

Guenther
Moewes

EVOLUTION IN REVERSE

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In the beginning the Earth was formless and empty. It was made of combustion waste. In the course of billions of years nature has decomposed this waste. Applying the energy of the sun, it has turned the dead planet into the potentials of this Earth: the minerals, resources, raw materials, oxygen, carbon hydrates, huge deposits of coal and oil, the wonders of species variety, of a bird's eye, and of intelligence. This process is called 'evolution'. After four billion years human intelligence had advanced far enough to realise the dream of millennia: the transfer of human labour to machines. More and more machines produced more and more affluence despite less and less human labour. This process is called 'industrialisation'. Man managed to turn both processes into their opposites. In just 150 years he 'reprocessed' the majority of the resources and their potentials, including great chunks of species variety, built up over four billion years, into waste again, for ever inseparable. And as to the dream of liberation from work and toil, he turned it into the curse of 'unemployment'. This process is called 'capitalism'.¹

How could this happen? Now then, capitalism had invented a construct, which turned not only evolution and industrialisation on its head but also the entire economy: the expansion of money without productive output. This invention channels all money, earned by those more and more machines, exclusively into the pockets of the owners of money. Every day new contraptions were invented to perfect this process of unproductive siphoning off money from the creation of real value, via good old exponential compound interest, hedge funds, REITs, and private equity. Below the tele-images run text bands transmitting the daily stage of this unproductive siphoning process. Less and less money is left to those who brought about the creation of real socially beneficial value. After dreaming thousands of years of the liberation from work and toil, people have now suddenly to insist on the op-

portunity of working, to turn the Earth into waste once again in order to safeguard their right of existence.²

Undeterred, 'scientists' invented all sorts of zeitgeist theories to support this process of 'unproductive siphoning', with the argument that it was necessary to maintain the required liquidity and to keep the wheels of the economy churning. Only by maintaining permanent economic growth, so the mantra goes, can environmental problems be resolved, and unemployment and poverty be overcome. Only if the rich ('the strong ones', as chancellor Merkel said in her government declaration) get enough would there be a share left for the poor ('the weak ones'). However, it is and always was precisely the opposite: as the annual social product is limited and finite, the less goes to the poor the more is flowing to the rich. Of course, the destruction of the environment cannot be overcome through growth; on the contrary, it is accelerated. Middle-term economic growth and unemployment have always risen in sync and parallel since 1965 instead of cancelling each other out.³ Mega wealth, poverty, social inequality, and environmental destruction all have the same cause: **unproductive money expansion.**

This perversion of economy and industrialisation was not without consequences. Currently we witness how this capitalism is thrown into the deepest crisis in its history through 'unproductive money expansion', the zeitgeist and vital lies of the rich. It is a self-inflicted crisis of which Man has not yet grasped the entire scale or significance: if he does not take action Man will be facing a rise in global temperature of 5°C, more than over the last 15,000 years, thus the climate researchers from Potsdam. The warm winter of 2007 will become the norm from 2020 on at the latest. Already the rise up to date of only 0.7°C caused extreme droughts, floods and hurricanes, not only in the Sahelzone and in Bangladesh but also in Germany where the winter storms have been most costly. Hurricane 'Kyrill' in January 2007 alone caused damages to the tune of seven billion Euros. The snow debacle in November 2005 paralysed the electricity supply of half of Münsterland (region of the FRG) for five

days, causing millions of damage particularly in those high-tech enterprises that are most dependent on electricity. However, all these catastrophes of today are only the consequence of the comparatively minor sins of the sixties. Imagine the consequences in 40 years' time of the current misdemeanours in light of the targeted 2°C or even of the threatened 5°C increase of temperature! After capitalism has paraded nature over the last 200 years it is now nature's turn to parade capitalism.

With financial securities against the catastrophe

Even more sensational than climate change itself is the way capitalism tries to tackle it. This is indeed a show of the madhouse, likely to occupy generations of bemused historians. For a long time politicians have been unable to exercise any form of control. They have descended to the role of stooges of the economy, utterly incapable to fend off any sort of catastrophe. Consequently politicians are crawling to tackle the crisis with capitalism's very own weapons. Capitalism, however, is only capable of mastering crises if money can be made in the process, that's to say by mobilising 'unproductive money expansion'. How is it possible to resolve crises by means of 'unproductive money expansion'? **This question gave rise to the most absurd constructs of present times, a recreation of the trade in indulgences: so-called 'carbon trading'**. Where is it located? Of course, in the temples of capitalism, in the stock exchanges. There experts have introduced so-called 'emission certificates'. These seriously provide for 'emission rights', a 'market for emission rights' and a 'surplus supply of emission rights'. Even better would be an 'open global market of emission rights' or 'comparative advantage in emissions'. Here language is not only treacherous but also, for once, truthful. For, as we know, capitalism pollutes everything it touches, the air, the landscape, the nights, the rivers, the lakes, the seas, the deep sea, the coral reefs, the cosmos, money, food, the tele-screens, and the brains of our children. This pollution confronts us generally in the guise of cleanliness, purity, and success, or simply as a 'right'. Referring to our glaring but deserted tinsel cities at nighttime, astronomers speak of

'light pollution'. Satellite pictures demonstrate this most impressively.

Also we are confronted with yet another basic capitalist pattern: the bail out from pollution. This is well known too: Ackermann, Hartz, Landowsky.⁴ Bail out of the big boys, blame on the little ones. It is not the billionaires, big land owners, cattle barons, rent sharks, and conglomerates who are guilty but the little fast-food eaters who refuse to buy energy-saving bulbs and leave on their light switches. They are not the perpetrators but always the victims.

Has carbon emission trading actually reduced the production of CO₂? Not a bit. Why not? Because every national government is entitled to hand out certificates as it thinks fit. The consequence is oversupply. Price and demand dwindle to zero. 'Even Monopoly is more transparent than emission trading', noted the Minister for the Environment of the FRG. And why do we have it in the first place? Mainly to make people believe that the crisis is being overcome by a self-financing *perpetuum mobile* that does not have to be paid for. As the television news *Tagesschau* proclaimed in all seriousness: 'the costs of retrieving the electro-waste will be borne by the industry'.

However, nothing is born by the industry. Via prices everything without exception to the last cent is passed on to the people, more precisely: to the majority of dependent employees, who are not able anymore to write invoices but still have to pay them, not only the invoices for the mistakes of others but, at the same time, also for the mistakes of the shareholders and those 'unproductive multipliers of money'. The eternal capitalist variant of the 'causation principle', the principle that the person who causes the damage must bear the cost: those at the bottom create the wealth and pay, while those at the top make the mistakes and cash in. Over precious and lost decades they have ignored all warnings and derided the findings of critical scientists. A chancellor of the FRG has, after his heroic battle against the floods of the Oder, clad in his Wellington boots, in-

augurated the same day a new factory destined for environmental damage: Porsche Cayenne. The Stern Report and the UN Climate Accounts estimate the impending climate costs to be higher than those of the two world wars together. As always, we will grudgingly be paying while the war profiteers will laugh all the way home.

Making money through waste instead of restraint

As it supports only those economic processes, which bring in financial gain, 'unproductive money expansion' is fundamentally at odds with any form of saving. Saving does not make profits nor does it create employment. This makes for an economy of 'conspicuous consumption', of wear and tear, of waste, and of destruction, which Friedrich August von Hayek in all honesty proclaimed to be 'creative'. Thus we get the opposite of saving. The nature of saving resources has not been properly grasped at all: when a nuclear power station is built, then taken out of use and finally dismantled, billions have gone to waste, but the demand for energy is exactly the same as before. Had these billions instead been invested in energy saving measures, the demand for energy would have disappeared for good, it would never crop up again. But this option is less lucrative and adds less to employment.

Example construction: there is more money to be made with insulating exterior walls than avoiding them. Non-existing exterior walls do not need insulation. Avoidable exterior walls, for instance, are gaps between buildings. Each gap wastes through the exterior walls for each floor the heat equivalent of an entire flat. In Dortmund North, for instance, 70 building gaps were recorded per square kilometre, most of them five stories high. Instead of filling them, modern architecture follows the mantra of 'detached housing' and designs ever more building gaps on the urban fringe, one for every detached property. Whereas a terraced house has only three exterior surfaces a detached house has five, 67 per cent more. What for?⁵

Example Deutsche Bahn: The myopic business and investment outlook of Deutsche Bahn is leading to a destruction of lines, capacities, and staffing. These measures will have to be reversed one day, with great expenses, under the pressure of rising petrol prices and the costs of individual transport, as is currently happening with the senseless canalisation of rivers, the building of mass estates and tower blocks in the 1960s.

Example solar energy production: Even here where ecology is the prime focus, we encounter waste for the sake of profit. It would be imperative in the first instance to use all roofs and south-facing walls as cost-free scaffolds for the purpose of harvesting solar energy. Thus production of energy would be decentralised, brought closer to users and would thus avoid loss through transport. It would also improve the aesthetic of our post-war architecture. Instead, new mega-constructions with costly support structures are slapped over open stretches of yet unspoilt countryside.⁶

Example biogas production: instead of processing in the first place the millions of tons of waste already available in agriculture and forestry, all refuse deriving from clearing and shredding (e.g. along the motorways), all rape stalks and grain straw as well as potato plant leaves, these millions of tons are left to rot, and so-called renewable resources are planted on specially marked out green-field sites as competing food stuff.

All this wasting is not by omission. It is politically and economically sanctioned. More than anything, it is serving 'unproductive money expansion', and through its machination, the accumulation of private money assets. As this wealth is to over 50 per cent in the hands of the richest 10 per cent, all waste amounts to one thing: serving the rich.

The business of the whitewashers

All this is permanently justified and swept under the carpet with the most abstruse arguments. Whole cohorts of zeitgeist-matadors, compliant scientists and other whitewashers

Subject articles

prance about with their books and on tele-screens. According to the Greenpeace Black Book, 32 politicians in office and 28 retired ones are in the service of energy companies. A ferocious propaganda marathon is unleashed: climate conferences, empty commitments, appeals, stickers, EU contracts without sanctions, etc. – the great climate hysteria! ‘Help...the Earth is melting’, carries a headline of ‘Der Spiegel’.⁷ George Bush had gathered once again the ‘willing ones’ around him, this time the world’s biggest polluters. An actual ‘executive director’ of the UN was pleased to announce that economic growth had eventually overtaken the production of climate pollutants.⁸ Meanwhile, the industrial nations are gloating the North would benefit from climate change: palm trees along the North Sea and rhinos in the Thames – the Tertiary all over again. Anyway, he mused, it would only hit the already poor ones in the South. Other soothsayers want to make us believe the catastrophe could be averted through energy-efficient bulbs and time switches.⁹ This is an attempt to divert attention from their own much more severe misdemeanours:

- from the wars of the West, before the beginning of which already greedy reconstruction conferences are held,
- from the waste of lighting energy in our nocturnal glitter towns whose mayors organise ‘light festivals’ and ‘light competitions’ with ‘light installations’ and floppy-hat wearing ‘light artists’ for the purpose of regenerating their city centres; the flip side of this glitter is the palls of smoke emitted by the power stations,
- from the energy-wasting northern and all-round facades of glass towers of company headquarters, which look the same wherever you go - in Montreal wastefully heated and in Sao Paulo wastefully cooled,
- from the empty spaces of public buildings, among them our universities which, due to vacation, holidays, inefficient use of space, stand empty for 85 per cent of the year but have to be heated and kept clean 100 per cent of the time,

- from millions of tons of futile printed promotion material dropped into our letter boxes, etc.

How many light switches will have to be turned off for how long to compensate for the voyage of a single US aircraft carrier to Iraq and the deployment of its fighter planes?

Sundry conservative philosophers will make us believe Nature cannot be destroyed. The product of destruction, too, would be Nature and be intended by Nature, for the culprit, Man, is part of Nature too.¹⁰ To avoid such sophisms and gratuitous licence it would be better to speak not of 'nature' but of 'evolution'. Billions of lifeless celestial bodies are Nature too.

Our planet, however, is so very precious because, with only a tick of a cosmic second, it has reached a very high standard of evolution. Progress can be measured but evolution is always disentanglement, always the building of new, previously never existing potentials. This can only be achieved by consuming less than is being reproduced. Its opposite is an irreversible mixture, a regression to lost potentials, entropy, refuse, litter. It is achieved by continuously consuming more than can be reproduced. This principle applies equally and summarily to the evolution of Nature as to the evolution of Culture. As long as 'unproductive money expansion' carries on without check, there will be neither restraint nor justice, never mind sustainability. Coal and oil can only be consumed but never be replenished. So-called 'more efficient' coal-based power stations are only extending the consumption for a little while, and they will not be operating before 2020. All lasting solutions require the use of the Sun, be it active or passive, direct or indirect (e.g. through bio-gas).

Solar energy is inexhaustible, soft, decentralised, and not primarily business inclined. It does not therefore per se favour the 'unproductive money expansion'. Solar energy is the door to the world of post-capitalism.

If the exit from fossil energies tied to big business and 'unproductive money expansion' fails, then it would be perfectly possible, as happened so frequently in history, of a sensible beginning to turn into something calamitous, namely the early success of industrialisation into disaster. Everything would pass in accordance with the time-honoured pattern: ascent, flowering, descent. Finally plutocrats would reign over combustion waste. For the first time in history the demise of a system could bring down the entire globe with it. We may then be faced with the choice of what to consign to the waste bin: Globe or Capitalism? How would we vote then?

Translation: Lutz Luithlen

Sources and comments:

1. The context of these issues is to be found in the publications Nr. 30*, 32*, 46*, 48* of the time 1990-95.
2. See thereto Guenther Moewes: "Über Wertschöpfung und Abschöpfung" in *Humanwirtschaft* 02/2007.
3. See thereto the contributions of the author in *Humanwirtschaft* 04/2006 and 06/2006.
4. Ackermann (Chief Executive of Deutsche Bank), Hartz (Director of the VW Personnel Board) and Landowsky (Berlin politician) were all defendants in well-publicised German corruption trials which ended in surprising acquittals.
5. See also publ. Nr. 46*, 48*, 49* (1995) and 77* (1999).
6. See also publ. Nr. 77* (1999) and 87*, 95* (2006).
7. *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 19/2007.
8. Achim Steiner: "Die Welt ist gar nicht so schlecht", in *Die Zeit*, 31.05.2007.
9. Among others the Australian Minister President.
10. See thereto in detail publ. Nr. 29* (1990).
See: www.quenthermoewes.de