

Are we moving closer to the sociopath strata?

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Dear friends,

What a week in the world. I wonder if there will be a time where we can say otherwise, though. We have seen the continued propagation of neo-imperialism backed by the traditional imperialists (this just cancels out to “imperialism proper” anyway) [1], the detention of a tech CEO over encrypted(?) messages [2], a waste of human life, sorry, Australian billionaire, urging the end of -coffee breaks- because mask-off slavery of the workers suits his personal agenda better [3], and research showing an >80% failure rate of “AI” projects [4].

It would also be remiss of me to not comment on the slow car crash of a purportedly “worker-focussed” party. The ALP has once again stooped to its lowest common right-wing denominator in making decisions about census, ejecting another member from the caucus [5]. At this point I am beginning to wonder if they will retain enough MPs to make any decisions before the next election, and while this may feel like hyperbole to sensible political observers but, I can feel in my bones a future where the labor right and the liberal left form a coalition to block independents and greens from power (not to mention with the “less radical” right-wing independents who will surely be elected too).

In a sentence, we are once again in a grim place. So, with the ever depressing scene set, let us begin an inquiry into an aspect of the contemporary capitalist phenomenon, an ideas favourite, the sociopath. Today, however, let’s look directly into the horses mouth –we’re going to examine the capitalist and some of the fundamental laws of economic organisation which enable both capital’s reproduction and the (re)production of sociopathy. Spoiler alert, capitalism is a sociopathic economic and social organisation system, and it’s not getting better for being less examined. Three components are of interest to us today: first, fundamental precepts of imperialist capitalism (yes, again, hello), second, the reciprocal (but ouroboros) nature of capital’s reproduction through the working class, and finally the erasure of the petit bourgeoisie (a move documented as early as Gramsci’s time in politics towards fascism [6]).

Capitalism demands predation upon those with something to give. Or, those with something to give demand capitalist participation. Yes, by and large, the predatory nature of capitalism has been erased in culture because of capitalism’s onto-epistemic seizure. In literal terms, capitalism has rewritten the way we see the world so fundamentally that workers see no alternative to selling a portion of their time in order to exist in the other portion [7]. For how does one acquire shelter, food, and life without paying a landlord or supermarket (capitalist)? This social mesh, in which we are born, raised and exist, demands monetary transactions flow from the worker to the capitalist to keep the worker “off the street”. The same, simultaneously, cannot be said for the capitalist, whose existence equally demands the proletariat’s offering of labour to power their accumulated (surplus) capital which furnishes their leisure lifestyles [8].

For secret reasons the working classes, unless agitated, are more or less forced to accept these relations as “natural”. To be careful and clear here, one cannot blame the working classes for the promulgation of capital. Indeed, Gramsci’s theorisation of civil society and the institutions in it which channel the bourgeoisie thought into the mainstream (the civil sphere) helps us understand that all types of engagement with society in the west (at least, if not elsewhere) are engrained with capital and allow only capital. So the secret reasons are, as inferred above, that social conditioning reproduces capitalism as natural, necessary, and innate. It is, of course, anything but.

The natural world, the antithesis of capitalism, does not demand moneys for the purchase of property. Indeed, if they were a person, mother nature would likely laugh at you, or maybe cry with you, for attempting to render cash for shelter. The capitalist world, on the other hand, sees humans as the only species in the universe dumb enough to pay another human for land, materials, and shelter. Fundamentally the needs for shelter, food, and other necessities have been exploited by capitalists in order to create a wealth-skimming 1% —a leisure class whose lavish lifestyles are based entirely on the expropriation of work, through gruelling daily labour by the working class, and extraction from nature. The problem, or conflict if you like, in capitalism is its need for continual growth, the “line must go up” mentality to retain the comfort of the capitalists.

First this need for growth drove colonisation, the brutal and genocidal expansion of European capitalism across the globe. Next the double expropriation from workers, in that not only must you sell your labour power to the capitalist for a means of subsistence, but that in so doing you subsist only to serve the capitalist another day. In the more bourgeois parts of the world this is supposedly “fairly traded” for a “socialist” retirement —of course, more unethical lies have never been told. The products of your labour, be it the curriculum and pedagogy you produce and enact when teaching a class of students, or be it the coal you remove from the coal seam, are alienated from you (hello Karl) in exchange for an empty value —a wage, which you must spend on subsistence. What’s worse is that the capitalist class demand competition, and pit you against your colleagues and comrades for the lowest possible subsistence. But, let’s diverge from explaining Capital again and look at how political society (in Gramsci’s terms) also enforces this mode of human life.

The current majority ALP government in Australia is interested in two main things, both of which are twistedly ironic for a party called “Labor”: the unrestricted accumulation of wealth for the capitalist at expense to the worker, friends and neighbours and environment; and the unashamed squeezing of the working classes to force basic subsistence living on a perpetually static wage. The first of these is an ipso facto necessity for participation in political society. I suggest, here, that to participate in the ruling and governing of any modern capitalist country in any capacity requires, at least, an acceptance of onto-epistemic capital. While there may be revolutionaries and resisters, the actual daily “work” (if you can call it that) of parliament requires belief in capitalism as vehicle for “momentum”, even if the momentum is anti-capitalist (*vis-à-vis* liberal reformism). The second of these, demonstrated time and again in a litany of anti-worker moves [see also 9], is a fundamental admission of adherence to capitalism over democracy (if there were such a thing). Political society, handmaiden itself to the bourgeoisie, not only perniciously enforces capital as model of operation for government, services, and so on, but sets the agenda for stasis and reproduction in civil society.

If political society both sets the tone for and inherits the tone of the media (murdoch), education (government curriculum), and social organisations (i.e., religions), we can begin to see where a capitalist onto-epistemology develops. Workers and capitalists alike consume media, education, and social fabrics which enforce capitalism. Naturally, the education and media a capitalist receives is vastly different from a working class person, right down to the sociopathic attitude modelled by their teachers. It is from this fundamental insertion of capitalist ontology into the minds of the young —the endless reproduction of political propaganda for capitalism’s reproduction —that capitalist reproduction springs forth. And knowingly the capitalists reproduce this, and their capitalist ideology (more recently popularly called neoliberalism).

So this cyclical “politics produces capitalism” and “civil society produces capitalism” just as “worker produces value which is alienated from them” and “capitalist sells the products of the workers labour for their own leisure” creates the conditions in which the working class must prostitute themselves for capitalists, and capitalists continue to fatten and brine

themselves in stolen products. An ouroboros of human suffering, except for the 1%, their leisure time more than makes up for the massive and crippling anti-human “ethic” they employ to secure their fortunes and perceived favour. So finally we arrive at the erasure of the middle class, or the petit bourgeoisie both by government and institutions of civil society –because primary extraction/extracted relationships are simpler to maintain, and do not require the capitalists to cede leisure (a mega yacht, for example) if production is “down” or there is civil unrest over capitalist unfairness.

I’ve noted, -ad nauseam- at this point, the sociopathy of the capitalist class -the bourgeoisie. Importantly, this is not becoming more prevalent. The capitalist class is sociopathic. They foster and demand competition between their fellow human for literally just existing. There is no other species on the planet which enslaves and manipulates, undermines and attacks another in this way. The capitalist class and its remaining adherents among the petit bourgeoisie and proletariat are either sociopathic themselves, or subscribe wholesale to sociopathic ideas in a quest for “pulling oneself up by their bootstraps”. A more impossible, and torturingly accurate, statement about the nature of capitalism has not been said, except that some people in capitalism are born without even the boots to begin with, while the engorged capitalist screams at them about pulling their straps up. Ok, yes, one of my great past times is over-stretching metaphors.

The middle class, however, the petit bourgeois, is always being actively undermined by those above. In times of relative economic (a fake science, and a fake system) surplus the petit bourgeois may grow, and even some of the more privileged amongst them may become class ascendant. However, when economic conditions change, this class is stripped of its (surplus) accumulation and gaslight to believe it wanted to do that. The middle’s leisure time disappears, and their true nature as a fraction of the proletariat is revealed. However, in contemporary times we can add a semi-psychological analytical opportunity, because those petit bourgeois in this relation are both being controlled in the style of an abusive relationship while simultaneously acting as a propagandist mouthpiece for capitals reproduction. What a contradiction. Passing the abuse down to those around them. If it happens that a member of this middle class sits in management, they delude themselves to believe they are not replicating the extractive, expropriative, and malicious toll required to feed the capitalist class, and they pass on the moral guilt of the capitalists (notably, this is largely absent due to true sociopathy in a clinical sense [9] which is broadly known and lauded by the capitalists themselves) through a prism of their own treachery, self doubt and moral concern.

For the remainder, the ALP is working hard to ensure that the working class primarily and the petit bourgeoisie as a happy coincidence are forced back on to subsistence wages through use of inflation to drive down the value of a wage to the worker. These are the terms with which economists speak, and the fundamentally anti-human nature of the language, the approach, and mentality of these traditional “intellectuals” is so infectious that they even believe themselves to be socially liberating others. So, what? We are seeing increasingly sociopathic behaviours in the workplace, from politicians, and across media not because of some new phenomenon. So, cheerily, I say...

Capitalism is run by sociopaths. Capitalism creates sociopaths. Capitalism is slavery.

Can we please wake up and smell the ashes before the planet is gone?

Your comrade,

Aidan

1. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/08/harris-says-she-wont-stop-bidens-policy-of-sending-weapons-to-israel/>

2. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/28/tech/pavel-durov-telegram-custody-released-intl/index.html> I have mixed feelings about this
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/article/2024/aug/29/australian-billionaire-boss-coffee-breaks-office-chris-ellison-perth-mineral-resources>
4. <https://www.tomshardware.com/tech-industry/artificial-intelligence/research-shows-more-than-80-of-ai-projects-fail-wasting-billions-of-dollars-in-capital-and-resources-report>
5. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-08-29/albanese-governemnt-lgbti-census/104280744>
6. Gramsci, A. (1977). Selections from political writings (1910-1920) (Q. Hoare & J. Mathews, Trans.). Lawrence and Wishart; Gramsci, A. (2007). Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell-Smith, Trans.; Reprinted). Lawrence and Wishart.
7. Marx, K. (1976). Wage-Labour and Capital & Value, Price and Profit. International Publishers. Marx, K. (1990). Capital: a critique of political economy (B. Fowkes & D. Fernbach, Eds.). Penguin Books in association with New Left Review.
8. Yes, the very ones that tell the working classes to eat less avocado on toast.
9. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/04/08/the-science-behind-why-so-many-successful-millionaires-are-psychopaths-and-why-it-doesnt-have-to-be-a-bad-thing.html> what an absolutely fucked up article, though.