



## Marx on colonial Ireland: A Dialectical Inquiry.

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**Abstract:** *This article provides a new insight into Marx's understanding of colonialism. In highlighting the method of dialectical inquiry used by Marx in an undelivered speech document (November 1867) it reveals how the essential structure of British colonial domination of Ireland, was not just a condition of existence of economic or political dependency but a constantly evolving social process, which moved through differing phases of development. As a systematic process of colonial repression, it penetrated all aspects of the Irish social formation and to such an extent that the colonised had to live under 'abominable conditions of existence'.<sup>2</sup>*

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The MEGA (Marx – Engels Gesamtausgabe) (publication of the entire works of Marx and Engels) is revolutionising our understanding of Marx’s dialectical methodology and thereby our perception of the workings of the real world. In opening a window on Marx’s conceptualising procedures, we finally gain an insight into how Hegel’s work influenced Marx’s development of his dialectical analysis<sup>3</sup>. The more we uncover the ‘inner workings’ of his dialectical technique, the more we are assured we can move the dialectic beyond Marx and develop it ourselves as an analytical tool that can not only revolutionize our understanding of our contemporary world but also allow us to revolutionize that world.

This article attempts to embrace the same emancipatory spirit of the MEGA project and accordingly to release Marx’s pronouncements on Ireland from its perceived empirical straitjacket<sup>4</sup> to reveal not only a dynamic dialectical framework but also a colonial dialectic which determined the Irish organic totality. Accordingly, my task is as much about excavating the underlying conceptual structure as it is about reproducing what Marx stated about colonised Ireland.

In a previous work, I (with Terrence McDonough) suggested that Marx’s (and Engels) perception of colonial Ireland was not to see it as an unchanging condition of existence

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<sup>3</sup>N. Levine, ‘Hegel and the 1861-3 manuscripts of Das Kapital’, *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 14, issue 4, (2002) pp.47-58, p.48.

<sup>4</sup>According to Stephen Howe – ‘Marx and Engels did write extensively on Ireland, though mainly in private letters and in their journalism. Those writings have attracted a vast body of subsequent commentary, but despite some rather pious claims by later Irish Marxists, they do not amount to a comprehensive treatment of the Anglo-Irish question, or its placement in some general theory of imperialism’, S. Howe, ‘Historiography’, in *Ireland and the Empire*, edited by K. Kenny, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p.246.

but an ever-evolving process of domination. This process of colonialism was constantly passing through phases of evolution and its political structure was made up of a number of distinct factions, which were at times competing with each other for dominance within the structure of the colonising regime<sup>5</sup>. Here I want to move the analysis on by proposing that Marx attempted to comprehend this organic totality of a colonised Ireland dialectically and I will attempt to ‘unearth’ this method of procedure. There is more to this conceptual endeavour of Marx than just the application of a dialectical framework, in that the actual empirical object of investigation was outside the confines of his original problematic of the capitalist mode of production and beyond the empirical boundaries of Britain. Recently, Anderson<sup>6</sup> (2010) has suggested that the mature Marx was not only working on ‘margins’ of capitalism, - in the sense of those margins were non-western societies - but also that his problematic had moved from a near totally exclusive economic object of investigation as conceptualised in the mode of production to a much more non-reductionist totality, which included a wide range of non-economic aspects:

Marx’s mature social theory revolved around a concept of totality that not only offered considerable scope for particularity and difference but also on occasion made those particulars – race, ethnicity, or nationality - determinants for the

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<sup>5</sup>E. Slater and T. McDonough, ‘Marx on nineteenth-century Ireland: analysing colonialism as a dynamic social process’, *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. xxvi, no. 142, (2008) pp.153-172.

<sup>6</sup>K. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies*, (University of Chicago Press, London, 2010).

totality. Such was the case when he held that an Irish national revolution might be the “lever” that would help to overthrow capitalism in Britain <sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, as in Anderson’s suggestion, Ireland was one of these non-reductionist totalities that Marx engaged with in his ‘mature social theory’ - those that were at the margins of capitalism. In addition, being at the margin meant not only being ‘non-western’ but also non-capitalist and as was often the case in the nineteenth century, being colonised as well! In Marx’s opinion, Ireland certainly fitted into these latter categories. Ireland was a totality that was determined by not only Anderson’s ‘particulars of race, ethnicity and nationalism’ but also by being non-capitalist and colonised. As we are going to uncover, every totality has a predominant determinant, which ‘shapes’ the overall structure of the totality and the ‘particulars’ within. In the case of Ireland and Marx’s understanding of it, it is colonialism that is the ‘general illumination, which bathes all the other colours, and modifies their particularity’<sup>8</sup>. However, if this is so, a crucial question remains to be answered and that is how does Capitalism operate in or penetrate into a totality dominated by colonialism? David Norman Smith in his discussion of Marx’s later writings on ethnology suggests that ‘Capitalism, as Marx had always argued, is an essentially dynamic system, which grows at the expense of the non-capitalist world. The ultimate tendency of this “metabolism” with the outside world is to break down the barriers that keep capital at bay’<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.* p.244.

<sup>8</sup>K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1973). p.107.

<sup>9</sup> D. N. Smith, 2002, ‘Accumulation and the clash of cultures: Marx’s ethnology in context’, *Rethinking Marxism*, vol.14, issue 4. (2002) pp.73-83, p.82.

I hope to prove that the determining ‘barrier’ which, kept capital at bay in the Irish case was colonialism itself. And if this is so the answer to Smith’s following on question becomes crucial to our understanding not only of colonialism but also of capitalism, but especially ‘capitalism’ at the margin - ‘So what, then does capital encounter in its outward spiral?’<sup>10</sup>

Marx introduced this new Irish ‘problematic’ in a short article published in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on 11<sup>th</sup> of July 1853, entitled ‘The Indian Question – Irish Tenant Right’. Within, Marx summarised the extent of English rule in Ireland in the following:

England has subverted the conditions of Irish society. At first it confiscated the land then it suppressed the industry by ‘Parliamentary enactments’, and lastly, it broke the active energy<sup>11</sup> by armed force. And thus England created those abominable ‘conditions of society’ which enable a small caste of rapacious lordlings to dictate to the Irish people the terms on which they shall be allowed to hold the land and live upon it<sup>12</sup>.

In summarising these ‘abominable’ conditions of subversion, Marx, I want to propose, was in fact highlighting the essential characteristics of the British colonial misrule. What we can take from this succinct synopsis of his understanding of Ireland in the 1850s is that to explicate these colonial ‘conditions of Irish society (including its economy)’, we

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.* p.82.

<sup>11</sup>By including the concept of the ‘active energy’ of Irish society, Marx is constructing his framework to allow for the possibility of Irish masses mobilizing and resisting these colonial impositions and thereby incorporating active agency within the dialectical relationship between the colonised and the colonising.

<sup>12</sup>K. Marx and F. Engels, 1971, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971). p.61.

need to be able to assess the degree of subversion operating throughout the entire structure of the Irish social formation. Even within the above brief quotation, we get a sense that Marx's object of inquiry is not just confined to a mode of production as it was in his major opus, *Capital*, but includes other societal levels beyond the economic. These levels therefore include not only the economic ('industry'), but also the political ('Parliamentary enactments'), the repressive state apparatus ('armed force'(s)), the legal system ('dictate ... terms'), and civil society ('the active energy' of 'the Irish people'). Consequently, Marx is essentially concerned with analysing as he stated in the opening line of the quotation, 'the conditions of a society', which were apparently made up of a number of levels. In fact, it is an 'organic totality' of a society colonised! Nevertheless, this new theoretical object of investigation is not only multi-layered, it is also moving as indicated by the sequence of events created by the use of 'at first ... then ... and lastly'. Furthermore, if it is moving, it is a process, in which its diverse moments enfold themselves into a mediated totality. Marx in the following captures the necessary sense of movement involved in a totality, which is an organic system/process:

This organic system itself, as a totality, has its presuppositions, and its development to its totality consists precisely in subordinating all elements to itself, or creating out of it the organs which it still lacks. This is historically how it becomes a totality.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p.278.

And in ‘subordinating all elements to itself’ an organic totality becomes an ‘internal law-governed structure’<sup>14</sup> in which one essential structure (process) becomes dominant - ‘In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is a general illumination, which bathes all the other colours, and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it.’<sup>15</sup>

Paul Lafargue, Marx’s son-in-law stated that Marx ‘did not see a thing singly, in itself and for itself, separate from its surroundings; he saw a highly complicated world in continual motion’<sup>16</sup>. This ontological view of the concrete world is supported by Marx’s own words from 1842 in which he refers to ‘the contents of the world’ as an ‘unorganised mass of the whole’ with a ‘fluid essence of the content’.<sup>17</sup> Ilyenkov argued that Marx perceived any individual entity as essentially a moment within a process: ‘That means that any individual object, thing, phenomenon, or fact is given a certain concrete form of its existence by the concrete process in the movement of which it happens to be involved;...’<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, the implication of this ontological perspective is that in order to interpret reality we cannot remain at the surface/appearance level of a totality, but we

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<sup>14</sup> E. Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s Capital*. (Progress Publishers, Moscow.1982). p.84

<sup>15</sup>Marx, *Grundrisse*. p.107.

<sup>16</sup>P. Lafargue, in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Moscow, p. 78, quoted from B. Ollman, *Alienation: Marx’s Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, (Cambridge University Press, London, 1971). p.280.

<sup>17</sup> K. Marx, *MECW*, vol.1, (Lawrence and Wishart, Moscow. 1975). p.233.

<sup>18</sup>Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s Capital*. p.118.

must enter the inner ‘workings’ of that totality. For Marx, empirical data as expressed in ‘... empirical correlations as needing to be explained and for him to explain them meant above all to unearth the *mechanisms* through which they are brought about, and behind them their *conditions*’<sup>19</sup> (author’s emphasis) and this search for the ‘mechanisms’ and ‘conditions’ entails uncovering of the ‘inner essential determination’ of these empirical entities.<sup>20</sup> However, Arthur warns us that ‘organic totalities’ are difficult entities to enter conceptually - ‘The problem we face is that a totality cannot be presented immediately, its articulation has to be exhibited; in doing that we have to make a start with some aspect of it’.<sup>21</sup>

In a little referred to section in *Theories of Surplus Value, Part 2*, Marx distinguished between two contrasting approaches to investigating concrete phenomena. Historically, in the development of the science of political economy, the first and necessary stage of investigation ‘takes the external phenomena of life, as they seem and appear and merely describes, catalogues, recounts and arranges them under formal definitions’<sup>22</sup>. If this is the only method of investigation used it:- ‘leads to erroneous

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<sup>19</sup>D. Sayer, *Marx’s Method: Ideology, Science and Critique in Capital*. (The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1979). p.114.

<sup>20</sup> G. Starosta, ‘The Commodity-form and the Dialectical Method: On the Structure of Marx’s Exposition in Chapter 1 of Capital’, *Science & Society*, vol.72, no.3, (2008), pp. 295-318, p.301.

<sup>21</sup> C. Arthur, *The New Dialectic and Marx’s Capital*, (Brill, the Netherlands, 2004). p.25.

<sup>22</sup>K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value, Part 2*. (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1969). p.165.



results because it omits some essential links and *directly* seeks to prove the congruity of the economic categories with one another'<sup>23</sup>.

In the development of a science, this empirical 'method of approach' has to be superseded by a more analytical form of investigation, which 'traces the intrinsic connection existing between economic categories or the obscure structure of the bourgeois economic system'<sup>24</sup>. In short, it 'penetrate(s) the inner physiology of bourgeois society'<sup>25</sup> which 'extract(s) the quintessence out of the divergency and diversity of the various phenomena'<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, for Marx the truly scientific endeavour is characterised by the latter approach. In this dialectical approach, Marx actually suggests that there are two necessary conceptual trajectories to follow, in order to analyse an organic totality dialectically:

The presentation of the whole ... as a rich totality of many determinations and relations is done by firstly discovering through analysis a small number of determinant abstract, general relations ... As soon as these individual moments had been more or less firmly established and abstracted, there began economic systems. Then begins the second 'path', [where] 'the abstract determination leads towards a reproduction of the concrete – the concrete is concrete because it is the concentrations of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse. It is 'the

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* p.165.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.* p.165.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.* p.165.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.* p.169.

method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is [the] only way<sup>27</sup> (emphasis added).

What we take from these complex assertions concerning the methodological techniques of Marx's analysis is that there appear to be two diametrically opposing trajectories involved in conceptualising an 'organic totality'. The initial procedure of analysis, Marx identified as the method of inquiry, which is differentiated from the method of exposition (presentation):

Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction.

The initial path or trajectory of the method of inquiry involves the 'descend from the concrete to the abstract'<sup>28</sup> is about uncovering 'a small number of determinant general relations' (Marx, above quotation) and thus explicating 'their forms of intercourse'<sup>29</sup> within the totality. This is how the dialectical method of inquiry is able to get beneath the surface of an organic totality and to arrive finally at the abstract inner connections of its

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<sup>27</sup>Marx, *Grundrisse*. p. 100/1.

<sup>28</sup> Sayer, *Marx's Method: Ideology, Science and Critique in Capital*. p.96.

<sup>29</sup>K. Marx, Preface, [1867], *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1976). p.90.

essential determination. This ‘inner connexion’ of ‘a small number of determinant general relations’ is not a thing-like structural core but a process<sup>30</sup>, which is an ‘active middle’.

Marx in his discussion of how capital is the essential determinant of the capitalist organic totality locates capital as the ‘active middle’ (process) between ground rent and wage labour:

The inner construction of modern society, or, capital in the totality of its relations, is therefore posited in the economic relations of modern landed property, which appears as a process; ground rent – capital – wage labour (the form of the circle can be put the another way; as wage-labour – capital – ground rent; but capital must always appear as the active middle.<sup>31</sup> (emphasis added).

What Marx is suggesting here is that not only is the relationship between modern rent, capital and wage-labour a process which forms a circle with capital as its core but also this capital-core is itself a process because it is not just a middle but an ‘active middle’. Consequently, the initial trajectory of Marx’s conceptualisation of the organic totality is not only to uncover these ‘internal relations’<sup>32</sup> but to explicate them as mediating processes, which has a determining active middle process. Having arrived at this point of being able to reveal the internal law-governed active middle, which we now have identified as the essential moving process of the totality, the trajectory of conceptualising

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<sup>30</sup>Marx stated in his preface to his German edition of Capital: ‘... the present society is no solid crystal, but an organism capable of change, and is constantly changing’ *Ibid.* p.28.

<sup>31</sup>Marx, *Grundrisse*. p.276.

<sup>32</sup>B. Ollman, *Alienation: Marx’s Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*. (Cambridge University Press, London, 1971).

is now reversed and ‘then begins the second “path” ‘of rising from the abstract to the concrete’<sup>33</sup>. This final path has been described by Marx as his method of exposition (presentation) where the ‘active middle’<sup>34</sup> of the totality is a process in which this ‘abstract determinations leads to a reproduction of the concrete’<sup>35</sup> conceptually.

We have in our possession two already published works in which Marx attempts to engage in unravelling the colonial conditions, which Britain imposed upon Ireland. These two pieces were originally handwritten in manuscript form - notes on an undelivered speech (26 November 1867) (six printed pages) and a delivered speech (16 December 1867) (fourteen printed pages). Although, these works are short and much of the assertions are in note form, but it should not be forgotten that the documents were not just intended for self-clarification but were composed to be presented to an audience. In this context, Marx must be seen to be attempting to give a consistent and coherent account of this particular subject matter. I believe the coherence of the speech documents is achieved, by his use of an underlying conceptual apparatus, which determine Marx’s methods of inquiry and exposition and the difference between them. It is the method of inquiry, which is embedded in the *Undelivered Speech* of 26<sup>th</sup> November that I want to examine in detail in this article and the explication of the conceptual apparatus of the method of exposition of the *Delivered Speech* of 16<sup>th</sup> December will have to wait for another occasion.

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<sup>33</sup>Marx, *Grundrisse*. p.101.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.* p.276.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.* p.101.

With regard to explicating the dialectics of the Irish colonial organic totality from Marx's speech documents of November and December of 1867, the analytical structure of the arguments appear to be quite different. The contrasting ordering of the subheadings of the speeches as the following suggests indicates this difference:

### **Opposing Trajectories of Marx's Dialectical Paths of Analysis**

| <i>Undelivered Speech</i>                    | <i>Delivered Speech</i>                      |
|--|--|
| Decrease in Population                       | <u><i>Clearing the estate of Ireland</i></u> |
| Increase in Livestock                        | Decrease of yield...of crops                 |
| Emigration                                   | Decrease of Population                       |
| How the Process works                        | Emigration                                   |
| Process of Consolidation                     | Decrease of the Natural Annual Accretion     |
| <u><i>Clearing the estate of Ireland</i></u> | Physical Depreciation of the Population      |
| Change of character of English Rule          | wages  |
| In Ireland                                   | The results of the Process                   |
|  | Consolidation of farms                       |

In contrasting the sequence of the speech document's subheadings, it becomes obvious that they are structured along two contrasting paths of conceptual unfolding with regard to investigating the colonial phase of 'Clearing the estate of Ireland'. In the *Undelivered Speech*, Marx begins with the subheading of the 'Decrease in Population' and moves through various concrete levels to arrive at the penultimate level of 'Clearing the Estate of Ireland'. This reflects the necessary trajectory of the dialectical method of inquiry of descending from the concrete to the abstract essential process of this colonial organic totality. While, in the *Delivered Speech*, the ordering of the subheadings is nearly diametrically the opposite, where Marx begins with the 'Clearing of the Estate of Ireland' – the abstract middle process – and then moves through again various concrete levels to

come to the essential concrete form of the ‘consolidation of farms’ in the post-Famine period. Accordingly, the architectural form of the conceptual movement of the *Delivered Speech* is determined by Marx’s dialectical method of exposition and its determining trajectory of ascending from the abstract to the concrete – ‘of ascent from the abstract to the concrete’<sup>36</sup>

However, in this article I am only explicating dialectical form of investigation/inquiry as in the *Undelivered Speech*. With regard to his method of inquiry, Kosik has suggested that Marx’s framework involved three stages:

- ‘1. Appropriating the material in detail, mastering it to the last historically accessible detail.
2. Analysing its different forms of development.
3. Tracing out their internal connections, i.e. determining the unity of different forms in the development of the material’<sup>37</sup>.

The first two stages as indicated by Kosik are concerned with the empirical appropriation of data and locating the apparent correlation between them, the final stage is about ‘unearthing’ the ‘very complicated mass of interconnected processes of development mutually interacting and altering forms of their manifestation’<sup>38</sup>. As Marx unfolds these

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<sup>36</sup> Discussion of Marx’s Method, part ,1 by S. Kuruma <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kuruma/method-discussion1.htm>

<sup>37</sup>K. Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete: A Study of Problems of Man and World*. (D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, Holland, 1976). p.15.

<sup>38</sup>Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s Capital*, p.135.

empirical processes as internally connected, their subsequent enfolding suggests that the last process presented engulfs the previous ones and they all form ‘moments’ of an enlarging ‘spiral’ type entity, shaped like an ever ‘expanding curve’ *rather* than a ‘simple circle’<sup>39</sup> Their internal moving interaction implies mutual conditionality, where development assumes a form of a spiral as Ilyenkov proposes:

This dialectics of all real development ... in which the condition becomes conditioned, the cause its effect, the universal becomes the particular, is the characteristic feature of internal interaction through which actual development assumes the form of a circle or, to be more precise of a spiral which extends the scope of its motion all the time, with each new turn.<sup>40</sup>

Ilyenkov therefore suggests that in his method of inquiry Marx descends from the concrete to the abstract in search of the essential active middle process. This descent is achieved by ‘dissolving’ concrete entities as they appear on the surface of society into moments of processes that unfold from each other and thus create not only an internal network of relationships but also one that is in a state of flux<sup>41</sup>. Consequently, this general process of unfolding develops into a spiral hierarchy of internally related processes as the emerging processes unfold and encompass all the previous unfolded processes. Therefore, although, the overall movement in this method of inquiry is one from the concrete

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<sup>39</sup>K. Marx, 1861-63, ‘Theories of Surplus Value’: *MECW*, vol. 31, (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1989), p.266.

<sup>40</sup>Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s Capital*. p.115.

<sup>41</sup>Marx in discussing the dialectical understanding of concrete reality stated that ‘every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence...’ (Marx, 1873, French Preface to *Capital*).

empirical entities towards the more abstract internally related processes, those abstract processes resurface now and again to incorporate new empirical moments<sup>42</sup>.

The major technical problem with Marx's method of presentation in these 'speech' pieces is that many of the conceptual formulations are written in note form, - condensed and compressed, as is the norm with speech note constructions. In dealing with the note form difficulty, I propose that we can incorporate the more developed conceptualisations from other published sources, which are dealing with the same subject matter but in a more extended format. Since, both texts come from the pen of Marx, I attempt to bring in to our exposition here, Marx's own formulations from these other sources - newspaper articles, sections from *Capital*, (of particular importance is 'Section 5 (f) Ireland from chapter 25 of vol. 1 (17 pages) and finally Marx's letter correspondence to various people but especially with Engels (and in certain cases Engels' own formulations). I also attempt to use those formulations which are closest to the particular timeframe of original texts, - November and December of 1867 and to help the reader, I present the material quoted from the *Undelivered Speech* in italics

Consequently, I have attempted to follow a sequence of priority insertion of the more extended formulations into the text here, firstly from Marx's own works, then Engels. I believe I can do this without destroying the explanatory power of Marx's analytical framework, because within these two speech manuscripts there is an essential architectonic framework that structures the logic of presentation.

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<sup>42</sup>J. Banaji, 'From the Commodity to Capital: Hegel's Dialectic in Marx's Capital' in *Value: Representation of Labour in Capitalism: Essays*, edited by D. Elson, (CSE Books, London, 1979). p.27.



As I am attempting to explicate Marx's theoretical framework from the *Undelivered Speech* document here, I believe it is necessary to follow the logic of his argument as it unfolds, especially since it is dialectically constructed. Therefore, most of my work is concerned with interpreting what Marx is saying. However, beyond the appearance of the empirical arguments there is an essential abstract conceptual process, which is determining the architectonic structure of the arguments. In order to highlight this 'hidden' conceptual movement it is necessary to break off from our interpreting endeavours to discuss in detail the underlying and unfolding theoretical apparatus. To do this, I have divided the paper into three sections. The first section has dealt with the concept of a colonised society being an organic totality. The second section is about interpreting what Marx is saying about the Irish colonial situation. Moreover, the final one attempts to make explicit Marx's dialectical framework with regard to his method of inquiry into colonial Ireland.

In a letter to Engels dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 1867, Marx tells his friend that he was relieved that at the General Council of the International Working Men's Association meeting (26<sup>th</sup> November) he was not called upon to talk on Fenianism. The reasons he gave for his relief was that he had a 'troublesome physical condition', caused by a fever that lasted a fortnight and 'passed only two days ago'<sup>43</sup>. And secondly that the subject matter of the meeting, Fenianism, 'was liable to inflame the passions to such heat that I would be forced to hurl revolutionary thunderbolts instead of soberly analysing the state

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<sup>43</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.146.

of affairs and the movement as I had intended'<sup>44</sup>. However, Marx then goes onto to admit that he was actually ill-prepared - 'As a matter of fact what I prepared for Tuesday last was not a speech but points of a speech'<sup>45</sup>.

Just over three weeks later, on December 16, Marx finally gave his 'Fenian' speech to the Communist Educational Association of German Workers in London. Accordingly, we now possess copies of his undelivered speech notes for November 26 meeting – *Notes* and his delivered speech of the December 16 - *Outline*. By contrasting these now published texts, I believe that we have an opportunity to explore how Marx 'works up' his material dialectically. We have evidence from this period that Engels was apparently assessing Marx's intellectual endeavours for the explanatory effectiveness of his dialectical expositions.<sup>46</sup> Here, I will be concentrating on the post-Famine period because Marx dealt with this phase of colonialism in more depth than any of the other identified phases.

We begin with the manuscript of the undelivered speech *Notes* of November 26, 1867, which is now titled *Notes for an undelivered speech on Ireland*.

Marx divides his *Notes* under a number of subheadings, which are *Exordium*. The Execution (two paragraphs), *The Question*, What is Fenianism? (One sentence – 'What is Fenianism?'), *The Land Question*. (Three pages), *The English People*. (Half page) and finally, *The Remedy*. (Two sentences). The first subheading he entitled *I. Exordium. The*

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<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.* p.147.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.* p.146.

<sup>46</sup>'Compared with your earlier form of presentation, the progress in the sharpness of dialectical exposition is quite striking'. (Engels to Marx, [16.6.1867], K. Marx and F. Engels, *MECW*, vol.42, (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1987), p.382.

*Execution*, where Marx refers to the recent execution of three Fenians, - Larkin, Allen and O'Brien, as 'Political Executions' and this has subsequently politicised the struggle despite the British establishment's attempt to continue to criminalise the Fenians and their activities:

*Since our last meeting the object of our discussion, Fenianism, has entered a new phase. It is baptized in blood by the English Government. [...] They (political executions at Manchester) open a new period in the struggle between Ireland and England. The whole Parliament and liberal press responsible. Gladstone. Reason: to keep up the hypocrisy that this was no political, but a criminal affair<sup>47</sup>.*

Section 2 on Fenianism is blank without any written comments, which supports Marx's earlier comment that this manuscript was an unfinished outline of a speech. However, Section 3: the Land Question makes up the bulk of the manuscript and is subdivided under the following subheadings:

***Decrease in Population, Increase of Livestock from 1855 to 1866, Emigration, How the Process Works, Consolidation and Change of Character of the English Rule in Ireland.***

In the first subsection entitled the *Decrease of Population*, Marx presents a statistical table, which revealed that in the twenty-five-year period, from 1841 to 1866, the population had decreased by 2,650,693<sup>48</sup>. Nevertheless, even in the last eleven years of this period, - 1855 to 1866, the population decreased by 1,032,694<sup>49</sup>. In the following

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<sup>47</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.120.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.* p.121.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.* p.121.

subsections, - *Increase of livestock from 1855 to 1866 and Emigration*, Marx statistically demonstrated that the continuing decline of the Irish rural population was diametrically contrasted with an increase in livestock - *'in the same period from 1855 to 1866 the number of livestock... [had a] ...total increase of live-stock: 996,877, about one million. Thus 1,032,694 Irish men have been displaced by about one million cattle, pigs, and sheep.'*<sup>50</sup>

And in correlating these 'movements of population and agricultural produce'<sup>51</sup> within this particular time Marx is suggesting that they are connected to each other through a third empirical trend of emigration, as he answers the question, concerning population loss- *'What has become of them? The emigration list answers. From 1<sup>st</sup> May 1851 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1866: 1,730,189.'*<sup>52</sup>

The now revealed relationship between these three concrete movements of human and livestock populations and emigration is that these are now posited as moments in a mediated process and crucially it expands upon being enfolded by two other concrete processes of farm consolidation and the conversion of tillage to pasture:

*'The process has been brought about and is still functioning upon an always enlarging scale by the throwing together or consolidation of farms (eviction) and the simultaneous conversion of tillage to pasture.'*<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.* p.121.

<sup>51</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, p.859.

<sup>52</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.121.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.* p.121.

Having identified the enfolding connection between these empirical processes within in Irish social formation, Marx is not just locating the dominant specific historical trends of this period here he is also initially establishing the empirical dimensions of the organic totality to be analysed.

Marx in a following subsection title sets about uncovering:

*'How the Process works'*

This title implies that the mediated process of land consolidation and the increase in pasture is itself being superseded by, as yet an unnamed process which apparently dominates the previously identified processes. We can begin to detect that Marx is unravelling a totalising ensemble of enfolding processes, which are simultaneously constructing an ever-evolving hierarchy of processual levels in a spiral-shaped movement. Marx begins his unravelling of this unnamed process by returning to the empirical areas of population movements and soil productivity. This time he attempts to assess the qualitative decline in the well-being of the majority of the population and the productivity of the Irish soil, which can be summarised in the following:

(a). The People: Deterioration in the overall well-being of the 'mass of the people' (near famine conditions and a decline in real wages)<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.* p.122.

(b). The Land: Deterioration in the soil fertility and its average output (dramatic decline in cereals, especially wheat where Ireland has moved from being an exporter to being an importer)<sup>55</sup>.

Therefore, with a massive exodus of people through continuing emigration, the remaining population and their conditions of production have experienced a deterioration of their conditions of existence in stark contrast to what certain ideologues were advocating for the continuing necessity of more emigration. Marx in an earlier piece of writing (1853) challenged the misconceived optimism of this position:

Like the world in general, we are assured, that Ireland in particular is becoming a paradise for the labourer, in consequence of famine and exodus. Why then, if wages really are so high in Ireland, is it that Irish labourers are flocking in such masses over to England to settle permanently on this side of the ‘pond’, while they formerly used to return after every harvest?<sup>56</sup>

And with regard to the determination of the apparent loss of soil fertility, Marx again locates the importance of farm consolidation but this time with regard to the subsequent elimination of the cottier class through emigration - *‘Since the exodus, the land has been underfed and overworked, partly by the injudicious consolidation of farms, and partly because under corn-acre the farmer in a great measure trusted to his labourers to manure the land for them’*<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.* p.122.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.* p.66.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.* p.122.

What Marx is referring to here is that the nutrients of the soil that are lost in agricultural production, especially in the production of commodities, are not replaced by nature itself<sup>58</sup>. They have to be physically put back into the soil in order to restore the ‘natural’ fertility through various types of manuring processes. The cottiers and the small tenants replaced the ‘lost’ soil constituents by manuring the land, but with their exodus, this necessary process of fertilization was stopped, consequently depriving the Irish soil of its ability to sustain its productive fertility<sup>59</sup>. However, the qualitative deterioration of the land and its immediate toilers is then subsequently contrasted with the increasing financial returns of profit and rent. This is apparently the dominant real contradiction of, the post-famine period, - where the soil and its toilers were being ‘sacrificed’ (expropriated of their respective productive powers) for increased money returns - *‘Rent and profits may increase, although the produce of the soil decreases. The total produce may diminish, but that part of it, which is converted into surplus produce, falling to landlord and greater farmers, instead of the labourer’*<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup>Recently John Bellamy Foster has identified this formulation of Marx as the metabolic rift. Marx even used it in the context of colonial Ireland:

[I]t must not be forgotten that for a century and a half, England has indirectly exported the soil of Ireland, without even allowing its cultivators the means for replacing the constituents of the exhausted soil (Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.860).

<sup>59</sup>This clearing of the smallest farm holdings included the cottiers and their tenurial agreement with the tenants of conacre, - ‘cornacre’. The Pre-Famine cottiers rented small plots of land (size varied from half a rood to two acres) from the tenant-farmer, which the cottier generally paid for in labour, - labour days. These plots were used to grow potatoes, which feed the cottier and his family. However, part of the agreement between the tenant and the cottier was that the cottier would ‘fertilize’ the plot, generally with manure or seaweed.

<sup>60</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p. 122/3.

In *Capital*, vol.1 Marx gives a clearer rendition of this conceptualisation of the dominant real contradiction of this post famine period:

The depopulation of Ireland has thrown much of the land out of cultivation, greatly diminished the produce of the soil, and in spite of the greater area devoted to cattle breeding, brought about decline in some of its branches, and in others an advance scarcely worth mentioning, and constantly interrupted by retrogressions. Nevertheless, the rents of the land and the profits of the farmers increased along with the fall in population, though not so steadily as the latter. The reason for this will easily be understood. On the one hand, with the throwing together of the smallholdings, and the change from arable to pasture land a larger part of the total product was transformed into a surplus product. The surplus product increased although there was a decrease in the total product of which the surplus product formed only a fraction. On the other hand, the monetary value of this surplus product increased still more rapidly than its actual quantity, owing to the rise in the price of meat, wool, etc., on the English market<sup>61</sup>.

The financial returns on this type of agricultural production ‘falls’ to the landlords and ‘greater farmers’ because a large proportion of the direct producers are expelled from the immediate production process through emigration, thus allowing more of the production to be given over to being a surplus product, or those that remain are more intensively expropriated of their surplus labour through increases in rent returns and profit taking.

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<sup>61</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.860.



Therefore, the apparent contradictory relationship between the increasing financial returns from production and the loss of soil fertility was intensified by the loss of the potential restorers of that fertility, - the cottiers and small tenants through emigration - ‘*So result: gradual expulsion of the natives, gradual deterioration and exhaustion of the source of life, the soil*’<sup>62</sup>.

Marx continues - ‘*Process of Consolidation. This process has only begun; it is going on in rapid strides*’<sup>63</sup>.

Here again Marx returns to the empirical level in which statistics on the consolidation of landholding reveal not only an increase in farm sizes but they also allow him to project forward these empirical trends of consolidation to predict that if the rate of consolidation is going to continue in its present propensity and reach the English level then more ‘expulsion of the natives’ will be needed - ‘*Thus to be cleared off 2,847,220, if we number only the farmers and their families*’<sup>64</sup>.

The ‘clearing off’ of this supposed surplus population of agriculturalists is not only a process but a systematic one - ‘*This system [is a] natural offspring of the famine of 1846, accelerated by the abolition of the Corn Laws, the rise in the price of meat and wool, now systematic*’<sup>65</sup>.

Therefore, this new process has very divergent moments in its formation as a systematic process. These moments include not only a natural occurrence (The Famine) but also

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<sup>62</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.123.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

economic (price rises) and political (Repeal of the Corn Laws) aspects<sup>66</sup>. In conceptualising it as systematic Marx is proposing that it was not just an immediate reaction to the famine conditions but having come into existence by that event, it became a structural part of the Irish social formation, as he states in the following from *Capital*:

Finally, it is a systematic process, which does not simply make a passing gap in the population, but sucks out of it every year more people than are replaced by births, so that the absolute level of the population falls year by year (footnote – Between 1851 and 1874, the total number of emigrants amounted to 2,325,922)<sup>67</sup>.

Finally, Marx identifies this crucial determining process:

*‘Clearing the estate of Ireland...’*

It is significant that Marx used the concept of the ‘estate’ in naming the process of land clearance in that it not only ‘equates’ Ireland with being essentially an extended landed estate and simultaneously emphasises that it is an industrial wasteland having already been deindustrialised by an earlier phases of colonial oppression. Marx continues the sentence by highlighting the consequence of this ‘clearing the estate of Ireland’ - ‘... *transforming*

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<sup>66</sup>The Repeal of the Corn Laws was to be assessed, by Marx as the ‘chief factor’ in his delivered speech document. Kinealy suggests that it was a conscious and deliberate decision by the British Parliament to sacrifice the Irish poor in order to provide cheap food for the British industrial workers (C. Kinealy, p.49. ‘Was Ireland a Colony?’ in *Was Ireland a Colony; Economics, Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, edited by T. McDonough, (Irish Academic Press, 2005, Dublin) And according to Marx this was the normal orientation of the Westminster Government to Ireland as ‘the management of merely local concerns of Ireland... was altogether immaterial to Great Britain’ (K. Marx, and F. Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. (second reprint, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978). p.177.

<sup>67</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.107.

*it into an English agricultural district, minus its resident lords and their retainers, separated from England by a broad water ditch*<sup>68</sup>.

As the Act of Union was the ‘annihilation of the Irish Legislature’<sup>69</sup> the process of estate clearances is the annihilation of Irish civil society and reducing it into being ‘only an agricultural district of England, marked off by a wide channel from the country to which it yields corn, wool, cattle, industrial and military recruits’<sup>70</sup>. In a letter to Engels (November 30 1867) Marx explicitly links the process of ‘Clearing the estate of Ireland’ with the colonising process:

*‘Clearing the estate of Ireland! Is now the one purpose of English rule in Ireland*<sup>71</sup>.

The following and final section unravels the ‘overriding moment’ of the colonising process within this particular organic totality of post-Famine Ireland.

The title of this section ‘*Change of Character of English Rule in Ireland*’ is extremely significant in that it asserts that ‘English Rule in Ireland’ is itself engaged in an evolutionary movement over time - in fact - as a process. Marx proceeds in his explication of this colonial process by looking initially at the contemporary situation and then moving on to examine how that process unfolded over time. Its style of exposition in

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<sup>68</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.123.

<sup>69</sup>Marx and Engels, (second printing), *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.224.

<sup>70</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.p.105.

<sup>71</sup> Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.148.

dense note form needs a lot of elaboration in order to make sense of Marx's ideas here.

The post-Famine manifestation of this colonial process is captured in the following two lines - *'State only a tool of the landlords. Evictions also employed as a means of political punishment. (Lord Abercorn. England, Gaels in the Highland of Scotland'*<sup>72</sup>.

The immediate 'character of English Rule in Ireland' within this post-Famine period is dramatically revealed in the opening statement - *'State only tool of the landlords'*<sup>73</sup>. This provocative assertion makes the link between the dominant overall process of 'Clearing the estate of Ireland' and the political institutions of the state and thereby with the colonial process. Crucially, it is not the obvious institutions of the colonial state that are determining this strategy of clearance but the landlords with the support of the state apparatus. These state institutions included the legal system, the local police force and the army when necessary<sup>74</sup>. And the crucial colonial 'moment' of Irish landlordism in the context of consolidating estate holdings is its ability to use the ultimate form of coercion – eviction - *'Eviction, also employed as a means of political punishment'*<sup>75</sup>.

It is not possible at this stage to ascertain what concrete instances Marx is referring to here. However, there are numerous examples even after the Famine of 'political' evictions. For example, in 1852, a landlord in Mayo evicted 15 tenants because

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<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

<sup>74</sup>As Marx said in 1853 'Legislature, magistracy and armed force, are all of them the offspring of improper conditions of society, preventing those arrangements among men which would make useless the compulsory intervention of a third supreme power' Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.61.

<sup>75</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.123.

of their failure to follow his voting instructions <sup>76</sup>. However, what is significant about this type of eviction is that it can legally exist in the Irish social formation, demonstrating how the Irish peasantry had no legal right to defend themselves against such an unfair imposition of ‘abominable’ legal conditions. Next Marx mentions Lord Abercorn without putting him into a context, but if we refer to his letter to Engels on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1867 we can gain an insight into why Marx was referring to the Irish Viceroy with regard to evictions - ‘The Irish Viceroy, Lord Abercorn, ‘cleared’ his estate in the last few weeks by forcibly evicting thousands of people. Among them were prosperous tenants whose improvements and investments were thus confiscated!’<sup>77</sup>.

The Abercorn reference is followed by the word ‘England’. Marx in his discussion of primitive accumulation stated how ‘in England the conversion of arable land into pasture since the decade prior to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the *enclosures of the commons*, the throwing together of small farms. This is still proceeding’<sup>78</sup>. *Gaels in the Highland Scotland*’ is Marx obviously referring to the Highland clearances in Scotland. These short note-like points are subsequently followed by a crucial presentation of the historical development of English rule in Ireland:

*Former English policy: displacing the Irish by English (Elizabeth), roundheads (Cromwell). Since Anne, 18<sup>th</sup> – century politico-economical character only again in the protectionist measures of England against her own colony making religion*

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<sup>76</sup> T. O’Neill, ‘Famine Evictions’ in C. King (edited) *Famine, Land and Culture in Ireland*, (U.C.D. Press, Dublin, 2000). p.53.

<sup>77</sup> Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p. 143/4.

<sup>78</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *MECW*, vol. 28, [1857-61], (Lawrence and Wishart, Moscow, 1986). p.258.

*a proprietary title. After the Union the system of rack-renting and middlemen, but left the Irish, however ground to the dust, holder of their native soil. Present system, quiet business-like extinction, and government only instrument of landlords (and usurers)*<sup>79</sup>.

With regard to the unfolding of empirical categories here there is a definite change in the style of the presentation. Marx obviously switches to a more chronological approach, which deals with a long sweep of Irish history, running from the twelfth century to mid-nineteenth century, within which he appears to locate seven phases in the evolution of the ‘character of the English rule in Ireland’. The watersheds of these phases are generally indicated by the name on the throne (or Cromwell) or by an event (which was generally catastrophic to Ireland), followed by a brief description of the characteristic traits ‘*of the English rule in Ireland*’, i.e., ‘*displacing the Irish by English*’, ‘*protectionist measures*’, ‘*religion as a proprietary title*’, ‘*rackrenting and middlemen system*’ and finally ‘*the present system of extinction*’<sup>80</sup>. This type of historical presentation establishes not only a sense of continuity of purpose in the English governance of Ireland but it also locates the ‘abstract’ process of colonising as the ‘internal’ and dominating process of these identified historical periods, although there are differences in the *modus operandi* as suggested in the specific historical categories of the strategies adopted.

The concept of the ‘*politico-economical character*’ used by Marx in this paragraph may be significant in his methodological exploration of colonialism, in that it

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<sup>79</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p. 123/4.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.* p.123.

appears to attempt to combine the political regime with its strategy of subjugating the Irish economy/civil society to its own desired aims. Accordingly, it is an abstract general concept (abstract universal) of colonialism, while its specific concrete manifestation within a particular historical period of English rule of Ireland, e.g., '*protectionist measures*', '*rackrenting and middlemen*' appear to take on the forms of the concrete universal within each phase of colonial domination. In a letter to Engels (30<sup>th</sup> November, 1867) Marx actually identified a change of form of the politico-economical character of the post-Famine period '...since 1846 the economic content and therefore also the political domination in Ireland has entered an entirely new phase ...'<sup>81</sup>.

Consequently, the diverse range of colonising strategies and their resultant subverted conditions of existence within Irish society can include cultural, religious, racial, military and of course the economic. In the post-Famine period, these other strategies were dominated by the landlord's strategy of extinction, which therefore emerges as 'active middle' of the colonial process in this particular historical phase of its development. This 'active centre' of clearing the land can be contrasted with the preceding phase of colonialism, 1800-1846, where the 'rackrenting and middlemen' system was the dominant process of the Irish organic totality. This system '*left the Irish ... ground to dust, holder of their native soil*'<sup>82</sup>. Marx suggested that as early as 1853 that part of this super exploitative rental system was its inability to compensate the native tenantry for agricultural improvements. The implication of this moment in the rackrenting

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<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.* p.147.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.* p.123/4.

process was that the direct producers and their essential condition of production - the soil - were both being 'pauperised':

A tenant having incorporated his capital, in one form or another, in the land, and having thus effected an improvement of the soil, either directly by irrigation, drainage, manure, or indirectly by the construction of buildings for agricultural purposes, in steps the landlord with demand for increased rent. If the tenant concedes, he has to pay the interest for his own money to the landlord. If he resists, he will be very unceremoniously ejected, and supplanted by a new tenant, the latter being enabled to pay a higher rent by the very expenses incurred by his predecessors, until he also, in his turn, has become an improver of the land, and is replaced in the same way, or put on worst terms. . . . . He had, accordingly, no other alternative left but to become a pauper – to pauperise himself by industry, or to pauperise by negligence<sup>83</sup>.

The consequence of this type of extreme rental appropriation of, not only the surplus labour (and in extreme cases even part of the necessary labour) of the tenant, but also the tenant's capital invested (mostly through labour) is that there was little to no investment in the improvement of the land. Therefore, even those that 'earned' a rental income such as landlords and middlemen in the pre-Famine period did not invest in agriculture as Marx states - *'Middlemen accumulated fortunes that they would not invest in the improvement of the land, and they could not, under the system which prostrated*

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<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.* p.59/60.



*manufactures, invest in machinery, etc. All their accumulations were sent therefore to England for investment*<sup>84</sup>.

The crucial point to emphasize from Marx's analysis here is that all these highlighted moments of the social processes operating in Irish agriculture suggest that the capitalist mode of production is not in existence in this particular colonial social formation. Marx explicitly states this in vol.3 of *Capital* - '[T]he capitalist mode of production itself does not exist, the tenant himself is not an industrial capitalist, and his manner of farming is not a capitalist one. This is how it is in Ireland, for example. Here the tenant is generally a small peasant'<sup>85</sup>.

Marx then articulates those moments that 'subvert' the productive conditions of the Irish peasantry and these revolve around how the specific rental form disrupts the 'normal' (capitalist) circulation of capital within the overall production process:

What he pays the landowner for his lease often absorbs not only a portion of his profit, i.e. his own surplus labour, which he has a right to as owner of his own instruments of labour, but also a portion of the normal wage, which he would receive for the same amount of labour under other conditions. The landowner, moreover, who does nothing at all here to improve the soil, expropriates from him the small capital, which he incorporates into the soil for the most part by his own

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<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.* p.131.

<sup>85</sup>Karl Marx, *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy*, vol.3, (Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1981). p. 763/4.

labour, just as a usurer would do in similar conditions. Only the usurer would at least risk his own capital in the operation<sup>86</sup>.

What we apparently have in this phase of Irish development is, according to Marx's analysis, colonialism without the capitalist mode of production!

The next phase located in this historical exposition is the post-Famine period, where Marx returns to the particular 'politico-economical character', which is further expanded upon from the opening assertion of the paragraph - '*Present system, quiet business-like extinction, and the government only the instrument of the landlords (and usurers) (emphasis added)*<sup>87</sup>'.

The newly added concepts to the ones in the initial formulation at the beginning of the paragraph are the 'quiet business-like extinction' and the 'usurers' added within brackets. In the latter concept, Marx is probably referring to how the Encumbered Estates Court 'turned a mass of previously enriched middlemen into landlords' (Marx to Engels, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1867, 148)<sup>88</sup>. The 'quiet business-like extinction' relates to how the Irish landlords were the instigators of this type of forced emigration (through eviction or assisted emigration) and they were applying this strategy of 'extinction' on their own individual landed estates. Consequently, the manifestation of this colonial strategy of

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<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.* p.763/4.

<sup>87</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p.124.

<sup>88</sup>Marx in a letter (April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1870) to Engels stated 'that the Encumbered Estates proceedings have put a mass of *small usurers* in place of the turned out flotten landlords' (*Ibid.* p.296) And in his reply the following day, Engels identified the number of estate transfers and the religion and ethnic characteristics of these usurers:

'Land sold since the Encumbered Estates Court amounts according to my notes to as much as 1/5 of the total, the buyers were indeed largely usurers, speculators, etc., *mainly Irish Catholics.* (*Ibid.* p.297).

‘Clearing the estate of Ireland’ was realising itself not only at the local level, within the confines of the immediate landed estates, but also across most of the landed estates in Ireland<sup>89</sup>. Therefore, behind these apparent discrete actions of expulsion there was a collective landlord plan to exterminate the native Irish lower classes as Marx revealed in the late 1850s - ‘The landlords of Ireland are confederated for a fiendish war of extermination against the cott(i)ers; or as they call it, they combine for the economical experiment of clearing the land of useless mouths. The small native tenants are disposed of with no more ado than vermin is by the housemaid’<sup>90</sup>.

However, these Irish landlords were ‘quietly’ going about their ‘business’ of extinction without supposedly the formal consent of the British State and, although this being the case, they were actually using the local apparatuses of that state to carry out their ‘war of extermination’. This was especially true with regard to the necessary legal and physical force requirements in the process of eviction, - the ejectment code etc. In this respect, the colonising British state, especially those apparatuses which maintained social order in the midst of civil turmoil, was being hijacked by these Irish landlords in supporting their actual eviction procedures on the ground by physically assisting the landlord’s crowbar brigade. In referring to this post-Famine colonial strategy of ‘Clearing of the estate of Ireland’, Marx stated in a letter to Engels (November 30, 1867) that ‘The *stupid* English government in London knows nothing of course itself of this immense change since

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<sup>89</sup>Marx was aware that there was a need to ‘aggregate’ the individual actions of the landlords in order to discover the systematic approach to the extinction of the Irish peasantry:

‘The *clearing of estates* only shows, as a *systematic process* applied to whole counties, what occurred everywhere in detail...’ K. Marx and F. Engels MECW, vol. 28, (Lawrence and Wishart, Moscow, 1986). p.258.

<sup>90</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.90.

1846'<sup>91</sup>. A dramatic point in the unravelling of the colonial process has been reached, where the most obvious organ of colonising, - the British Government in London - was unaware of what another faction of the colonising regime was actually enacting on the Irish landed estates, - the landlords and their strategy to extinguish the small tenantry and the cottiers.

So the end point of Marx's first conceptual path has been reached, - the 'essential determining structure' (process), in this phase of colonialism, - 'Clearing the estate of Ireland'. Marx now needs to explicate in detail its specific social form. However, in this document Marx does not engage in this process of exploration but leaves it to his later work which he presented in his delivered 'Fenian' speech of the 16<sup>th</sup> December 1867.

'*The English People*' - This section begins with a general point that the Irish Question was [a] '*cause of humanity and right, but above all a specific English question*'<sup>92</sup>. It is only when Marx discusses the '*Irish in England*' that his comments on other occasions can give us some insight into these apparent discrete note forms. These note forms are:

*'Influence on wages, etc. Lowering the character of the English and Irish. The Irish Character. Chastity of Irishmen. Attempts at education in Ireland.*

*Diminution of crimes*<sup>93</sup>.

We are fortunate to have longer elaborations of these assertions available to us from Marx and Engel's discussions of these topics elsewhere in their works and we can present them

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<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.* p.148.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.* p.124.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.* p.124.

in the order of they are unfolded in the above. With regard to the Irish lowering the character and wages of the English workers, Marx famously stated the following in 1870:

The revolutionary fire of the Celtic worker does not go well with the nature of the Anglo-Saxon worker, solid, but slow. On the contrary, in all *the big industrial centers in England* there is profound antagonism between the Irish proletariat and the English proletariat. The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and *standard of life*. He feels national and religious antipathies for him. He regards him somewhat like the *poor whites* of the Southern States of North America regard their black slaves<sup>94</sup>.

These contrasting racial forms as they are presented here were manifesting themselves within the industrial working class of nineteenth century Britain. In this context, the racial traits appear to be conceptualised as reified entities, - the contrasting racial characteristics seem to be innate and immutable. However, appearances can be deceptive because these character traits were being determined by societal conditions - a change in these conditions appear to cause these 'immutable' traits to also change. In the ever-revelatory technique of Marx's dialectical method, the apparent 'immutable' surface appearances of discrete entities always end up being mere moments of a constantly evolving organic totality. This becomes evident in the case of these racial traits when Marx discussed the 'chastity of Irishmen' prior to them emigrating in *Capital*, vol.1 - 'Thousands of Irish families, who according to the testimony of the English, eaten up as these are with national prejudice, are notable for their rare attachment to the domestic hearth, for their

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<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.* p.162.

gaiety and purity of their home-life, found themselves suddenly transplanted into hot-beds of vice'<sup>95</sup>.

The actual movement from 'moral' Ireland to foreign 'hot-beds of vice' conditions appear to cause the Irish peasant, according to Engels, to become corruptible - 'The worst about the Irish is that they become corruptible as soon as they stop being peasants and turn bourgeois. True, this is the case with most peasants. But in Ireland, it is particularly bad'<sup>96</sup>.

Engels is even more explicit in the following of the moral decay of the Irish as they migrate to English speaking parts of the globe but lays the blame for this decline on colonial oppression - 'By consistent oppression they have been artificially converted into an utterly impoverished nation and now, as everyone knows, fulfill the function of supplying England, America, Australia, etc., with prostitutes, casual labourers, pimps, pickpockets, swindlers, beggars and other rabble'<sup>97</sup>.

The ever-changing racial constructions of the Irish were not only multi-faceted but differing forms of colonial oppression were also determining them. Consequently, the racial traits of the nineteenth century Irish are very different from those of the sixteenth century and not because they evolved within an exclusive cultural sphere but by their relationship with the ever-changing forms of colonialism. Even the trait of melancholy was a consequence of colonialism, which Engels discovered within Irish songs - 'The

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<sup>95</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.110.

<sup>96</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p.274.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. p.84/5.

melancholy dominating most of these songs is still the expression of the national disposition today. How could it be otherwise amongst a people whose conquerors are always inventing new, up-to-date methods of oppression?’<sup>98</sup>

Even the emerging forms of education in nineteenth century Ireland were been determined by colonialism, which either were been imposed by the British, or a specific Irish form was adopted to resist the colonial imposition as Engels reveals to Jenny Longuet (Marx) in 1881:

The Irish, neglected by the English government, had taken the education of their own children into their own hands. At a time when English fathers and mothers insisted upon their right to send their children to the factory to earn money instead of school to learn, at that time in Ireland the peasants vied with each other in forming schools of their own. [...] In 1812 there were 4,600 such hedge-schools in Ireland.... So then, these truly *national* schools did not suit English purposes. To suppress them, the *sham* national schools were established. [...] Compare with these Irish peasants the English who howl at compulsory school-attendance to this day!<sup>99</sup>

And finally, with regard to ‘the diminution of crime’ Marx provided not only a criticism of the English racial stereotyping of the Irish but also crucially a damning critique of racial characteristics as a determinant of behaviour:

Strange to say, the only part of the United Kingdom in which crime has seriously decreased, say by 50, and even by 75 per cent, is Ireland. How can we harmonise

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<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.* p.271.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.* p.328/9.

this fact with the public-opinion slang of England, according to which Irish nature, instead of British misrule, is responsible for Irish shortcomings? It is, again, no act on the part of the British ruler, but simply the consequence of a famine, an exodus, and a general combination of circumstances favourable to the demand for Irish labour, that has worked this happy change in Irish nature.<sup>100</sup>

Although, the process of racialisation took on many concrete forms and across an ever-expanding range of institutional contexts, the highlighted diverse character traits of the Irish race were determined in the ‘last instant’ by the process of colonialism. In this sense, the cultural forms of racial oppression were exposed as being determined by changing conditions outside the cultural sphere, when these respective ‘badges of conquest were removed [but] the servitude remained’<sup>101</sup>. And with the specific process of ‘clearing the estate of Ireland’, the particular ‘badge’ was a cultural form of ethnicity, which manifested itself in the decline of the Celtic trait of the Irish population and the subsequent emergence in its place of the ‘Saxon’ cultural form, Engels describes this transformation:

The country was completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the wars and the state of siege lasted as long as that). [...]. The people itself got its peculiar character from this, and for all their national Irish fanaticism the fellows feel they are no longer at home in their own country. Ireland for the Saxon! That is now being realized. The Irishman knows that he cannot compete with the Englishman, who comes equipped with means

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<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.* p.93.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.* p.154.



superior in every respect; emigration will go on until the predominantly, indeed almost exclusively, Celtic character of the population is gone to the dogs. How often have the Irish started out to achieve something, and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially<sup>102</sup>.

However, there is an ironic ‘twist’ to this depopulation of the Celtic race in Ireland because as they were cleared from their homeland, which was subsequently made into a ‘Saxon’ stronghold, - the Celtic Irish were reappearing in the heartlands of Britain, - in the industrial and political centers of the colonising. This racial revenge was observed by Marx in 1855 - ‘Ireland has revenged herself upon England, *socially* – by bestowing an *Irish quarter* on every English industrial, maritime or commercial town of any size, and *politically* – by furnishing the English Parliament with an “Irish Brigade”<sup>103</sup>.

However, the Celtic Irish were not just invading the Saxon heartlands of Britain they were also crucially emerging on the other side of the Atlantic as a political threat to the old colonial queen herself:

With the accumulation of rents in Ireland, the accumulation of the Irish in America keeps pace. The Irishman, banished by sheep and ox, re-appears on the other side of the ocean as a Fenian, and face to face with the old queen of the seas rises, threatening and more threatening, the young giant Republic<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.* p.84/5.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.* p.74.

<sup>104</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p. 115/6.

As we have discovered there is an obvious sense of conceptual movement inherent in Marx's work here. He begins by examining the specific historical categories on human and livestock population movements by locating an apparent statistical relationship between them and a third factor, - emigration. In establishing a mediated relationship between these three concrete entities Marx revealed that they formed a process and these concrete entities were subsumed under that process as its essential 'moments'. This initial process is then subsequently enfolded by another empirical process, - 'farm consolidation – the switch from tillage to pasture'. These now metabolised processes are in turn engulfed by the emergence of an economic process, which appears to be the dominant economic contradiction of this post-Famine period. Where, unlike the capitalist mode of production, the shedding of direct producers from agriculture would be indicative of an increase in the output of production as expressed in relative surplus value, but in this Irish case the fall in the population of agriculturalists saw simultaneously a decline in the 'produce of the soil' but an increase in the financial returns of profit and rent.

Therefore, the misery of the labourers and the soil (as manifested in its depletion) is contrasted by the increasing returns on profit taking and rent. These empirical trends are thus linked to each other as the concrete forms of revenue acquisition was determined by the landlords extracting a 'surplus' from the direct producers (the tenantry) and their essential condition of production – the soil. In a strictly mode of production analysis where the organic totality is generally confined to the economic, this grinding extractive process would probably be the overall dominant relationship, and thereby 'predominates over the rest' of the relationships to become the 'active middle' process. But Marx does

not stop at this point of his conceptual pathway but pushes on to unearth a process that will ultimately become the real ‘active middle’ process of this Irish organic totality.

**Marx conceptually unfolding the processes towards the determining colonial phase of ‘Clearing the estate of Ireland.’**

Population decrease – livestock increase – emigration



Farm consolidation – increase in pasture



Deterioration in conditions of production – increase in financial returns



Famine – Repeal of the Corn Laws – rise in the price of meat and wool, entitled

‘Clearing the Estate of Ireland’.



Colonial State dominated by the ‘clearing’ landlords

In conceptually moving through these processes sequentially Marx finally arrives at what he called the ‘systematic’ process, where the Repeal of the Corn Laws instigated a ‘systematic process’ which involved Westminster passing a parliamentary act which in turn devastated the Irish agricultural economy by collapsing the prices for Irish grain. It was at this point that Marx was able to reveal the essential ‘active middle’ process of this

entire concrete totality, - 'Clearing the estate of Ireland' - and subsequently declared it to be 'the one purpose of English rule in Ireland'. Marx appears to have switched from a more synchronic type of analysis to a more diachronic form as he investigates the emergence of this final phase of 'English rule in Ireland' – 'clearing the estate of Ireland'. Thus, this post-Famine form is itself an evolutionary phase of the British colonising process, where the political process of colonialism metabolises with the economic process of civil society to become the overall dominant process of 'Clearing the estate of Ireland'.

Consequently, as Marx 'descended' from the concrete to the abstract he arrived at the essential social process of the Irish social formation in its post-Famine phase which was declared to have a specific colonial form to it. Marx therefore has completed his crucial initial path of inquiry and I would presume that he would now turn his attention to the second path of exposition, as he will attempt to retrace his conceptual steps and ascend from the abstract to the concrete. However, on this occasion as we have discovered he did not set out on the second conceptual pathway, - his method of exposition. This failure to continue and move from the abstract to the concrete may be explained by his declared illness when a 'fever that lasted a fortnight and passed only two days'<sup>105</sup> before he was scheduled to give the paper on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1867.

It is crucial to highlight that Marx is not describing the features of colonialism in the post-Famine period. He is in fact tracing out the 'inner connections' of this organic totality and the precise trajectory of his conceptual movement is determined by how these

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<sup>105</sup>Marx Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.146.

‘inner connections’ are structured internally in this real concrete object. We have discovered that Marx in his investigation of this period unravelled a totalising ensemble of enfolding processes, beginning with ‘population loss – emigration – livestock increase’ process at the immediate concrete level to the ‘clearing of the estate of Ireland’ at the ‘abstract’ centre of this particular totality. Nevertheless, crucially it has moved through a number of mediating processes. Therefore, Banaji is right, Marx’s conceptual movement ‘is not a straight-line process’ - ‘One returns to the concrete at expanded levels of the total curve, reconstructing the surface of society in stages, as a structure of several dimensions. And this implies ...we find a continuous oscillation between essence and appearance’<sup>106</sup>.

The latter tendency was obvious in Marx’s work here as he constantly kept referring back to statistics, which identified empirical trends manifesting themselves at the concrete surface level before he uncovered how they were actually mediated moments of underlying processes. The inherent oscillation between appearance and essence and an unfolding of internally mediated processes determines that we perceive the overall structure of this organic totality as ‘expanding curve or spiral-movement composed of specific cycles of abstraction (of processes). Each cycle of abstraction, and thus the curve as a whole, begins and ends with ...the realm of appearances ...’<sup>107</sup>.

However, there is another crucial determination of the spiral structure to the organic totality and that has to do with understanding movement within a totality and specifically between processes. When Marx initially unfolds these processes, they have a

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<sup>106</sup>J. Banaji, ‘From the Commodity to Capital: Hegel’s Dialectic in Marx’s Capital’. p.27.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.* p.27.

tendency to appear to be mere circles, forming an internal unity and whose elements are mutually conditioning, ‘in which the condition becomes conditioned, the cause becomes the effect, the universal becomes the particular, is a characteristic feature of internal interaction through which actual development assumes the form of a circle’...<sup>108</sup>. This is an illusion created by the process of abstraction as the real concrete ‘is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse’<sup>109</sup>. In our case, it is the unity of diverse processes! Therefore, mediating processes smash open the inherent tendencies of an individual process to be self- conditioning and thus taking on a circular form.

Therefore, Marx’s initial process of his *Notes* here, ‘the population loss – emigration – livestock increase’ process forms a such-like circle of self-conditioning. But this process was subsequently engulfed by another process, - ‘*the consolidation of farms and the switch from tillage to livestock*’, - which not only merged the two processes but they subsequently began to expand ‘*upon an always enlarging scale...*’<sup>110</sup> Marx has conceptualised this type of expanding movement as a change in form from a circular to a spiral form - ‘... the gradual propagation of capital by reproduction passing it from a circular into a spiral form...’<sup>111</sup>

Therefore, since the essence of an organic totality is movement as ‘mutual interaction’ takes place between different moments (processes), thus the mediating processes will

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<sup>108</sup>Ilyenkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx’s Capital*. p.115.

<sup>109</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*. p.101.

<sup>110</sup>Marx Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.121.

<sup>111</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.780.

always form an ever-enlarging and expanding spiral curve in its inner configuration. Therefore, the essential inner determination of an organic totality will be the active middle process like the valorisation process in capitalism. This is also true with regard to what we have uncovered in the post-Famine phase that ‘Clearing the estate of Ireland’ is an active middle process of this colonised organic totality<sup>112</sup>.

Therefore, if Anderson and Smith are right about Marx’s intellectual endeavours in his later years (they both suggest that Marx was attempting to ‘extend his dialectical analysis’ into non-capitalistic social formations, - replicating the real movement of capitalism into these regions), the question arises what type of societal entity was there to be conquered. What I want to suggest from our conceptual odyssey into Marx’s dialectical understanding of the Irish situation is that what was waiting for capitalism at the ‘margins’ were other organic totalities, with their necessary spirals of intermeshing processes and each and every one of these ‘non-western’ totalities having its own specific ‘active middle’ process. Smith grasps the essential and potentially correct trajectory of conceptualisation in his question, - ‘So what, then does capital encounter in its outward spiral?’<sup>113</sup> The answer is, - other spirals – of mediating processes that form non-capitalistic organic totalities. In the Irish case, as we have discovered, the indigenous organic totality was dominated by British colonialism, where the normal conditions of a

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<sup>112</sup>In Wacquant’s critical review of Marx’s heuristic models - it was his organic totality model that was ‘more specific, concrete and processual’ than the other models used by Marx. From our explication of Marx’s conceptual framework on Irish colonialism, we uncovered that Marx was using this particular heuristic model. L.J.D. Wacquant, ‘Heuristic Models in Marxist Theory’, *Social Forces*. vol.64:1, (1985) pp. 17-45, p.35.

<sup>113</sup>Smith, ‘Accumulation and the clash of cultures: Marx’s ethnology in context’. p.82.

society were transformed into ‘abominable’ conditions. This process of subversion was imposed on Irish society, as Marx stated in his opening quotation of this article, in order ‘to enable a small caste of rapacious lordlings to dictate to the Irish people the terms on which they shall be allowed to hold the land and live upon it’<sup>114</sup>. Therefore, capitalism is, to paraphrase Smith, being ‘barred’ by how a particular form of commodity production, which had ‘metabolised’ with an Irish organic totality where colonial landlordism dominated. Marx repeatedly stated that ‘All that the English government succeeded in doing was to plant an aristocracy in Ireland’<sup>115</sup>. And as a consequence, of this imposed landlordism, it is the rental relationship which was the main driver of accumulation rather than capital as in the capitalist mode of production. This itself, is a consequence of the particular colonial configuration of the Irish organic totality that made commodity production unable to become ‘completed’ in its capitalist form. Marx in his Preface to the German edition of *Capital* brilliantly captures this contradictory relationship between fully developed capitalist production and its ‘incompleted’ form:

In all other spheres, and just like the rest of Continental Western Europe, we suffer not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside the modern evils, we are oppressed by a whole series of inherited evils, arising from the passive survival of archaic and outmoded modes of production, with their accompanying train of

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<sup>114</sup>Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*. p.61.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.* p.141.



anachronistic social and political relations. We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead<sup>116</sup>.

Therefore, commodity producers ‘at the margins’, who produce under non-capitalist conditions of production suffer from both the ‘living ... [and] the dead. In the sense that they have to live with market competition from capitalist commodity producers and simultaneously produce those commodities without the more developed capitalist forces of production. These non-existent conditions of production are therefore ‘dead’ to these ‘petty’ commodity producers. In the Irish colonial case, Marx in his discussion of the Irish peasantry outlined the precariousness of such a relationship between the non-capitalist Irish peasant producer and capitalism - ‘They are, one after the other, and with a degree of force unknown before, crushed by the competition of an agriculture managed by capital, and therefore they continually furnish new recruits to the class of wage-labourers<sup>117</sup>.

However, it needs to be stated that, although they are generally ‘crushed’ by foreign capitalist competition, they do not join the ranks of the Irish industrial wage-labourers because their respective industrial enterprises have already been ‘cleared’ from the Irish landscape in previous crushing bouts of colonial oppression and as a consequence, the ‘ejected’ Irish peasantry become proletariats in foreign locations. Therefore, they are cleared not only from their landed estates also from their homeland!

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<sup>116</sup>Marx, (Preface to the first edition), *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.91.

<sup>117</sup>Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. p.862.

Accordingly, as we have discovered colonialism, is a multi-faceted process, which has an innate ability to manifest itself throughout a societal organic totality on many levels and within differing and diverse forms. Its omnipotent presence and its constantly changing forms 'bath' all in its hue to such an extent that its existence belies direct empirical observation and subsequent description; it is only when we attempt to perceive it through the prism of a dialectical framework that its presence becomes obvious. In holding Marx's *Undelivered Speech* document up to the mirror of dialectics, the apparent concrete empirical data presented in its statistical and factual forms melt away to reveal an underlying ensemble of constantly moving internal processes. These levels penetrate each other, - the concrete entities end up as moments within abstract processes and the internal processes are the determination of concrete entities of reality. Both the concrete and the abstract forms thus interact with each other to become an organic totality.

Levine argues that in the 1861-3 workbooks, Marx arrived at a new definition of capitalism. Until the drafts of 1861-3 Marx had remained close to Adam Smith's definition of capitalism as stored-up labour, this was modified by Marx to mean stored-up surplus labour. In these drafts, he begins to redefine capitalism as a process of valorisation<sup>118</sup>. Levine suggests that '[t]he storing up of labour is quantitative...The valorisation process, on the other hand, refers to the inherent tendencies of a system, the necessary drive of an organic totality to increase surplus-value'<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup>Levine, 'Hegel and the 1861-3 manuscripts of Das Kapital', p.52.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.* p.52.

What I believe is crucial about this ‘epistemological break’ is that it indicates how Marx is moving away from not only the empiricism of classical political economy but also towards a more Hegelian framework, in which reality is seen as a continuous moving process (or processes). The subsequent analysis replicates this sense of movement in how there is an inherent sense of conceptual movement in Marx’s methods of inquiry and exposition. This crucial attribute of the dialectical approach can cause problems in any attempt to provide a definitive definition of a particular structure or process within the totality under investigation. Again, Chris Arthur highlights this difficulty with regard to the concepts of value and capital within Marx’s dialectical analysis of them:

The upshot is that value cannot be defined in the simple sense of either substance pre-existing exchange or as a mere phenomenal relation, but only as a moment of a totalizing process of development of internally related forms of a complex whole ... whose internal moments...are nested within each other and enfold one another in an ever-moving mediatedness ... A methodological consequence of this is that the concept of capital ...requires not a definition ...but a dialectical exposition of its inner self-development<sup>120</sup>.

If this is so with regard to all organic totalities, it is so with regard to our attempt to explicate Marx’s dialectical presentation of the colonial dialectic within the organic totality of post-Famine Ireland, in which colonialism has to be understood and analytically grasped as process with ‘its inner self-development’.

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<sup>120</sup>Arthur, Christopher, *The New Dialectic and Marx’s Capital*, (Brill, the Netherlands, 2004). p.30.

Peter Hudis is right when he stated that with regard to Marx's work on colonialism, we 'still have much to learn from the *method* and *approach* that Marx employed in his studies on colonialism,'<sup>121</sup>.

And especially in the case of colonial Ireland!

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<sup>121</sup> P. Hudis, 'Marx Among the Muslims', *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, vol.15, no.4. (2004) pp.51-67, p.58.