



Waste, wasteworlds, and worldmaking

Call for Papers: European Workshops of International Studies, 3-5 July 2024, Istanbul

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The Prophecy © Fabrice Monteiro, 2015

In Fabrice Monteiro's *The Prophecy*, a spirit rises from a mountain of rubbish. Shot in Mbeubeuss, a gigantic waste dump outside of Dakar, the photo is both a warning from the future as well as a postcard from a present which has long been dystopian. Our current global economic and political systems demand the creation of waste—from the Great Pacific garbage patch, to shipping containers full of waste bound to the Global South, to deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, and landscapes ravaged by wildfires, to the slow violence of e-waste that leaks poisons, and the presence of microplastic in unborn babies. Anticolonial, black, and indigenous radicals have long theorised these processes of laying waste—to land, bodies, and belief-systems—as central to imperial projects, plantation logics, extractivism, and mass consumption (Galeano, 1971; Liboiron, 2021; Voyles, 2015; Yusoff, 2018).

At the same time, capitalist modernity purports to abhor waste and strives to stamp out wasted time, wasted resources, and wasted lives in the name of increased efficiency and progress. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer quotes early settlers to the Great Lakes who observed native populations collecting wild rice: “the savages stopped gathering long before all the rice was harvested... nothing will compel them to continue, therefore much goes to waste” (2013: 181). Indeed, the elimination of waste is often the disciplinary tool used to lay waste to that which refuses to conform. However, Wall Kimmerer goes on to explain that what looked like ‘waste’ actually nurtured nonhuman life and future generations—groups too often ignored and erased by modern capitalist definitions of efficiency and usefulness. Likewise, waste has also been mobilised as resistance through foot-dragging (Scott 1985), the ‘lying flat’ movement in China, and rest as resistance (Hersey 2022) that challenges the very capitalist logics that hold us spellbound.

In this workshop, we aspire to create an interdisciplinary conversation on the global history, political economy, and philosophy of waste. What exactly is waste, and how does ‘waste make worlds’ (Doherty, 2021)? What has been the role of waste, waste dumping, and waste elimination (as well as imaginaries of dirt, filth, slums, and “shithole” countries) in colonial and carceral projects? Who cleans the bourgeois world and how do global economies of waste function by reducing certain bodies to always already waste? Ultimately, what (if any) genres of refusal, resistance, and repair are rendered possible through practices of wastefulness and the redefinition of ‘waste’? In a wasted world, what can be learnt from that which has already been discarded?

We invite submissions on a range of topics including, but not limited, to:

- Colonialism, modernity, and the making of wasteworlds
- Global economies of waste management and waste infrastructure
- Consumer society, green consumption, planned obsolescence, and hidden waste
- Capitalist efficiency and the elimination of ‘waste’ as surplus and undeservingness
- Slow violence, unimagined communities, and environmental justice (Nixon, 2011)
- Scavenging, dumpster diving, and waste activism
- Indigenous lifeworlds and the redefinition of waste
- Time-wasting as resistance, sabotage, and flight (Hersey, 2022; Scott, 1985)