lives represents a saving to capital's over a worker's lifetime. Reduction in life expectancy parallels the rate of exploitation; however, the time lags will remain those of social time, which is the repercussion of a past event upon the present and the future in correspondence to the power of

capital over labour. A more powerful capital pre-configures the playing fields for the events that regiment labour. While capital represses to co-align the time of production with its requirement for minimal socially necessary labour time or the time that society inputs into production for a minimal cost to capital, it deploys wars, austerity, and the evisceration of nature as industries that counteract demand-led crises. Credit supported demand for waste overtakes wage-led demand for civilian-end use commodities. The efficacy of returns to capital per unit of inputs rises not only by how 'mean and lean' labour becomes, but also by how many excess people relative to spare capacity are made to disappear in the waste industry. This is unlike the Malthusian position where the excess population dies off because of exogenous state welfare policy causing moral improbity, higher fecundity, and higher population growth competing for fewer resources. In this approach, the relative depopulation is endogenous, and alongside degraded nature, the waste industry employs labour to destruct labour as the rudimentary activity that underlays surplus value. The rate of relative depopulation or relative social de-reproduction is the principal mitigating factor against the permanent crisis of capital.

In formulaic expression, the proper functioning of the value relation occurs when the expropriation of labour expropriates the life of labour. The objective of the value relation is to grind down man and nature in excessive auto-consumption. To counter value, Mészáros (1995) suggests that socialist growth is 'the expansion of ecologically benign use values rather than an unlimited increase in merely quantifiable material outputs.' To be sure, the category of value in political economy is not some goodness to things. Value proper (the socially necessary labour time) is the social form of reified labour and the relation that propels the reproduction of society. It is the principal category of the market economy under capital. It replicates itself in different shapes, especially waste, to reconstitute the social conditions for additional value making. Waste is value's genesis and principal social form. Depending on the conditions of the struggle, value's impact is inherently negative; however, just like the impersonal history that birthed value, there is not a negative and positive side to value, or dark or a lighter side to value. Value is a relation that is innately inclined to de-reproduce society by class undergirded market deliberations.

The production of waste has been instituted in forms of social organisation and introjected in thought. It is either the system or an intrinsic part of the system. In accumulation, which is a class-configured social process represented in the physical and cultural wealth whose sub-stratum is waste, commodities as value ought to self-expand to expand accumulation. In the case of the self-expanding death commodity, it must also be underpinned by a culture of death to self-expand. A sort of social *thanatos*, an inclination towards death,

may be said to sustain the waste of life constituted as use-value by the false social needs erected to expand death. Unlike the less wasteful commodity, like the coke-can, this fetishism of death or pure waste fetishism, in its class related aspect, means that the death commodity expands by quickly consuming living people. It additionally plays a prominent role in concealing the value of the quickly realised stock of labour power interred beneath the money form. With so much to its advantage, the production and exchange of waste, the subprocesses of the self-expanding death commodity determine the reproduction of life. The conclusion that death determines life is not the same as Karl Jaspers fear of death determines life. The former notion of death is a real commodity realised by the travails of value whose fetish rules society, the latter is about psychology and existentialist angst.

Although there is no such thing as human fallibility into which war is inbuilt, imperialist war, already a prerequisite for the expansion of capital, becomes a permanent feature of market operations. War occurs at different periods for historically determined reasons, which requalify its content or subtending laws of development. With the onset of the dominance of exchange over use-value or capitalist production relations, the war industry in its early capitalist forms would have employed waged soldiers and sailors. War is profitable since it is the stage in production whose surplus value underpins the wealth to date. The nature and people that white colonists encountered abroad and exterminated were inputs and outputs in a market of waste. The living and the dying in wars had value, generated surplus value by their very lives as input and deaths as output. Ethnocide exchanged for a price, and thusly, the slaughter as a market platform for the skins of natives. The wars of capital persisted as waste enterprises on their own as well as preliminary inputs of other industries. The imperialist wars of the finance-monopoly age further bolstered waste. Set against the immense reserve army of labour, deemed excessive relative to available resources, war in the age of monopoly-finance became a principal means to resolve capital's crisis.

Unlike past times when it was permissible to enslave or murder the inferior other for some silver, such lucrative endeavours are not recognised as legitimate industries in the modern intellectual *corpus*. They appear as moral misdemeanours by the self-righteous whites; accounting-wise, to plunder was a predisposition of man that fell outside the circuit of capital and outside value relations. As with any other Eurocentric model, the Western Marxist approach to value, imbued with empiricism, had to consider value as only a thing. True, some argue that value is a social relation, but that conceptual side of value is lost in eclecticism and in relation to other categories, and what remains is just the Ricardian value theory. For reasons of class position, the class as a concept for Western Marxists is delimited by the reified national boundaries. They

must adopt the position of value as a thing since theory bows down to their specific mode of social reproduction within the class order. The class they represent is the thingified class or the central capitalists that have adopted the reason of the commodity. The moment the subject labour in value is considered in its international dimension and organic ties to other working classes, the strategy of central Marxists will be to prioritise national liberation struggles in the developing world over their demands for higher pay at home, a pay whose predicate is imperialist booty. The implications are that the politics of the left in the centre would have to extend the armed class struggles of the South to the centre. Such did not happen and would not happen exactly because of the thesis expounded in this work, which is the state of being of Northern classes is its reproduction via imperialism. In its symbiosis with capital and as a cohesive social formation, the Northern working classes reproduce by imperialist waste. They maintain the circulatory process that transfers value from the South to the North. At this ontological level, Western working classes are organic partners of capital, as opposed to international labour. Their prolonged co-existence with capital is not merely détente or some lull before the storm. Most times when a crisis sets in, their reformism through the bourgeois democratic channels only reformulates their shares of income. Such is not so because of their higher productivity. After all, productivity's subject is the relation of the exclusion of the South from the global the social product, while labour is the real process, which gives the semblance of reality to the totality of capital, on account of the real power it bestows upon it by surrendering to it. Conversely, since labour hoists capital over society, while it is the true relation by which society reproduces, then labour, just as capital, becomes an indistinguishable totality given in its abstractions whose purpose is to reproduce capital. Furthermore, the proposition that Western workers alone are productive cannot be since the alone-ness of labour cannot exist. To assume that Western labour is more productive for illustrative reasons, such would still be partial concreteness. In value theory treated as a relation, what exists is the 'we,' which is all of global labour, and which drives social productivity.

That economics is determining in the last instance establishes the primacy of politics or the necessity for capital to control the labour process before it captures the rents (Althusser 1967). In the dialectic of the base-superstructure, the production relations nesting at the base call the shots in the last instance, while the institutions of capital, its superstructure, must manage profit making under the constraint of an objectively widening gap between production relations and productive forces. Over the time horizon, capital balances what it shares with its Northern classes against the politics of the times to steady its profits. Of late, because Europe feels the de-oxygenation of the planet and because the waste of nature is harmful to its quality of life than the waste of

man in the South, the accent shifted towards further depopulation policies in the South. In *a fortiori* evidence, the positions of white classes in support of colour revolutions abroad, regime change, and the ongoing re-arming of Ukraine provide further proof of hardened imperialism. Instead of abolishing private property *cum* value, the policy of the North targets low growth and pollution taxes. However, for the rate of surplus value to be maintained with cleaner air, it must be reconstituted less from burning fossil fuels and more from extinguishing people before their due time. The chauvinism interspersed in Western thought surfaces in the proposition that to save nature is to cordon off natural reservations surrounded by starving people. Here, surplus value emerges from the equation to cut less trees, more of the people from the South must be eliminated. On balance, the waste of social nature must grow to feed the insatiable appetite of capital for profits. Possibly this explains why the air waves are awash with insinuations that human population is much like an infestation of some mammal species, which requires culling by Safari hunting trips. More and more, the rate of depopulation relative to the realisable potential of longevity with modern means will constitute the preconditions for surplus value.

Under finance-monopoly capital, growing imperialist rents widen the gap between what people need and what people produce. Waste, militarism, wars and war technology are examples of what people do not need, yet society continues to produce and consume. These are alienated processes falling outside social control. Under the command of thingified capital, the better machinery of modern times accentuates overproduction and induces wars that mediate crises of overproduction. Even the supposed green machinery, which is intended to reduce the waste, will still search for cheaper inputs in unregulated areas, abuse social nature, in order to relieve a natural disaster that cannot be portioned.

Accumulation by waste, militarism, and imperialist wars is accumulation by the fetishes attendant upon the merchandise of capital. The acceptance of waste follows a cascading scale that mimics the social class ladder. Nations at the bottom of the South pain more than others and are less likely to willingly swallow the waste since they are themselves visibly wasting away. However, just as there is a 'keeping up with the Jones's' in the North, there also develops the smugness of 'we are lucky we are not Starving Yemenis.' There are many ways to explain such sameness in perception that grips the Western class imagination. Wilhelm Reich's (2014) psychoanalytic way was to dub it a class-mental disease as a result of patriarchy. A child's inability to confront the repressive father figure identifies with the father when young, and later in life as an adult identifies with state power no matter how fascist its practices. Such schizophrenic social state incubates the torturers sprouted in the

image of the torturing state. For the sociologist Davis (1993), the insecurity and the costs of the transition to a better world balanced with the payoffs from imperialist rents have created a Northern working class that cosies to capital no matter its atrocities. Hobsbawm (1996) underscores the uncanny tolerance of people to misery or getting used to 'slow motion catastrophe.' Their ability to habituate themselves to war and austerity augurs an age of barbarism. From another angle, a society of the spectacle (Debord 1967) endures a race to the bottom because suffering is displaced onto a world experienced vicariously through the dominant imagery on display. In such a world, the suffering of the other is accepted in relation to one's own misery. Whatever the explanation, the facts are a Western hemisphere armed with liberalism and in charge of history has delivered a planet teetering on the brink of self-annihilation.

Revolutionary change self-suffices by the degree to which the contradictions of capital are laid bare before labour. Still, bringing back ideology to the radicalism of Marxian theory is necessary. Ideological interactions transpire into a real effect. To speak of value as something useful when it has become waste is political doublespeak. Additionally, the war of ideas is chiefly a struggle against the formalism that has been instilled by dominant ideology. The struggle to demystify prefabricated conceptions cannot to be carried out by inculcation. To counteract the conservatism of dominant culture, practice must inform theory. This may sound outdated because it is what Aristotle contemplated, but the point is to include gradated change from observation into theory. Such interface between theory and practice when guided by labour organised around anti-imperialism reconceptualises the dominant categories of thought in concrete reference to what they really are. In a world, that dubs global waste as wealth, or something like the preponderant waste as value with use value, the departure of mainstream concepts from their concreteness is outlandish.

Instead, faux anti-capitalist practice has bred reconciliatory Marxian theory, which has sown into public discourse the current defeatism. For now, alongside de-sensitisation to war and waste, many working classes vote for politicians that deprive them of basic necessities and a better natural environment. They reject the televised murder shows of the Islamic State (is), yet they are oblivious to the ongoing structural genocide. The bigger quotidian crimes are not spotlighted by the media and, as such, they do not exist. The only televised revolutions are of the coloured sort, the ones that crushed Libya and the Ukraine.

All in all, capital may be reduced to a commodity, a thing whose inbuilt drive to self-expand becomes its compass. The thing re-encodes the social map by which society reproduces more so by destruction than sane wealth creation.

The wars outside the commodity are a magnification of the contradiction of the value relationship within the commodity. So long as the product of labour and its usefulness are forcefully alienated from the direct producer and mediated by exchange, war will spread as a necessity under the control of things rather than the control of social man. The gravity of the matter sets in when the commodity being alienated and market-realised is the life of man. It is then that wars occur for the sake of war, and waste is created for the sake of waste. The current estrangement of social consciousness from social being consummates in the ongoing act of class cannibalism. The ‘what is to be done question’ remains to put up a fight under the leadership of mass workers parties dedicated to internationalism.

## 10 Resist to Exist

As the fetish of premature death takes hold, its associated culture of death borne out in the damage to social nature, restrengthens capital’s position. Unless resistance overthrows capital, whether the planet unexpectedly cools or heats up, the waste of man and nature that undergirds profits will proceed as usual. Whereas all that is rational is supposedly real, the irrational or, worse yet, the absurd has become real. Alongside the sparkle of material and spiritual attainment of the North, the many irreversibly lost humans and other natural species have emerged as stark monuments of Western civilisation. Relative to what the development of the productive forces could have improved versus what it has accomplished, this is the bleakest phase in history. The destruction of nature continues to erode the basis for sane social reproduction, and to boot, it circularly reinforces the market mechanisms that boost waste-based profits. Although Engels (1877) observed that the capitalist mode of production becomes dis-useful and that *reason becomes unreason*, the phenomenal waste that has emerged evinces the point that the production of a culture of un-reasonability, especially the co-optation of Marxism, to have been the gyroscope that steadied capital. Capital’s propagation of absurdities that seize the mind is just as relevant a product to nurture as any commodity. In fact, the absurdity itself, for instance, the lure of consumerism in the sixties deployed against the Soviet Union and, the current woke trends deployed against Russia and China, these are cultural weapons that account for the resilience of capital.

Waste’s concrete moments crystallise as those of the forms of the value category. With so much traded waste, one may easily replace the law of value with the law of waste and surplus value with surplus waste at no significant loss to meaning. Similarly, capital or the self-expanding value interchanges

with self-expanding waste. So long as people gulp the waste or submit to be wasted, the world gets turned upside down, and a theory of value based on the consumption of what is of use-value must be inverted to account for the consumption of what is not of use value. The new objectified products of labour as forms of value are all waste related, with their corresponding money form recreating the condition for their growth. As against a power of labour that would set social reproduction on a saner path, the imposing Northern structure of capital has turned the planet into a dump.

Waste on its own and as part of useful commodities, in its holistic or partial state, has a market-gestation time. In the case of environmental waste, it exhibits a lengthy period before it *openly* crystalises for a price – although it has been there in implicit prices all the time. To re-elucidate with a salient example, through the deliberations of markets for exchange, some environmental waste accumulated over many years has acquired a price of its own (like CO<sub>2</sub> emissions). Although waste is interconnected to any value activity, it openly manifested in a price and was recognised as a component of capital's money circuit only when it was deemed not to present a damage to capital's rule. A strong capital pays little attention to justifying its wasteful actions, since its power is its pragmatic or conventional truth no matter the facts. Speaking of facts, commodifying and wasting all that exists expands the scope of the market, as well as the scale of exploitation required to keep profit rates afloat. Moreover, the waste accumulated in nature *all on its own* dislocates or wastes labour without paying armies to evict tribes from forests or peasants from the land.

For accounting purposes, in the case of pure waste or imperialist wars, however, the gestation cycle may close with the war spending cycle. As the war ends, the dead will be tabulated against war spending and booty. However, war is permanent under capital, and the duration of the cycle may last as long as lives are being mowed down. Timewise, capital's harvest of premature deaths is ongoing, or the commodity given in the death of man cycle is open-ended. From a working-class accounting perspective, as distinct from capital's accounts, the social cycle ought to begin at the start of the labour of birth and end with the labour performed over the average lifetime of the worker. The time of that cycle ought to be determined by the activity of labour undertaken to the benefit of labour, rather than the conventional time of capital into which it chooses the count the activities that are of benefit to it. Over capital's cycle, the majority pay out in years of their lives to offset the reduction in an income already insufficient to meet minimum subsistence. To conceal the relation of constant loss of life to waste, capital leaves the wasting events out of its accounts. Yet, the net worth of the planet is negative when waste is factored in, while the less developed nations that are forced to deplete their resources by imperialist wars, these are too deep into the negative quadrant.

When lost years of life are costed into the net worth of less developed nations alongside the destruction of assets and resource flight, these would be countries like of Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, etc. And, as Michael Parenti (2011) had put it, these are countries rich in peoples, resources and culture, but drained of their wealth by imperialism.

Labour, the subject in unity with nature *become* social nature, is also the subject in value brutalised by capital to reduce costs. To begin with, society pays a superficially low price for a useful commodity that short-changes the real costs to nature and man. The inputs that went into the making of that commodity include its corresponding portion of the costs of social reproduction and unpaid moneyed and non-moneyed losses to nature and man. The same inputs are simultaneously the forms of waste in its social and natural state. Social waste, in analytical breakdown, peaks when working-class infighting orchestrated by capital socialises labour by immiseration and war leaving resources up for grab. Natural waste sickens nature and drives peoples from the land. It increases the debts that tax an otherwise healthier reproduction of the working class. In addition to the automatic roles of waste as an adjunct to capital that further proletarianises the working class, society finds itself paying for the abusive measures of production employed in the past as well as their impact upon future resources and markets. At this intersection in time, capital reveals the damage it inflicted upon nature guided by market signals and, always in how such information may shore up future investment-returns opportunities. In some measures of the environmental losses, capital may water down the climate reports (Bordera 2022), in others, it forbodes of greater disaster to spur more waste by the impact of future markets upon present conditions (United Nations 2022). In more radical positions, Ajl (2021) incisively criticises capital's 'green-new deal', while Carter and Woodworth (2018) demand that ecocide be outlawed and 'indict corporate and governmental bodies identified without hyperbole as guilty of crimes against humanity.' Typically, in capital-provided information, what will be excluded is the identity *waste is capital*. Waste reconditions, society, sells and, figuratively speaking, its contribution to value and, down the line profits, may be measured by the gap between the life span of David Rockefeller who lived to over one hundred by undergoing seven heart transplants, while most in Yemen struggle to reach 60 years of age.

The scientific community and its scientists, vulnerable to the flattery of capital's Nobel-like Prizes, serve without imagination and great zeal to quash labour's potential. Mainstream formalism, with its knack to reduce the mind to a camera that snaps still images in time, dulls the prevalent modes of thought. In the absence of laws of development, each caption of reality only notionally relates to the previous caption. Continuity is formal or discrete time continuity, as opposed to real or historical. True, successive pictures of worsening

conditions in time inform of things going from bad to worse, but when the subject of history is formalised or personalised, each snap in time becomes independent and structurally different of prior points in time. From a predominantly Eurocentric optic, it is either the new president or the newly practiced policy, but never the class relation of persistent imperialist assault. It is never the historical surplus value or development conditioned by capital's law of value, which fashion the context for events to mature into. It is never the abstract but real social relationships, which as modes of consciousness reassert the correspondence of production relations to productive forces, otherwise the social milieu into which people are born and must engage with. Instead of dialectical reasoning, elite rotation or essentialist theories conjoined with fictional and unchanging attributes of human nature reinforce the resignation of the masses. The alleged futility of struggle emerges from the notion that nothing could be changed because individuals have not abruptly changed their minds to fit into some utopian socialism. However, socialism arrived at by overnight spiritual volte-face is only possible if every human is a replica of every other human or the Western Marxist who critiques human rights abuse in Burkina Faso under Sankara. Yet, formalism as such is the hypostasized fiction of capital, the idea given material structure by the power of capital, against which reality is gauged. Formalism allows the witty apologists for imperialism to question why Iran must create a support base in neighbouring Lebanon, and would not such action constitute Iran as a mini imperialism. There is wit but not wisdom in this question, but it is also completely oblivious of the facts or that the incessant aggression against Iran and the immensely distorted balance of forces have throughout history pressured Iran's class formation into poverty and defensive expansion.

With formalism, the transition to socialism, the sane reorganisation of man and nature via planning, becomes an impractical ideal, which is, *ipso facto*, the Western world's weapon of choice. In addressing how the proletariat cannot take over without overcoming the fictions of capital, Marx (1845) noted that 'communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.' Changing minds is always possible and observable, but it is only effective when the synergy between theory and practice develops as an organised anti-imperialist popular front targeting Western interests with armed resistance as the principal method of choice. The central objective of such resistance is to abolish private property, as the strategic policy goal to which all other goals are subordinate. *The kernel of revolutionary consciousness is in its definition and perception of capital as the permanent and expanding systemic genocide, which is the self-expanding waste*

*necessary to maintain profit rates. The ironclad law that capital consumes man, more so when society surrenders to it than when society struggles against it, is the law of value motivated by the rationale of waste.*

Private property abolition goes hand in hand with the dictatorship of the proletariat. The rule of the masses is compulsory in the transition because even the petty bourgeoisie diverges from the proletariat in its objective and, 'once encouraged, the petty bourgeois will destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement' (Lenin 1920). Moreover, unlike the prevaricating petty bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat is required to abolish private property (not personal property) and nationalise the means of production (Mao 1942). Mao added that 'anything that is truly of the masses must necessarily be led by the proletariat.' The class struggle in that sense is the real struggle as well as the struggle for ideas. Its landscape at the time of writing is as follows. There are revolutionary consciousness-disarmed masses that combat highly armed imperialist classes. In their current ideologies of resistance, the masses may reformulate and resurrect the cultural symbols and heroes of past anti-colonial struggles. Ness (2021) observes new forms of struggles against imperialism developing in the South. However, the masses may successfully confront the white world's dominant ideology and its national privilege only by aligning cultural identity with a working-class anti-imperialist position. Along the way, they must face off against the comprador, the inflated 'Ts' of liberalism and the consumerism injected amidst their ranks to split the national liberation fronts. In the battle for emancipation, the class demarcation lines are the frontlines against a megalithic Western structure auto-propelled by the weight of history.

In relation to consumerism, the consumption for consumption's sake evolved into the consumption of waste. It reflects the domination of use by exchange value. Consumerism raises the dependence of monopoly-finance capital on the spread of waste, especially militarism. Waste as a domain of accumulation with sub-industries may relocate to the South, but a balance in imperialist rent redistribution must be struck between capital and its adjunct classes in the North to bolster the aggression against the South. Increasingly, the ratio of deploying a certain amount of kilotons in explosives against a starving nation over the number of casualties the aggressed developing nation may inflict upon the imperialist aggressor in retaliation represents the threshold for conducting the next imperialist war.

Save the counteracting rise of China, as a civilisation of capital, the Western world has eroded the natural base beyond repair and rebolstered its military advantage with digital technology to the point that it could decimate many weaker nations with minimal losses to itself. In many instances, imperialism has blanked out the minds of the victimised classes turning them into

cheerleaders of NATO. In spite of the damage, capital's Western Marxism vies for an idyllic communism or the ideal to which reality will have to instantly adjust itself according to Marx above. Instead of direct action targeting the institutions of the centre, it faults the defensive strategies of lesser-armed peoples against Western aggression. In the skewed torrents of power, the slightest mistake of a resisting-country media-fanned as a human right violation dehumanises the developing 'othered-entity' and justifies further imperialist aggression. Western Marxist formalism neglects the fact that developing world history was made by Western powers and it continues to be remoulded by these through their comprador. It also neglects the fact that between two points in time, now and in the future, it is not analysis that decisively informs the transition to socialism, but more so, the day-to-day activity of the struggle. It omits the idea that it is the contingent balance of power in the class struggle that bears fruit and, analytical projections only inform insofar as they emanate from a proletarian position. Masses do not suddenly mature into some future communism or acquire a revolutionary consciousness by some messianic élan to effect change. Just as science progresses despite the impurities of experiments, and just as scientific categories grow from the inalienable bond between theory and practice, so too the social-scientific categories. As each subject in substance – here the subject is the working class reshaping its social conditions – realises its own cultural particularity in the politics of anti-imperialist struggle, a momentum for socialism builds. There is no culturally homogenous working class and culture will remain the crucible of working-class realisation. As the particular cultural trait auto-mediates into the universal culture of anti-imperialism, especially in the rise of nations embodying the civilisation of labour, the experiences of anti-imperialist struggles become moments of the same subject-substance, the anti-systemic struggle.

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Phenomenal waste has surfaced as the social form and substance of value. In capital's totalizing process, which commodifies all that comes in its way, wasting classes consume the wasted classes. This book addresses the metamorphosis of value into waste and it focuses on wars as industries of perfect waste. Whereas wasted man is visibly the prevalent commodity on sale, this central element in the commodity relation is rarely mentioned. In line with this, the book examines how waste, as a surrogate value, mitigates the crises of capital and maintains its resilience.

**Ali Kadri** teaches at Sun Yatsen University Zhuhai, PRC. His recent books include *The Cordon Sanitaire: A Single Law Governing Development in East Asia and the Arab World*, *Imperialism with Reference to Syria*, and *The Unmaking of Arab Socialism*.



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