

Navigating plurality in non-dynamic systems (or, ‘dynamism’ and human suffering)

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Dear friends,

We are bound in frames of colonial capitalism with systems of static purpose and design. Unless you live on the periphery, it is highly likely that at least some aspect of your existence fits within the western economic system. And unless you are centralised in a small handful of European nations (with, admittedly, high populations), you are probably contributing to those European nations prosperity, rather than your own. Naturally, with American imperialism this began to shift, and the global flows of resources and moneys are so deeply complex and intently mystified that tracing from primordial origins no longer serves meaningful purpose, but let’ s do a little now anyway.

Capitalism emerged through violent processes of transformation beginning in 15th century Europe, where leaders leveraged desires for wealth and power to drive colonial expansion across the globe. This involved a dual process of material and ideological change. Materially, people were removed from their traditional relationships with land through enclosures and forced into wage labour, while skilled craftspeople were transformed into alienated workers separated from their means of production. This process was accompanied by colonial expansion that established global systems of exploitation and resource extraction [1].

The establishment of capitalism also required fundamental social and cultural transformations. This included the subjugation of women and devaluation of reproductive labour, most violently expressed through witch hunts, which helped establish the patriarchal control necessary for capitalist accumulation. Women’ s unpaid domestic labour, childcare, and community care work became essential but unvalued parts of the new economic system [2]. Simultaneously, racial hierarchies were established to justify colonial violence and exploitation [3]. Both of these schematics of oppression continue today in ever more violent, sociopathic, and intergenerationally damaging forms.

These origins weren’t natural or inevitable, but rather emerged through deliberate processes of violence, dispossession, and ideological transformation that continue to shape contemporary (capitalist) social relations. New cultural institutions were created to maintain hegemonic control, transforming previous social values into ones centred on profit and accumulation. The Marxian tradition emphasises understanding these violent origins is crucial for recognising capitalism’ s fundamental nature as an exploitative system rather than a natural way of organising society. But what are these systems now? And what the heck are dynamics?

The material conditions of capitalism in the 2020s are characterised by extreme wealth concentration, with the top 1% controlling more wealth than all world governments combined. This material dominance is maintained through new forms of exploitation, particularly through “innovations” like digital platforms and algorithmic control of workers entire lives. We’ ve talked at length about how companies like Meta, Google, Amazon, and Apple have created digital fiefdoms that extract value from all social and economic activity within their domains [4]. Meanwhile, the traditional working class faces increasing precarity, with stable employment replaced by gig work and casual contracts, while essential public services are stripped away through privatisation and corporatisation.

Ideologically, capitalism maintains its hegemony through increasingly sophisticated means of manufacturing consent [5]. Social media algorithms create personalised propaganda,

pushing users toward content that fragments class consciousness while promoting individualistic and reactionary worldviews. Digital platforms function as new cultural institutions that shape public discourse and prevent the emergence of collective resistance. Traditional media, largely controlled by figures like Murdoch, work in concert with these digital systems to naturalise consent to capitalist exploitation and prevent alternative visions from gaining traction.

The reproductive aspects of capitalism have also evolved, with the crisis of social reproduction intensifying. While women's unpaid labour remains essential to capitalism's functioning, new pressures from precarious employment and the dismantling of social services have made this reproductive work increasingly difficult to sustain. The system responds by commodifying aspects of social reproduction, from childcare to emotional support, while simultaneously devaluing and degrading these services. Moreover, in places like the United States, basic access to health care is not only stratified to the wealthy elite, but increasingly drawn on racial and gender axes. This has led to a perfect storm of psychological warfare against workers, particularly affecting those at the intersections of gender, race, and class exploitation.

Social institutions ranging from education to healthcare maintain rigid barriers against meeting genuine human needs while showing remarkable dynamism in creating new forms of exploitation. For example, universities remain inflexibly opposed to providing genuine public education or supporting critical thinking, while rapidly evolving new methods to extract value from students and workers through casualisation, metrics-based management, and the commodification of knowledge. Similarly, healthcare systems are increasingly rigid in denying universal access while dynamically developing new ways to generate profit from human suffering. Here, my friends, we start to see the rigidity of systems which may even claim "dynamism" .

The supposed dynamism of capitalist systems masks a fundamental rigidity. While markets and technologies evolve rapidly in pursuit of profit, the underlying structures of exploitation remain remarkably static [6]. We see this, particularly, in capitalism's persistent reliance on unpaid reproductive labour, primarily performed by women, which forms an essential yet systematically devalued foundation of the entire economic system. The "dynamic" face of capitalism, which is actually its ceaseless drive for new markets, technologies, and methods of surplus value extraction, operates in parallel with rigid hierarchies of gender, race, and class. These hierarchies ensure continued access to devalued reproductive labour: the childrearing, housework, and emotional labour necessary to reproduce the workforce itself. This creates a striking paradox where capital can rapidly adapt production methods while steadfastly resisting any meaningful valuation of reproductive work or addressing intersectional worker needs.

This isn't to say that there are not those working towards their own utopias.

The formation of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU) is just one recent example of workers confronting both technological control and reproductive constraints. Workers organised specifically around issues of bathroom breaks, parental leave, and scheduling predictability. All points where profit-driven "efficiency" directly conflicts with human needs and dignity. Their success in becoming the first unionised Amazon warehouse (in the US) demonstrates how collective action can challenge seemingly immutable corporate structures. In Spain, the Mondragón Cooperative Corporation offers a different model of resistance, having developed an extensive network of worker-owned enterprises that explicitly prioritise worker well being "alongside economic viability" . Their integration of childcare facilities and flexible scheduling directly addresses reproductive labour needs traditionally ignored by capitalist firms.

The Zapatista movement in Mexico, has developed autonomous communities that inte-

grate collective care work into their economic organisation [7]. Their caracoles explicitly incorporate women’s leadership and Indigenous understanding of collective well being, challenging both capitalist exploitation and colonial impositions on Indigenous ways of being. In Canada, First Nations-led movements such as Idle No More have confronted extractive capitalism through land defence which asserts sovereignty and relationships to land. These resistive movements frequently centre women’s leadership and cultural knowledge, refusing the capitalist separation of resource extraction from reproductive care for land and community.

We live within, however, a capitalist ontology which very quickly reaches and colonises our minds –from an extremely young age we are thrust into relation with capital. This ontological capture operates at multiple levels. At the individual level, precarity and debt create constant psychological stress that makes long-term, strategic thinking difficult. People trapped in cycles of survival labour often lack the mental bandwidth to imagine alternatives, let alone organise for them. The gig economy’s atomisation of workers further fragments collective consciousness, making it harder to recognise shared conditions of exploitation. Moreover, the colonisation of resistance is ever clear in how anti-capitalist movements are often recuperated into market logic. Thinking back on my post on how self-care transformed from a Black feminist concept into a commodified industry, or how workplace wellness programs individualise systemic issues [8]. Even our modes of resistance often unconsciously replicate capitalist temporalities and metrics of success.

We need frameworks for seeing the plural nature of reality, but we also need to tare down systems which reinforce division, hate and exploitation. Managing this requires dialogue and community. This is something that we’re building ever more of here, and I am so grateful to you for your reading of this post. Keep de-capitalising your mind, folks.

With love,

Aidan

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1. Marx, K. (1990). *Capital: A critique of political economy* (B. Fowkes, Trans.). Penguin Books in association with New Left Review.
 2. Federici, S. (2014). *Caliban and the witch* (Second, revised edition). Autonomedia.
 3. Sherwood, J. (2013). Colonisation -It’s bad for your health: The context of Aboriginal health. *Contemporary Nurse*, 46(1), 28-40. <https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.2013.46.1.28>
 4. <https://mndrdr.org/2025/the-labour-process-atomisation-and-social-media>; Varoufakis, Y. (2023). *Technofeudalism: What killed capitalism*. The Bodley Head.
 5. Chomsky, N. (1994). *Manufacturing Consent* (E. S. Herman, Ed.). Vintage.
 6. Dynamism under capital is ultimately anti-human, it seeks to evade or obscure the messy and annoying ‘organic’ parts of a human workforce. This, obviously, is deeply problematic for anything resembling humanist values and equality.
 7. <https://mndrdr.org/2024/making-meaning-at-the-end-of-time>
 8. <https://mndrdr.org/2024/on-burnout>