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Strategies

Understanding capitalism has always been a project of the left, especially within the Marxian tradition. There, where knowledges of "capitalism" arguably originated, theory is accorded an explicit social role. From Marx to Lenin to the neo-Marxists of the post-World War II period, theorists have understood their work as contributing – whether proximately or distantly – to anticapitalist projects of political action. In this sense economic theory has related to politics as a subordinate and a servant: we understand the world in order to change it.

Given the avowed servitude of left theory to left political action it is ironic (though not surprising) that understandings and images of capitalism can quite readily be viewed as contributing to a *crisis* in left politics. Indeed, and this is the argument we wish to make in this book, the project of understanding the beast has itself produced a beast, or even a bestiary; and the process of producing knowledge in service to politics has estranged rather than united understanding and action. Bringing these together again, or allowing them to touch in different ways, is one of our motivating aspirations.

"Capitalism" occupies a special and privileged place in the language of social representation. References to "capitalist society" are a commonplace of left and even mainstream social description, as are references – to the market, to the global economy, to postindustrial society – in which an unnamed capitalism is implicitly invoked as the defining and unifying moment of a complex economic and social formation. Just as the economic system in eastern Europe used confidently to be described as communist or socialist, so a general confidence in economic classification characterizes representations of an increasingly capitalist world system. But what might be seen as the grounds of this confidence, if we put aside notions of "reality" as the authentic origin of its representations?

Why might it seem problematic to say that the United States is a Christian nation, or a heterosexual one, despite the widespread belief that Christianity and heterosexuality are dominant or majority practices in their respective domains, while at the same time it seems legitimate and indeed "accurate" to say that the US is a capitalist country?[1] What is it about the former expressions, and their critical history, that makes them visible as "regulatory fictions,"[2] ways of erasing or obscuring difference, while the latter is seen as accurate representation? Why, moreover, have embracing and holistic expressions for social structure like patriarchy fallen into relative disuse among feminist theorists (see Pringle 1995; Barrett and Phillips 1992) while similar conceptions of capitalism as a system or "structure of power" are still prevalent and resilient? These sorts of questions, by virtue of their scarcity and scant claims to legitimacy, have provided us a motive for this book.[3]

The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It) problematizes "capitalism" as an economic and social descriptor.[4] Scrutinizing what might be seen as throwaway uses of the term – passing references, for example, to the capitalist system or to global capitalism – as well as systematic and deliberate attempts to represent capitalism as a central and organizing feature of modern social experience, the book selectively traces the discursive origins of a widespread understanding: that capitalism is the hegemonic, or even the only, present form of economy and that it will continue to be so in the proximate future. It follows from

[1] For one thing, an ambiguity exists in the former instances (between, for example, the reference to a population and its heterosexual practices, and the reference to a regime of compulsory heterosexuality) that does not exist in the latter. This suggests that the "dominance" of capitalism might itself be undermined by representing capitalism as a particular set of activities practiced by individuals.

[2] Butler (1990) uses this term with respect to the "fiction" of binary gender and its regulatory function as a support for compulsory heterosexuality. No matter how much the New(t) Right in the US wants to impose the "truth" of a Christian heterosexual nation, this fiction is actually the focus of considerable contention.

[3] The list of questions could be extended. How is it, for example, that "woman" as a natural or extradiscursive category has increasingly receded from view, yet "capitalism" retains its status as a given of social description? The answer that presents itself to us has to do with the feminist politics of representation and the vexed problem of gender (and other forms of personal) identity. The question of social identity has not been so extensively vexed (despite the efforts of Laclau and Mouffe, among others) but is perhaps ripe for the vexing.

Many people have observed that the economic and social realms are sometimes accorded the status of an extratextual reality. Butler notes, for example, that the domain of the social is often seen as "given or already constituted." She suggests a reinfusion of what she calls "ideality," with its implications of "possibility" and "transformability," into feminist representations of the social (1995: 19–20).

this prevalent though not ubiquitous view that noncapitalist economic sites, if they exist at all, must inhabit the social margins; and, as a corollary, that deliberate attempts to develop noncapitalist economic practices and institutions must take place in the social interstices, in the realm of experiment, or in a visionary space of revolutionary social replacement.

Representations of capitalism are a potent constituent of the anticapitalist imagination, providing images of what is to be resisted and changed as well as intimations of the strategies, techniques, and possibilities of changing it. For this reason, depictions of "capitalist hegemony" deserve a particularly skeptical reading. For in the vicinity of these representations, the very idea of a noncapitalist economy takes the shape of an unlikelihood or even an impossibility. It becomes difficult to entertain a vision of the prevalence and vitality of noncapitalist economic forms, or of daily or partial replacements of capitalism by noncapitalist economic practices, or of capitalist retreats and reversals. In this sense, "capitalist hegemony" operates not only as a constituent of, but also as a brake upon, the anticapitalist imagination.[5] What difference might it make to release that brake and allow an anticapitalist economic imaginary to develop unrestricted?[6] If we were to dissolve the image that looms in the economic foreground, what shadowy economic forms might come forward? In these questions we can identify the broad outlines of our project: to discover or create a world of economic difference, and to populate that world with exotic creatures that become, upon inspection, quite local and familiar (not to mention familiar beings that are not what they seem).

The discursive artifact we call "capitalist hegemony" is a complex

[4] Though we refer on almost every page of this book to capitalism, we find ourselves loath to define it, since this would involve choosing among a wide variety of existing definitions (any one of which could be seen as our "target") or specifying out of context a formation that we wish to understand as contextually defined. One familiar Marxist definition, however, involves a vision of capitalism as a system of generalized commodity production structured by (industrial) forces of production and exploitative production relations between capital and labor. Workers, bereft of means of production, sell their labor power for wages and participate in the labor process under capitalist control. Their surplus labor is appropriated by capitalists as surplus value. The capitalist mode of production is animated by the twin imperatives of enterprise competition and capital accumulation which together account for the dynamic tendencies of capitalism to expand and to undergo recurring episodes of crisis.

[5] Which we hesitate to call "socialist" because of the emptiness of the term in a context where the meaning of capitalism is called into question. Conversely, of course, the "death" of socialism is one of the things that has made it possible to question and rethink capitalism (since each has largely been defined in opposition to the other).

[6] The metaphor of the brake is drawn from Haraway (1991: 41–2).

ject of a wide variety of discursive and nondiscursive conditions.[7] this book we focus on the practices and preoccupations of discourse, cing some of the different, even incompatible, representations of pitalism that can be collated within this fictive summary represen- tion. These depictions have their origins in the diverse traditions Marxism, classical and contemporary political economy, academic cial science, modern historiography, popular economic and social ought, western philosophy and metaphysics, indeed, in an endless ray of texts, traditions and infrastructures of meaning. In the chapters at follow, only a few of these are examined for the ways in which y have sustained a vision of capitalism as the dominant form of onomy, or have contributed to the possibility or durability of such ision. But the point should emerge none the less clearly: the virtually questioned dominance of capitalism can be seen as a complex product a variety of discursive commitments, including but not limited to rganicist social conceptions, heroic historical narratives, evolutionary cenarios of social development, and essentialist, phallocentric, or binary patterns of thinking. It is through these discursive figurings and align- ments that capitalism is constituted as large, powerful, persistent, active, expansive, progressive, dynamic, transformative; embracing, penetrat- ing, disciplining, colonizing, constraining; systemic, self-reproducing, rational, lawful, self-rectifying; organized and organizing, centered and centering; originating, creative, protean; victorious and ascendant; self- identical, self-expressive, full, definite, real, positive, and capable of conferring identity and meaning.[8]

The argument revisited: it is the way capitalism has been "thought" hat has made it so difficult for people to imagine its supersession.[9] It is therefore the ways in which capitalism is known that we wish to delegitimize and displace. The process is one of unearthing, of bringing to light images and habits of understanding that constitute "hegemonic capitalism" at the intersection of a set of representations. This we see as a first step toward theorizing capitalism without representing dominance as a natural and inevitable feature of its being. At the same time, we hope to foster conditions under which the economy might become less subject to definitional closure. If it were possible to inhabit a heterogeneous and open-ended economic space whose identity was not fixed or singular (the space potentially to be vacated by a capitalism that is necessarily and naturally hegemonic) then a vision of noncapitalist economic practices as existing and widespread might be able to be born; and in the context of such a vision, a new anticapitalist politics might emerge, a noncapitalist politics of class (whatever that may mean) might take root and flourish. A long shot perhaps but one worth pursuing.

In this introduction we touch upon the various discursive appearances of capitalism that are given different or more detailed treatment later in the book. The introduction serves to convene them, and in bringing them together to make them susceptible to a single critique. As the prelude to and precondition of a theory of "economic difference," the critique of economic sameness (or of essentialism, to invoke a freighted synonymy) attempts to liberate a heterospace of both capitalist and noncapitalist economic existence. Here, as throughout the book, we draw upon the strategies of postmodern Marxism and poststructuralist feminism to enable both criticism and re-imagination. Somewhat diffidently and rudimentarily, we also take up the challenge of concretely specifying different economic practices that can be seen to inhabit a space of economic diversity, or that might be called into being to fulfill its promises of plenitude and potentiation. Together, the critical project of undermining prevalent practices of capitalist representation, and the more arduous project of generating a discourse of economic difference, constitute the unevenly distributed burden of this book.[10]

Strategy 1: Constructing the straw man

Capitalism's hegemony emerges and is naturalized in the space of its overlapping and intersecting appearances – as the earthly kingdom of modern industrial society; the heroic transformative agent of development/mod-

[7] The latter including, among other things, working-class struggles and the forms of their successes and defeats. To take another example, the technologies of communication and replication that are used to trumpet the triumph of global capitalism are themselves nondiscursive conditions of "capitalist hegemony."

[8] This list of qualities should not be seen as exhaustive. Indeed one could certainly construct a list of equal length that enumerated capitalism's weaknesses and "negative" characteristics: for example, images of capitalism as crisis-ridden, self-destructive, anarchic, requiring regulation, fatally compromised by internal contradictions, unsustainable, tending to undermine its own conditions of existence. That these opposing lists do not negate (or even substantially compromise) each other is one of the premises of this discussion. (In fact, "weaknesses" or problems of capitalism are often consonant with, and constitutive of, its perceived hegemony and autonomy as an economic system.)

[9] Except, of course, as the product of evolutionary necessity or the millennial project of a revolutionary collective subject. At this moment on the left, when these two familiar ways of thinking capitalist supersession are in disrepair and disrepute, there are few ways of conceptualizing the replacement of capitalism by noncapitalism that we find persuasive.

[10] In this book we give some glimpses of the noncapitalist class relations that inform our anticapitalist imaginary. Extended explorations of these class processes and positions are provided in our co-edited collection which is tentatively entitled *Class: The Next Postmodern Frontier* (in progress).

nization; a unitary, structured and self-reproducing economic system; protean body with an (infinite?) repertory of viable states; a matrix flows that integrates the world of objects and signs; the phallus that structures social space and confers meaning upon social practices and positions (these as well as other representations are explored in later chapters.) Each of these figurings tends to position capitalism – with respect both to other specific types of economy and to the general social space of economic difference – as the dominant economic form. In other words not only is capitalism in itself triumphant, encompassing, penetrating, expansive (and so on), but by virtue of these "internal" capitalist qualities, other forms of economy are vanquished, marginalized, isolated, restricted. Different as they may be from one another, they are united by their common existence as subordinated and inferior states of economic being. In this sense, we may speak of the relation of capitalism to noncapitalism in the terms of the familiar binary structure in which the first term is constituted as positivity and fullness and the second term as negativity or lack.

When we say that most economic discourse is "capitalocentric," we mean that other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism, or as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement of capitalism;[11] as existing in capitalism's space or orbit. Thus noncapitalist practices like self-employment may be seen as taking place *within* capitalism, which is understood as an embracing structure or system. Or noncapitalist activity may be elided, as when "commodification" is invoked as a metonym for capitalist expansion.[12] Noncapitalist economic forms may be located in "peripheral" countries that lack the fullness and completeness of capitalist "development."[13] Noncapitalism is found in the household, the place of woman, related to capitalism through service and complementarity. Noncapitalism is the before or the after of capitalism: it appears as a precapitalist mode of production (identified by its fate of inevitable supersession); it appears as socialism, for which capitalism is both the negative and the positive precondition.

Capitalism's others fail to measure up to it as the true form of economy: its feminized other, the household economy, may be seen to lack its efficiency and rationality; its humane other, socialism, may be seen to lack its productivity; other forms of economy lack its global extensiveness, or its inherent tendency to dominance and expansion. No other form displays its systemic qualities or its capacity for self-reproduction (indeed projects of theorizing noncapitalism frequently founder upon the analogical imperative of representing an economic totality, complete with crisis dynamics, logics and "laws of motion"). Thus despite their ostensible variety, noncapitalist forms of economy often present themselves as a homogeneous insufficiency rather than as positive and differentiated others.

To account for the demotion and devaluation of noncapitalism[14] we must invoke the constitutive or performative force of economic representation. For depictions of capitalism – whether prevalent and persistent or rare and deliquescent – position noncapitalism in relations of subsumption, containment, supersession, replication, opposition and complementarity to capitalism as the quintessential economic form.[15] To take a few examples from a list that is potentially infinite:

(1) Capitalism appears as the "hero" of the industrial development narrative, the inaugural subject of "history," the bearer of the future, of modernity, of universality. Powerful, generative, uniquely sufficient to

[11] We are indebted for this definition to the conceptions of phallocentrism of Grosz (1990) and Irigaray.

[12] Despite the general recognition that slave, communal, family, independent and other production relations are all compatible with commodity production, that is, production of goods and services for a market, the commodity is often uniquely associated with capitalism (perhaps because of the prevalent definition of capitalism as involving "generalized" commodity production, referring to the existence of labor power as a commodity). Laclau and Mouffe depict the process of capitalist expansion over the post-World War II period in terms of commodity relations: "this 'commodification' of social life destroyed previous social relations, replacing them with commodity relations through which the logic of capitalist accumulation penetrated into increasingly numerous spheres . . . There is practically no domain of individual or collective life which escapes capitalist relations" (1985: 161). Note here the language of destruction, penetration, capture, replacement, invasion, and the sense that these processes are driven by a logic (in other words they are the phenomenal expressions of an underlying essence). See also chapter 6 on globalization.

[13] "Development" is not understood here as a process but in another of its meanings as the quintessential form of western society.

[14] Here and throughout, when we refer to noncapitalism, we mean noncapitalist forms of economy, unless otherwise noted.

[15] Of course some of the most famous and seminal representations of capitalism can be found in the *Communist Manifesto*, which came to life as one of the founding documents of a revolutionary political tradition. That the *Manifesto* – and the vision that animated it – functioned powerfully to motivate successful workers' movements is something we do not wish to deny; but the image of two classes locked in struggle has in our view now become an obstacle to, rather than a positive force for, anticapitalist political endeavors. It is difficult for us – and we believe for others – to identify with this image today, though it may still resonate with many.

the task of social transformation,[16] capitalism liberates humanity from the struggle with nature. (In its corresponding role as antihero, capitalist development bears the primary responsibility for underdevelopment and environmental degradation.)

(2) Capitalism is enshrined at the pinnacle of social evolution. There it brings – or comes together with – the end of scarcity, of traditional social distinctions, of ignorance and superstition, of antidemocratic or primitive political forms (this is the famous social countenance of modernization).[17] The earthly kingdom of modernism is built upon a capitalist economic foundation.

(3) Capitalism exists as a unified system or body, bounded, hierarchically ordered, vitalized by a growth imperative, and governed by a telos of reproduction. Integrated, homogeneous, coextensive with the space of the social, capitalism is the unitary "economy" addressed by macroeconomic policy and regulation. Though it is prone to crises (diseases), it is also capable of recovery or restoration.

(4) Capitalism is an architecture or structure of power, which is conferred by ownership and by managerial or financial control. Capitalist exploitation is thus an aspect or effect of domination, and firm size and spatial scope an index of power (quintessentially embodied in the multinational corporation).

(5) Capitalism is the phallus or "master term" within a system of social differentiation. Capitalist industrialization grounds the distinction between core (the developed world) and periphery (the so-called Third World). It defines the household as the space of "consumption" (of capitalist commodities) and of "reproduction" (of the capitalist workforce) rather than as a space of noncapitalist production and consumption.

Capitalism confers meaning upon subjects and other social sites in relation to itself, as the contents of its container, laid out upon its grid, identified and valued with respect to its definitive being. Complexly generated social processes of commodification, urbanization, internationalization,

[16] Anderson depicts capitalism in familiar terms as a relentless transformative force, one that "tears down every ancestral confinement and claustral tradition in an immense clearing operation of cultural and customary debris across the globe" (1988: 318). In a similar vein Spivak evokes capitalism's agency in service of its own imperatives: "To minimize circulation time, industrial capitalism needed to establish due process, and such civilizing instruments as railways, postal services, and a uniformly graded system of education" (1988b: 90).

[17] Acknowledging not only capitalism's agency but its extraordinary creativity and universalizing reach, Haraway invokes a feminist political imaginary by calling for "an emerging system of world order analogous in its novelty and scope to that created by industrial capitalism" (1991: 203). The earthly kingdom of capitalism can only be replaced by its likeness.

proletarianization are viewed as aspects of capitalism's self-realization.

(6) Capitalism's visage is plastic and malleable, its trajectory protean and inventive.[18] It undergoes periodic crises and emerges regenerated in novel manifestations (thus Fordism is succeeded by post-Fordism, organized by disorganized capitalism, competitive by monopoly or global capitalism).

(7) Ultimately capitalism is unfettered by local attachments, labor unions, or national-level regulation. The global (capitalist) economy is the new realm of the absolute, the not contingent, from which social possibility is dictated or by which it is constrained. In this formulation economic determinism is reborn and relocated, transferred from its traditional home in the "economic base" to the international space of the pure economy (the domain of the global finance sector and of the all powerful multinational corporation).

(8) It is but one step from global hegemony to capital as absolute presence: "a fractal attractor whose operational arena is immediately coextensive with the social field" (Massumi 1993: 132), "an enormous . . . monetary mass that circulates through foreign exchange and across borders," "a worldwide axiomatic" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 453) engaged in "the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places" (Jameson 1991: 412), "appropriating" individuals to its circuits (Grossberg 1992: 132). Here the language of flows attests not only to the pervasiveness and plasticity of capital but to its ultimate freedom from the boundedness of Identity. Capitalism becomes the everything everywhere of contemporary cultural representation.

If this catalogue seems concocted from exaggerations and omissions, that will not surprise us.[19] For we have devised it in line with our purposes, and have left out all manner of counter and alternative representations. Indeed, as our critics sometimes charge, we have constructed a "straw man" – or more accurately a bizarre and monstrous being that

[18] Arguments that capitalism is in fact "capitalisms" (see for example Pred and Watts 1992) may actually represent capitalism's chameleon qualities as an aspect of its sameness, its capacity for taking everything into itself. These arguments constitute capitalism as a powerful system that is not delineated by any particular economic practices or characteristics (except power). Everything in its vicinity is likely to be drawn into it, overpowered by it, subsumed to it. In related formulations, homogeneity, even of the economic kind, is not a requirement of a monolithic capitalism, since the nature of capitalism is "not to create an homogeneous social and economic system but rather to dominate and draw profit from the diversity and inequality that remain in permanence" (Berger 1980).

[19] In fact we were inspired to some extent by Foucault in *The Order of Things*, where "orders" or classifications are made to appear strange or ridiculous as part of a strategy of denaturalization.

will never be found in pure form in any other text.[20] The question then becomes, what to do with the monster? Should we refine it, cut it down to size, render it once again acceptable, unremarkable, invisibly visible? Should we resituate it among its alter and counter representations, hoping thereby to minimize or mask its presence in social and cultural thought? These are familiar strategies for dealing with something so gauche and ungainly, so clearly and crudely larger than life.

But of course there are alternative ways of disposing of the creature, perhaps more conducive to its permanent relegation. Might we not take advantage of its exaggerated and outlandish presence, and the obviousness that attends it? We can see – it has been placed before us – that a (ridiculous) monster is afoot. It has consequently become "obvious" that our usual strategy is not to banish or slay it, but rather to tame it: hedge it with qualifications, rive it with contradictions, discipline

[20] Of course this could be said of most representations. Many people have assured us that "nobody" thinks any more that capitalism is heroic, systemic, self-reproducing, lawful, structural, naturally powerful, or whatever it is we are adducing. We have come to identify this "nobody" with the one invoked by Yogi Berra ("Nobody goes there any more. It's too crowded.").

We are reminded of the early 1970s when many people found feminist arguments about the existence of a regime of sexism or male dominance to be paranoid or hyperimaginative. Women often argued, for example, that the men they knew were not "like that" or that particular texts, events or relationships did not display the contours of such a regime. These individuals were quite right to note that what feminists described as male dominance was not ubiquitous or pervasive, and was not fully manifest in the behavior of individual men (as indeed feminist activists were often tempted to adduce), yet that did not mean there were no practices and conditions of male dominance. What it meant was that those practices and conditions were often subtle rather than blatant, slippery rather than firm, invisible as well as visible, or visible only from particular locations. It was no simple matter to "reveal" their existence, tangled as they were with their opposites, their disconfirmations and misrecognitions, their negations, their contradictory effects, their failures, their alternative interpretations, the resistances they called forth, the always different contexts that produced the specificity of their forms of existence.

Perhaps a better way of saying this is that feminists were required to produce a theoretical object (sexism or male dominance or patriarchy or the binary hierarchy of gender) and to constitute it as an object of popular discourse and political struggle. That object was no more self-evident than any other (than, for example, the existence of something called "capitalism" before Marx did his work). In this sense, the burden can be seen to lie with us, to produce the discursive object of our critique. Those who invoke the "straw man" argument are questioning the initiative of constituting this theoretical object (by arguing that our construct is illegitimate in comparison to some other) and calling upon a putative community of understanding (of the real or right way to represent capitalism) to regulate the production of social and economic theory. But they are also reacting against the exaggerated appearance of capitalism as it is portrayed here. Presumably their intention would be to mute and domesticate that appearance rather than to highlight it as an object of criticism and derision.

it with contingencies of politics or culture; make it more "realistic" and reasonable, more complex, less embarrassing, less outrageous. But where does such a process of domestication leave us?

Unfortunately, it does not necessarily address the discursive features and figurings that render capitalism superior to its noncapitalist others. Capitalism might still relate to noncapitalist economic sites (in the so-called Third World and in "backward" regions and sectors in the developed world) through images of penetration. Its body could continue to "cover" the space of the social, so that everything noncapitalist was also capitalist (not of course a reciprocal relation). It could still be inherently capable of initiating thoroughgoing (perhaps dysfunctional) social transformation, relegating noncapitalism to a space of necessary weakness and defeat. It might still be driven by internal dynamics of expansion or regeneration, taking advantage of the relative vitality and longevity such imperatives confer. And it could still figure as a systemic totality, producing economic monism as an implication or effect. It seems quite likely, then, that noncapitalism could continue to be suppressed or marginalized by a tamer beast.

In the hierarchical relation of capitalism to noncapitalism lies (entrapped) the possibility of theorizing economic difference, of supplanting the discourse of capitalist hegemony with a plurality and heterogeneity of economic forms. Liberating that possibility is an anti-essentialist project, and perhaps the principal aim of this book.[21] But it is no simple matter to know how to proceed. Casting about for a way to begin we have found feminist and other anti-essentialist projects of rethinking identity and social hegemony particularly fruitful.

Strategy 2: Deconstructing the capitalism/noncapitalism relation

In the writings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985, for example) we find the identity of "the social" rethought and decentered. Society resists being thought as a natural unity (like an organism or body) or as one that is closed by a structure, like patriarchy or capitalism, around a central antagonism or fundamental relation. Rather society can be seen as transiently and partially unified by temporary fixings of meaning. These are achieved in part through political struggles that change the relationship of social elements one to another.

Often though not always, the elements of society are articulated,

[21] In other words, this is a project of attempting to make difference rather than sameness "obvious," in the way that Sedgwick does for sexuality (1990: 25–6).

"sutured" as moments in a "hegemonic" relational structure. But this articulation is always ever incomplete and temporary, susceptible to subversion by the "surplus of meaning" of its moments (each of which has various "identities" in the sense of being differentiated within alternative relational systems). Thus the term "woman" has a different meaning when it is articulated with "private life" and "marriage" than when it is set in the context of "feminism" and "lesbian," and the latter contextualization is destabilizing to concepts of male prerogative associated with the former.[22] Identity, whether of the subject or of society, cannot therefore be seen as the property of a bounded and centered being that reveals itself in history. Instead identity is open, incomplete, multiple, shifting. In the words of Mouffe (1995) and other poststructuralist theorists, identity is hybridized and nomadic.

Perhaps we may pursue this further, into a region that is somewhat less traveled, to consider what this might mean for the economy, to ask what a hybridized and nomadic "economic identity" might be. If Mouffe and Laclau have rethought the "social," translating what was formerly closed and singular to openness and multiplicity, what implications might such a rethinking have for the "economic"? It might suggest, at the very least, that the economy did not have to be thought as a bounded and unified space with a fixed capitalist identity. Perhaps the totality of the economic could be seen as a site of multiple forms of economy whose relations to each other are only ever partially fixed and always under subversion. It would be possible, then, to see contemporary discourses of capitalist hegemony as enacting a violence upon other forms of economy, requiring their subordination as a condition of capitalist dominance.[23]

In the frame of such a discursivist and pluralist vision, emerging feminist discourses of the noncapitalist household economy can be seen as potentially destabilizing to capitalism's hegemony.[24] By placing the term "capitalism" in a new relation to noncapitalist "household production," they make visible the discursive violence involved in theorizing household economic practices as "capitalist reproduction." The feminist intervention problematizes unitary or homogeneous notions of a capitalist

[22] We are indebted to Daly (1991: 91) for a version of this example.

[23] For a longer and more developed version of this argument, see Gibson-Graham (1995b).

[24] Feminist economics (as well as other branches of feminist social analysis) has focused attention on unpaid household labor and the production and distribution of use values in the household and on the relative absence of these in both mainstream and Marxist discourses of economy (Waring 1988; Beasley 1994). For studies of the household economy and household social relations, see Delphy and Leonard (1992), Folbre (1993), Fraad et al. (1994), among many others.

economy. It opens the question of the origins of economic monism and pushes us to consider what it might mean to call an economy "capitalist" when more hours of labor (over the life course of individuals) are spent in noncapitalist activity.[25] It is possible, then, that such an intervention could mark the inception of a new "hegemonic discourse" of economic difference and plurality.[26]

At the moment, however, the conditions of possibility of such a discourse are decidedly unpropitious. For both as a constituent and as an effect of capitalist hegemony, we encounter the general suppression and negation of economic difference; and in representations of noncapitalist forms of economy, we have found a set of subordinated and devalued states of being. What is generally visible in these representations is the insufficiency of noncapitalism with respect to capitalism rather than the positive role of noncapitalist economic practices in constituting a complex economy and determining capitalism's specific forms of existence.[27]

In encountering the subordination of noncapitalism, we confront a similar problem to that encountered by feminists attempting to reconceptualize binary gender. It is difficult if not impossible to posit binary difference that is not potentially subsumable to hierarchies of presence/absence, sufficiency/insufficiency, male/female, positivity/negation. Thus rather than constituting a diverse realm of heterogeneity and difference, representations of noncapitalism frequently become subsumed to the discourse of capitalist hegemony. To the extent that capitalism exists as a monolith and noncapitalism as an insufficiency or absence, the economy is not a plural space, a place of difference and struggle (for example, among capitalist and noncapitalist class identities). The question then presents itself, how do we get out of this capitalist place?

Here we may fruitfully turn to the work of those feminists who

[25] See Katz and Monk (1993). Of course there are many possible indicators (such as numbers of people working at any one time, or value of output) that could be used to suggest the relative size of the "household economy."

[26] This is just one example of the sort of problem and opportunity that arises when noncapitalist forms of economy are theorized as both existing in society and as suppressed in economic discourse.

[27] This should not be taken to mean that there are no theorists who pursue a "dialectical" conception of capitalism, examining the ways in which capitalist development is a condition of noncapitalist development, but that such approaches are not dominant or even prevalent. Certain postcolonial theorists (Sanyal 1995, for example) argue that capitalist development in the Third World involves the constitution and valorization of noncapitalist economic activities, which articulate with and participate in constituting capitalism itself.

have attempted to (re)theorize sexual difference, to escape – however temporarily and partially – from the terms of a binary hierarchy in which one term is deprived of positive being. For woman to be a set of specificities rather than the opposite, or complement, to Man, man must become a set of specificities as well. If Man is singular, if he is a self-identical and definite figure, then non-man becomes his negative, or functions as an indefinite and homogeneous ground against which Man's definite outlines may be seen. But if man himself is different from himself, then woman cannot be singularly defined as non-man. If there is no singular figure, there can be no singular other. The other becomes potentially specific, variously definite, an array of positivities rather than a negation or an amorphous ground. Thus the plural specificity of "men" is a condition of the positive existences and specificities of "women."[28]

By analogy here, the specificity of capitalism – its plural identity, if you like – becomes a condition of the existence of a discourse of noncapitalism as a set of positive and differentiated economic forms. Feudalisms, slaveries, independent forms of commodity production, non-market household economic relations and other types of economy may be seen as coexisting in a plural economic space – articulated with and overdetermining various capitalisms rather than necessarily subordinated or subsumed to a dominant self-identical being.

But in order for this to occur, capitalism must relate to itself as a difference rather than as a sameness or a replication. For if capitalism's identity is even partially immobile or fixed, if its inside is not fully constituted by its outside, if it is the site of an inevitability like the logics of profitability or accumulation, then it will necessarily be seen to operate as a constraint or a limit.[29] It becomes that to which other more mutable entities must adapt. (We see this today in both mainstream and left discussions of social and economic policy, where we are told that we may have democracy, or a pared-down welfare state, or prosperity, but only in the context of the [global capitalist] economy and what it will permit.) It is here that anti-essentialist strategies can begin to do their work. If there is no underlying commonality among capitalist instances, no essence of capitalism like expansionism or property ownership or power or

[28] Here we may see a feminist argument for anti-essentialist discourses of identity as a political strategy of discursive destabilization, drawn from the work of Irigaray (Daley 1994, Hazel 1994).

[29] This is the problem, for example, with theories of capitalist regulation that array their "models of development" on an invariant social skeleton centered on capital accumulation (see chapter 7), or with representations of capitalist enterprises as centered by an imperative of profitability (see chapter 8).

profitability or capital accumulation,[30] then capitalism must adapt to (be constituted by) other forms of economy just as they must adapt to (be constituted by) it. Theorizing capitalism itself as different from itself[31] – as having, in other words, no essential or coherent identity – multiplies (infinitely) the possibilities of alterity. At the same time, recontextualizing capitalism in a discourse of economic plurality destabilizes its presumptive hegemony. Hegemony becomes a feature not of capitalism itself but of a social articulation that is only temporarily fixed and always under subversion; and alternative economic discourses become the sites and instruments of struggles that may subvert capitalism's provisional and unstable dominance (if indeed such dominance is understood to exist).

Strategy 3: Overdetermination as an anti-essentialist practice

The capitalism whose hegemony is intrinsic never attains full concreteness. Its concrete manifestations, its local and historical contextualizations, are always only modifications or elaborations of a dominance that already (abstractly) exists.[32] When capitalism is unified by an abstract self-resemblance, a conceptual zone is liberated from contradiction. Each time the name of capitalism is invoked, a familiar figure is (re)imposed on the social landscape.

For capitalism to exist in difference – as a set of concrete specificities, or a category in self-contradiction – it becomes necessary to think the radical emptiness of every capitalist instance. Thus a capitalist site (a firm, industry, or economy) or a capitalist practice (exploitation of wage labor, distribution of surplus value) cannot appear as the concrete embodiment of an abstract capitalist essence. It has no invariant "inside" but is constituted by its continually changing and contradictory

[30] The similarity here to anti-essentialist reconceptualizations of "woman" should be apparent. As sexual dimorphism has increasingly become understood as a discursive construct, it has become more difficult to see gender as socially constructed and mutable in contrast to the supposedly immutable (because biologically given) category of sex. Thus, there is a tendency now to recognize as "women" those individuals who are temporarily identified by themselves and others as women (who are, in Althusser's terms [1971], interpellated by the ideology of binary gender) rather than to define the category in some invariant way. No commonality unifies all the instances of "woman" in this anti-essentialist formulation.

[31] This is a project which is arguably being undertaken by those working on capitalist embeddedness or "different capitalisms" (see, for example, Mitchell 1995 and chapter 8).

[32] Usually this dominance is guaranteed by a logic of profitability, a telos of expansion, an imperative of accumulation, a structure of ownership and control, or some other essential quality or feature.

This move also undermines the presumptive or inherent dominance of capitalist class relations. When capitalism is represented as one among many forms of economy (characterized, say, by the presence of wage labor and the appropriation of surplus labor in value form), its hegemony must be theorized rather than presupposed. Economic sites that have usually been seen as homogeneously capitalist may be re-envisioned as sites of economic difference, where a variety of capitalist and noncapitalist class processes interact.

One example may convey some of the potential power of such a re-envisioning. In chapter 6, where we examine discourses of globalization, we briefly consider the international finance sector, which is often represented as the ultimate flowering of capitalism. Yet what can we say is necessarily capitalist about this industry, if we examine – with an eye to theorizing economic difference – its production relations, the sources of its revenues, and the destinations of its loans and investments? To the extent that firms in the finance sector are engaged in commodity production, some will be capitalist sites where surplus labor is appropriated as surplus value from employees whereas others will be sites of independent commodity production – for example, the personal investment manager who is a self-employed entrepreneur and appropriates her own surplus labor – and therefore noncapitalist. Other noncapitalist enterprises within the industry will be the sites of collective production and appropriation of surplus labor.[38] It is not clear what it means to call the industry capitalist given these differences in production relations, except that it entails obscuring rather than illuminating plurality and difference. Moreover the revenues that are accrued by the industry can be viewed as having entirely heterogeneous sources (some are distributions of surplus value in the form of interest payments from capitalist enterprises; some come from noncapitalist enterprises including independent producers, sites of enslavement and sites of collective or communal surplus appropriation; some are consumer interest payments, that is, nonclass revenues in the terms of Resnick and Wolff and therefore neither capitalist nor noncapitalist). Finally, the investment and lending activity undertaken by the industry can be seen as an unruly generative force that is not entirely disciplined by the imperative of capitalist reproduction.

Indeed, it is easy to tell a story that highlights the unprecedented opportunities this industry has created for the development of noncapitalist class relations: for instance, the huge increase in "consumer" credit has made it much easier for small businesses (including collectives and

[38] Partnerships, for example, in which the surplus – including profit – is jointly appropriated and decisions about its distribution are jointly made.

self-employed producers as well as small capitalist firms) to obtain needed inputs like equipment and supplies through credit card purchases. This growth in unmonitored business lending has undoubtedly contributed to the success and viability of a large number of noncapitalist enterprises, and especially to the growing practice of self-employment. Thus even if one theorizes the finance industry itself as thoroughly capitalist, it can be represented as existing in a process of self-contradiction rather than self-replication – in the sense that it is a condition of existence of noncapitalist as well as capitalist activities and relations. A frothy spawn of economic diversity slips out from under the voluminous skirts of the (demon capitalist) finance industry.

In the context of a capitalist monolith, where class is reduced to two fundamental class positions, sometimes supplemented by intermediate or ambiguous class locations, individuals are often seen as members of an objectively defined or subjectively identified social grouping that constitutes their "class." In the discursive space of diverse class processes, on the other hand, individuals may participate in a variety of class processes at one moment and over time. Their class identities are therefore potentially multiple and shifting.[39] Their class struggles (over exploitation, or over the distribution of its fruits) may be interpersonal and may not necessarily involve affiliation with a group.[40] What this means for a politics of class transformation is interesting but of course uncertain. It is clear, however, that a discourse of class exploitation and surplus distribution – and the theoretical vision of the variety of their forms – might enable some individuals to understand their economic experience as both a domain of difference and a region of possibility: the possibility, for example, of establishing communal or collective forms of appropriation, or becoming self-appropriating, or reducing the surplus that is appropriated by others, or changing the destination and size of surplus distributions.[41] How these possibilities might articulate with visions (and realities) of economic "improvement" or "liberation" or "equality" is an open question. The answers to this question are to be

[39] For example, a person may appropriate surplus labor from a partner at home, produce surplus labor at a capitalist place of work, and both produce and appropriate surplus labor as a self-employed entrepreneur. None of these class positions confers a fixed or singular class identity. Within one individual multiple class identities will overdetermine and contradict one another, as well as other positions of the subject.

[40] In chapter 3 we offer an extended discussion of class.

[41] Here we might imagine new sorts of alliances between managers and unions, for example, in capitalist firms, who might have common interests in reducing distributions of surplus value to financiers and instituting an Employee Stock Ownership Plan or other arrangement through which distributions to both unionized and non-unionized employees would be increased (see chapter 8).

constructed not only in theory but also perhaps through an anticapitalist politics of economic innovation.[42]

Strategy 5: Making do with the wreckage and rudiments

This book is founded upon a desire for deliverance from a capitalist present and future that offers little possibility of escape. But to the extent that we gain a certain freedom through the thinking and writing of the book, we lose as a consequence the positive force of our desire. We may struggle and strain to banish a hideous monster from our economic space. But our attempts at banishment and evacuation leave us in an impoverished landscape, full of lackluster abstractions ("difference") and emaciated categories ("noncapitalist class processes"). Freedom from "capitalism" has perhaps become imaginable (freedom at least of a discursive sort). But we leave behind us a creature larger than life and twice as exciting, to enter into a starveling's embrace.

Nevertheless we have embarked, or opened the possibility of embarking, upon a project that has a discernible logic and momentum. That project is to produce economic knowledge within (and by developing) a discourse of economic difference, and specifically a discourse of class.[43] At the outset, class as a category seems mundane and uncompelling, shorn of the consequence and privilege it enjoyed as the principal axis of antagonism in a unified capitalist space. The different forms of class processes are merely part of an "economy" that encompasses innumerable other processes – exchange, speculation, waste, production, plunder, consumption, hoarding, innovation, competition, predation – none of which can be said (outside of a particular discursive or political context) to be less important or consequential than exploitation. Situating and specifying class (and differentiating the many noncapitalist forms of class relations) is a theoretical process that involves discursively constructing the connections and contradictions between class and other social processes and relations, over small or great spans of space and time. In this process, the emaciated class categories will take on flesh. As they become embedded in stories and contexts, their emptinesses will be filled, their skeletal outlines plumped up by their "constitutive outsides." They will gather meaning and visibility, import and inflection. Narratives and

[42] Of course the eradication of capitalism may not be the object of such political projects, once capitalism is dissociated from images of necessary rapacity and predation, and from related tendencies toward economic monism or hegemonism.

[43] In this latter effort we are not alone (see, for example, the journal *Rethinking Marxism*). See also Gibson-Graham et al. (1997) where we bring together writings on class, economic difference, and subjectivity.

social representations of existing and potential alternatives to capitalism may begin to resonate, to generate affect, to interpellate subjects, to ignite desire. In other words, they may become compelling, just as so many representations of capitalism now are.

Here at the outset, however, the Identity of "capitalism" is for us much more compelling than the non-identity of "different class processes." We are still attuned to social narratives and images in which capitalism constitutes a powerful and pervasive presence, one whose social and economic ramifications are largely malign. Such representations call forth intense feelings and interpellate us as revolutionary antagonists to a capitalist economic system. In the absence of a "capitalist system" and the narratives that constitute and attend it, we feel an absence of the political emotions that are traditionally associated with anticapitalist politics. In slaying the capitalist monster, we have eliminated as well the subject position of its opponent.

This suggests that we may need to produce a noncapitalist economic imaginary in the absence of desire (or in the presence of multiple and contradictory desires). Whereas we may "desire" the "capitalist totality" because of the powerful antagonistic sentiments we feel in its vicinity, we may not want to live with it. We may want instead a landscape of economic difference, in the presence of which paradoxically we feel no desire. The process of social representation calls forth and constitutes desiring subjects – persons with economic, professional, sexual, political, and innumerable other compulsions and desires. But the representation of noncapitalist class processes has barely begun. Developing an economic imaginary populated with "friendly monsters" of the noncapitalist sort is itself a project – only minimally engaged in this book but underway in other locations – that has the potential to create new political subjects and desires.

For now, in this book, we will take only a few initial and rudimentary steps. We must starve capitalism's bloated body and invigorate its "constitutive outside" – these are the conditions of both envisioning "different capitalisms" and constituting a positive space of noncapitalist economic difference. Through this project of undermining and construction, we may begin the process of engendering new political visions, projects and emotions. Luckily this is a project we do not undertake by ourselves.

Representations of capitalism as political culture: a road map

We have chosen to focus this book primarily upon representations of capitalism, which we see as a formidable obstacle to theorizing and envisioning economic (and specifically class) difference. In terms of

the strategies set forth in this chapter, then, we have largely pursued strategies 1 through 3. These involve us in delineating the object of our critique (the hideous and hegemonic monster) and in undermining the representational coherences, correspondences and naturalizations that attend it.

So many and mutually reinforcing are the representations of capitalism, and so diverse are their origins and confluences, that we have sometimes felt quite daunted in the face of the capitalist eminence. Much as we now see economic development politics as taking on "the economy" in localized skirmishes, we have seen ourselves as taking on "capitalism" in brief bouts and fragmentary encounters. These small ways of contending with a large creature, linked together as the chapters of a book, may present both gaps and overlaps to a reader. We can only hope that she or he will experience the former as relief and the latter as needed reinforcement.

In a sense, the book starts with chapter 11, which began its life as a talk at a large conference on Marxism. Attempting to understand why there might be so much antagonism to capitalism, but at the same time so little politics focused on constructing noncapitalist alternatives, the chapter addresses the ways in which certain kinds of Marxian economic theory have become an obstacle rather than a spur to anticapitalist political projects. We see chapter 11 as a kind of companion to this first chapter, encapsulating the themes and import of the book. One way to read the book might be to read chapter 11 next.

Chapter 2 finds its companion in chapter 10, in the sense that they are both focused on methods of "deconstruction" and categorical destabilization. In the earlier chapter we explore the Althusserian concept and practice of overdetermination – its potential both for emptying the category "capitalism" and for filling it up differently. Chapter 10 finds in Derrida's recent book on Marx certain instabilities in the category "capitalism" that represent traces of or openings for noncapitalism in the present and proximate future.

Chapter 3 introduces "class" in its anti-essentialist conceptualization, suggesting a range of noncapitalist class relations on the contemporary economic scene. But we must look to chapter 9 for a fully developed exploration of a noncapitalist class process and its interactions with a capitalist one.

In chapter 8, which is also an offspring of chapter 3, we consider distributive class processes and explore capitalism itself as a difference. This chapter represents the capitalist enterprise as a decentered and differentiated site, where the process of exploitation (the production and appropriation of surplus value) can be seen as producing a "condensation" of wealth. Focusing on the enterprise as a collection point

from which wealth is dispersed in any number of directions, it suggests some of the contours of a new class politics of distribution.

In chapter 4 we explore both metaphorical and social space as colonies of capitalism and the phallus, where all objects are located and identified with respect to these master terms. Inspired by feminist representations of space and the body, we attempt to imagine spaces of becoming and difference, perhaps harboring or generative of noncapitalist forms. These themes are taken up in chapter 6 on globalization, where we attempt to undermine the "rape script" that structures globalization stories as narratives of capitalist penetration and dissemination.

In chapter 5 we interrogate the body metaphors that inform economic policy discourse, recognizing in systemic and organicist conceptions some of the origins of economic monism. In addition, we examine the ladder of evolution that sets economic development upon a single path (with capitalist development as its pinnacle). Drawing upon feminist rethinkings of the body and upon nonlinear conceptions of biological evolution, we attempt to undermine the notion of a unitary and centered (capitalist) economy pursuing a unidirectional development trajectory.

Following and extending the arguments of chapter 5, chapter 7 takes on the discourses of Fordism and post-Fordism, scrutinizing not only the conceptions of economic totality they embody but also the economic activism they have engendered. In both theory and practice, these discourses can be seen to be conditions of capitalist reproduction.

Each of these chapters represents a skirmish with the capitalist beast. In every encounter we depict the object of our obsession as powerful and well developed, but we also try to muzzle and silence it. Rather than giving it a platform from which to speak its dominance, as leftists including ourselves have often done, we enshroud it in a productive silence, in order that glimmers and murmurings of noncapitalism might be seen or heard. Perhaps these glimpses and low sounds will be tantalizing (or frustrating) enough to inspire some others to pursue them.

The Economy, Stupid![1] Industrial Policy Discourse and the Body Economic

Once upon a time, people used to talk about ISSUES and HAVE FUN. But then someone invented the economy . . . The economy grew and grew! It took over EVERYTHING and NO-ONE COULD ESCAPE.

(Morris 1992: 53, quoting from memory a recent cartoon)

I saw men on television (trade-union stars, Cabinet Ministers, left-wing think-tank advisers) visibly hystericized by talking economics: eyes would glaze, shoulders hunch, lips tremble in a sensual paroxysm of "letting the market decide," "making the hard decisions," "leveling the playing field," "reforming management practices," "improving productivity" . . . those who queried the wisdom of floating the exchange rate, deregulating the banks, or phasing out industry protection were less ignored than washed away in the intoxicating rush of "living in a competitive world" and "joining the global economy."

(Morris 1992: 51–2)

In *Ecstasy and Economics*, Meaghan Morris chronicles the ecstatic submission of white Australian men to "the economy."[2] Humbled before its godlike figure, grown men grovel and shout in fundamentalist rapture, transported in "an ecstasy of Reason" (1992: 77). By giving themselves over to a higher power, they have paradoxically gained mastery and authority. They "talk economics" and find themselves speaking the

[1] A sign allegedly posted in Clinton headquarters to remind campaign workers of the central issue of the 1992 presidential campaign.

[2] As Fred Block points out, the economy has increasingly become the social site which dictates or constrains social policy: "a broad range of social policies are now debated almost entirely in terms of how they fit in with the imperatives of the market" (1990: 3).

language of pure necessity, unhampered by base specificities of politics and intention. In the face of necessity, and in its despite, they project a wilful certainty that their economic "interventions" will yield the outcomes they desire.

During the 1980s and 1990s Australia has been one of the few OECD countries governed by a social democratic (albeit right-wing) Labor Party in which interventionist economic and industrial policies have been on the national agenda. Recently, though abortively, the Clinton administration promised to concern itself with many of the things that concerned the Hawke and Keating governments from the beginning: deindustrialization, lack of technological innovation, a labor force unsuited to the needs of industry, a weak competitive position in a rapidly changing world. In seeking models of successful intervention that have presumably fostered rather than blocked economic adaptation, American economic strategists looked to Australia for innovative ways of meeting Clinton's mandate to "grow the economy." These American analysts included not merely center and right-wing Democrats but Marxists and other leftists whose pronouncements were suddenly contiguous to debates in the mainstream press.

After 12 years (or maybe a lifetime) in exile, leftists in the US were "talking economics" in a room where just possibly they could be overheard. And the economics they were talking was in some ways very different from what was permissible just a few years before, when "industrial policy" or "managed trade," for example, could not be broached at the national level. Yet despite its release from old strictures and prohibitions, the discussion of economic policy seemed entirely familiar. It moved laboriously in a confined space, as though hobbled by an invisible tether or circumscribed by a jealous and restrictive force – something more potent even than the political realities that also operate to keep debate within narrow and familiar limits.

Despite their divergent positions on every issue, the right and left share a "discourse of economy" that participates in defining what can and cannot be proposed. What from a right-wing perspective may seem like a truly misguided left-wing proposal is nonetheless intelligible and recognizable as a member of the extended family of potential economic initiatives, and vice versa. This is not to say that right- and left-wing policy analysts profess the same economic theories and harbor the same social conceptions. In their positive proposals, their understandings of economy and society are often revealed to be quite different, and indeed they may have been trained in very different schools of thought.[3] Nevertheless, there seems to be a substrate of commonality, detectable in the ubiquitous affective paradoxes of submission and control, arrogance and caution, that structure the range of economic emotions. If the economy of the

s so different in its operations and possibilities from that of the ; why does it produce such similar affective disjunctions? Why is economy" at once the scene of abject submission, the social site that trains activities at all other sites, the supreme being whose dictates t unquestioningly be obeyed and, at the same time, an entity that bject to our full understanding and consequent manipulation? And is it, furthermore, that something we can fully understand and thus implication fully control is susceptible only to the most minimal stments, interventions of the most prosaic and subservient sort? at accounts for the twin dispositions of utter submission and con- nt mastery, and for boldness and arrogance devolving to lackluster nomic interventions?

Of course, these questions could be turned upon the questioner, d one might wish to understand how it is that I am positioned to the left and the right as operating within the same "discourse of nomy" despite the cacophony produced by their different starting ces, their divergent ends and means, their backgrounds in Marxism or oclassicism, their heterogeneous present attachments to Keynesianism, st-Keynesianism, and various forms of development economics. In at discursive space am I situated, that left proposals appear strangled d truncated rather than as reasonable or even as exhausting the realm the possible? If I turned to cultivating that space, to "growing an ternative discourse of the economy," what monstrous novelties might merge?[4]

The task of cultivation is so daunting that I scarcely know where o begin. But fortunately I do not have to make a beginning, since I oo ambpart of a lineage. Indeed, I can only locate myself outside the "discourse of the economy" by virtue of my association with an alternative conomic knowledge, even though the products of that knowledge are few nd far between.[5] What follows, then, can be read as the delineation of an existing formation whose magnificent contours can suddenly be seen rom the vantage of a new and separate space, itself uncultivated and nformed.

[3] Nor is it to suggest that leftists (or for that matter right-wingers) are unified in their economic thinking; or to deny that very different policy proposals will produce very different economies, belying the notion of a singular "economy" or economic conception.

[4] Haraway (1991) asks a similar question as she embarks on her monstrous project of "reinventing nature."

The body economic

Ailments in search of a cure

Anorexia, meaning without appetite, is a starvation syndrome that has reached epidemic proportions in wealthy western social formations. Deindustrialization, defined as the decline of traditional manufacturing, is an economic condition widely perceived as a threat to the industrial capitalist nations. What might be the connection between these two representations of disorder?

A solution to this riddle can be found in the ways in which medical interventions into anorexia, and industrial policy interventions into deindustrialization, are construed as potential "cures" for the ailments of a suffering body. Food is administered intravenously to the anorectic, and investment is lured to declining industrial regions, in order to revitalize an ailing corporeal being. Convincing the anorectic to participate in family therapy and negotiating with the downsized workforce to stem wages growth and introduce a new work culture are both attempts to foster the conditions under which the essential life forces, calories and capital, might restore the body to its natural state of health.[6]

Twenty years of investment policies directed at declining industries and regions have resulted in only marginal success in redressing the deindustrialization disorder. Yet there are few attempts to rethink the economic discourse upon which this "cure" is predicated. By contrast, the human body is currently the focus of a radical rethinking (see, for example, Bordo 1989; Gatens 1991; Grosz 1994b; Kirby 1992). Feminists exploring the social construction of the female body have questioned the centrality of the phallus, or its lack, in governing the actions of the embodied subject. The body is reappearing as a fluid, permeable and decentered totality in which physiological, erotic, mental, psychological, social and other processes mutually constitute each other,

[5] They include the emerging postdevelopment discourse exemplified in the work of Arturo Escobar (e.g., 1995) and others; various attempts to "marginalize the economy" in order to re-vision the conditions of social possibility (e.g., Block 1990); and the journal *Rethinking Marxism*, which is a site of the reinvention of Marxism as a discourse of overdetermination and anti-economistic social analysis (see as well Resnick and Wolff 1987).

[6] In a fascinating dialogue around the complicated association of female fatness with economic accumulation and waste, Michael Moon and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discuss the emergence of a Dickensian loathing and revulsion toward the fleshy female body in post-Enlightenment Western culture. They point to the shift, after World War I, "of thinness from being a lower-class to an upper-class female signifier" and to the delicate negotiation between representations of overeating as "unhealthy" and excessive dieting as "addiction" within the medicalized discourse of fat (1993: 233–4).

with no one process or zone being more invested with meaning or effectivity than another.

In part what has motivated this rethinking are the social effects of representing the (female) body as a bounded and structured totality governed by the psyche (or some other locus of dominance) instead of as a "material-semiotic generative node" with boundaries that materialize in social interaction" (Haraway 1991: 200–1). The physical and psychological tortures associated with the treatment of anorexia, for example, have prompted a reconceptualization of the body as a complexly overdetermined social site rather than a discrete entity subject to internal governance and medically restorable to self-regulation. Thus psychotherapist Harriet Fraad sees anorexia as an agonized crystallization of the contradictions "crowding in on [women's] lives" (1994: 131) as men, bosses, the media and women themselves exercise new and demanding expectations of women.

For Fraad, the body is both a site where the female subject takes control and resists social, sexual and economic expectations, and a site where control is relinquished as the anorectic takes to heart the body image associated with "success" as an object–woman.[7] The body is an overdetermined social location in which a multitude of social, political, physiological, and discursive practices participate in constituting the act of starvation. From the standpoint of this representation, the medical and psychological treatment of anorexia that focuses upon the individual and her family is addressing only a very few of the contradictory practices constituting the anorectic condition, and therefore has only limited potential as a cure.

Whereas feminist theorists have scrutinized and often dispensed with the understanding of the body as a bounded and hierarchically structured totality, most speakers of "economics" do not problematize the nature of the discursive entity with which they are engaged. Instead, they tend to appropriate unproblematically an object of knowledge and to be constructed thereby as its discursive subjects. In familiar but paradoxical ways, their subjectivity is constituted by the economy which is their object: they must obey it, yet it is subject to their control; they can fully understand it and, indeed, capture its dynamics in theories and models, yet they may adjust it only in minimal ways. These experiential constants of "the economy" delineate our subjective relation to its familiar and unproblematic being.

[7] Grosz argues that anorexia is "a form of protest at the social meaning of the female body. Rather than seeing it simply as an out-of-control compliance with the current patriarchal ideals of slenderness, it is precisely a renunciation of these 'ideals'" (1994b: 40). I would argue, with Fraad, that it could be both.

Constituted in relation to the economy as both submissive and manipulative beings, capable of full knowledge but of limited action, our political effectivity is both undermined and overstated. With the consummate and ultimately crippling arrogance of modernist humanism, we construct ourselves as both the masters and the captives of a world whose truth we fully apprehend. In the face of that world or, more specifically, of the discourse of its economic form, and in the trains of the subjectivity which that discourse posits and promotes, we struggle to mark the existence and possibility of alternate worlds and to liberate the alternative subjectivities they might permit. But in order to recreate or reinform the political subject – a project which is arguably a rallying point for left social theory in the late twentieth century – it is necessary to rethink the economic object. Given the centrality of the economy to modernist social representations, and given its role in defining the capacities and possibilities of the left, it is necessary to defamiliarize the economy as feminists have denaturalized the body, as one step toward generating alternative social conceptions and allowing new political subjectivities to be born.

The birth of the organism: metaphors of totality and economy[8]

Like the anorectic woman constructed as a target of medical intervention, the economy of the economic strategists and planners is depicted as a body, and not just any body. It is a bounded totality made up of hierarchically ordered parts and energized by an immanent life force.

[8] The movement among some economists to view economics as discourse, that is, as a site in which meanings are continually negotiated and ultimately unfixed, has generated a growing interest in metaphor among economic discourse analysts, who range from the relatively apolitical to the explicitly political in their interests and intentions. For McCloskey (1985), metaphor is but one of the devices used in the contest of rhetoric between competing paradigms. Thus, for example, the appropriation of physics metaphors by neoclassical economists was an attempt to establish scientific status for their emerging paradigm (Mirowski 1987: 159); it was part of a disciplinary process of self-justification, involving a quest for the appearance of rigor as well as ontological validation for privileging the individual within a theory of society.

In contrast to most though not all economic discourse analysts (see, for example, the work of Jack Amariglio and Antonio Callari), Foucault and Haraway are interested in metaphors for their social and political effects. Foucault is concerned with the ways in which power and knowledge intersect within economic discourse to enable particular conceptions of acting subjects and, within the modern episteme, to participate in producing Man (Amariglio 1988: 609). Haraway is motivated to deconstruct the metaphors through which we have understood society (both human and animal) in order to foster liberation and the building of "new relations with the world" (1991: 19).

word, the body economic is an *organism*, a modern paradigm of tality that is quite ubiquitous and familiar.

The organismic totality emerged, by some accounts, with the birth of e economy" as a discrete social location.[9] When Adam Smith theo- ed the social division of labor as the most productive route to social oduction, he laid the groundwork for a conception of "the economy" a coherent and self-regulating whole (Callari 1983: 15).[10] By analogy th the individual who labored to produce his own means of subsistence, reby constituting a unity of production and consumption, Smith saw ciety as structured by a division of labor among quintessentially conomic" human beings laboring for their own good and achieving e common good in a process of harmonious reproduction.

[9] Haraway (1991: 7) argues that, at the beginning of the industrial revolution in Europe, the representation of both nature (the natural economy) and political economy in terms of the body resuscitated organic images of the body politic developed by the ancient Greeks. While it is usually thought that economics in particular and social science in general poached their metaphors from physics and biology, actually economics has provided the source for some of the most well known metaphors of the natural world – including that of the organism and the metaphors employed in understanding evolution. Perhaps the most famous instance is Darwin's story of the way in which his own narrative of competition and struggle was inspired by the writings of Smith and Malthus.

Mary Poovey describes the emergence in eighteenth-century England of "the economy" as a distinct and bounded social domain in terms of a discursive object embedded in and giving shape to other aspects of social life: "The term *economy* initially referred to the management of a household . . . In the course of the eighteenth century, the word *economy* was yoked to the term *political* and used to signal the management of national resources . . . the economic domain can be seen as an Imaginary entity that is governed by a specific rationality, in this case, the logic and procedures by which productivity and financial security are thought to be ensured . . . Institutionally, the rudiments of what eventually became the economic domain were established in England in the late seventeenth century, in the Bank of England, the national debt, and the stock exchange. These institutions, in turn, along with the discipline by which they were detailed and naturalized – political economy – constituted the first of many concrete forms in which individuals encountered and imagined *the economic* to exist" (1994: 8–9).

[10] According to Callari (1983), Smith's theoretical object was to conform the homogeneity of human interests (the universal need for survival) with the heterogeneity of class positions (differential positioning with relation to the means of survival) that characterized a capitalist social formation. His was a quintessentially political project – to justify capitalism and its inequalities, including the existence of a class of propertyless individuals, within a social context in which an equalizing doctrine of needs and rights common to all men had been articulated and would prevail. By framing society as a unity in which inequalities of property and class were both a requisite and a guarantor of greater social well-being, Smith not only achieved his political objectives but set the stage for the emergence of "the economy" as a bounded and unified social instance.

In the absence of specialization producers are atomized, producing on their own or in small communities the wealth that satisfies their wants and needs; the "economy" is a plurality of practices scattered over a landscape. Increased specialization, however, requires greater social integration, in order for reproduction to take place. The *division of labor*, and the specialization it entails, thus necessitates the *integration of labor*.[11] Over the course of history, then, what was once plural becomes singular. Fragmentation becomes an aspect of unification rather than a state of atomism and dispersal. Scattered economic practices come together as "the economy" – something we all recognize, though may differently define, in economic discourse today.

Eighteenth-century students of animal nature adopted the vision of "the social economy" as a metaphor for the animal body, even referring to the latter as an "animal economy," which they envisioned as "various organ parts or functions" operating in a coordinated "division of labor" for the common good (Canguilhem 1988: 88). Drawing on the developing lore of machinery, these founders of modern physiology used the notion of an internal regulator or governor[12] to understand the way in which "organ systems seemed to be controlled from within" (p. 88) and had the capacity to maintain an equilibrium or "normal" state.

A developing vitalism breathed life into these conceptions, ascribing to human and animal bodies "some inherent power of restitution or reintegration" (p. 89). "Life" makes the organism susceptible to death and disease but also gives it the capacity for recovery (p. 132), the ability to re-establish wholeness or "health" in accordance with its telos or life form (p. 129). As the organism's invisible sovereign, "life" connects the internal to the external, the visible to the invisible, producing the "coherent totality of an organic structure" (Foucault 1973: 229). Its presence establishes reproduction of the organism (the struggle against death) as its raison d'être.

It is relatively easy to read certain forms of Marxian theory as tracing the lineaments of an economic body. In many versions of Marxism, the capitalist economy or society is represented as a totality governed and

[11] See Sayer and Walker (1992). Buck-Morss (1995: 449) points to the paradox inherent in this otherwise elegant vision – the real bodies of workers become stunted and stultified by the nature of the divided labor they are required to do "in order for the social body to prosper." "Smith's sleight of hand he himself called the "invisible hand" . . . What appears to individuals as their own voluntary activity is used, cunningly, by nature to harmonize the whole, so that each person is 'led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention' (*The Wealth of Nations*, 4:2: 485)."

[12] A part that functioned to control the functioning of the other parts, which was itself associated with the political notion of "wise government of a complex entity to promote the general welfare" (Canguilhem 1988: 131).

propelled by the life force of capital accumulation. The requirements of this life force structure the relationship of parts within the whole, ordaining the extraction of surplus value from labor by capital, for example, which is facilitated by the division of functions among financial, commercial, and industrial capitalist fractions. Social labor is pumped from the industrial heart of the economy and circulates through the veinous circuitry in its commodity, money and productive forms. As it flows, it nourishes the body and ensures its growth.

As the invisible life force of the capitalist economy, capital accumulation establishes the economy's overarching logic or rationale, its telos of self-maintenance and expanded reproduction. In addition, a regulatory mechanism such as the rate of profit, or competition, or the business cycle, may operate like a thermostat to maintain the economy in a steady state. Ultimately, however, the life "narrative" of the economic organism incorporates not only health and stability but illness and death. Thus, a capitalist economy experiences growth punctuated by crises, and may even be susceptible to breakdowns of an ultimate sort. When it eventually fails and dies, it will be succeeded by another organic totality, a socialism that is presumably better adapted to the conditions that brought about capitalism's dissolution.

Some Marxian theories have attempted to dispel or attenuate the economic determinism and functionalism of this story by externalizing the regulatory function and by theorizing reproduction as a contingent rather than a necessary outcome of capitalist existence. French regulation theory and social structures of accumulation (SSA) theory,[13] for example, have invoked the role of political and ideological – as well as economic – norms, habits and institutions in the process of economic regulation and have attributed to historical "accident" the maintenance of stability in the relation of production to consumption. Despite these attempts to suppress both the teleological and functionalist aspects of "classical" Marxian theory, these frameworks represent the economy and society as an organic structure that operates as a unity among harmoniously functioning parts (see chapter 7). Capitalist history is portrayed as a succession of such structures, each one experiencing maturation and healthy functioning followed by sickness and death. Growth and reproduction are the narrative constants of capitalism's story, revealing the hidden role of accumulation as its life force.[14]

[13] Founding texts within these traditions include, respectively, Aglietta (1979) and Gordon et al. (1982).

[14] This is not to say that all Marxian theorists conceptualize the economy as a coherent and self-reproducing totality but simply that this is a prominent strand of thought within the Marxian tradition (which could be seen as quite internally divided with respect to this type of economic representation.)

In all these narratives there are elements of what might be called cybernetics or systems theory, as well as images of living bodies and machines; indeed, it is difficult to trace concepts like feedback, equilibrium, regulation, and reproduction to a single origin in a particular type of being or science. Though it may be the case as Haraway asserts that the mechanical and cybernetic images became more prevalent in the twentieth century, there was no unilinear movement from organic to mechanical and then to cybernetic conceptions.[15] Thus the concept of the "organism" was not an obvious or natural characterization of the human or animal body, which was developed and then applied to other totalities susceptible to this conceptualization. Rather it was constructed in an interaction of metaphors of economy, machinery, and physiology and indeed only coalesced, according to Foucault, as a hegemonic metaphor of totality, informing both the social and natural sciences, at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the age of modernism and of Man.

Metaphor and mastery, organism and intervention

Foucault places in a transitional moment at the end of the eighteenth century the first use of organic structure as a "method of characterization" that

> subordinates characters one to another; . . . links them to functions; . . . arranges them in accordance with an architecture that is internal as well as external, and no less invisible than visible. (1973: 231)

Man's body, constituted as an organism structured by a life force that produces order from within, became at this time the modern *episteme*, setting unspoken rules of discursive practice that invisibly unified and constrained the multifarious and divergent discourses of the physical, life, and social sciences. Modern economics is grounded in Man's body,

[15] While different in detail and language, the structure of the organic and mechanical metaphors is similar, with the entity internally ordered around a hierarchy of functions. Freud speaks in *Civilization and Its Discontents* of the extension of the human organism's powers by the use of tools and machinery: "With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning" (1930: 27); "man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent . . . " (pp. 28–9). The permeable boundary between body and machine is one of the things that allows the easy translation between organic and mechanical imagery that is so characteristic of economic discourse today. It is often in the context of Keynesian policy discussions, which are more accommodating to the role of a driver, that the mechanical representation replaces the organic – thus the familiar images of getting the economy rolling again, kick-starting it, etc.

finding the essence of economic development in man's essential nature – his labor (the struggle against nature and death), for example, or his needs and desires (Amariglio 1988: 596–7; Amariglio and Ruccio 1995b). These bodily essences structure a field which is itself the very map of Man, an economy that is organically interconnected, hierarchically organized and engaged in a process of self-regulated reproduction.

Feminist theorists have argued that it is a gendered body "that was the foundation for representing all things, and thus giving things their hidden meaning" (Amariglio 1988: 586) in the modern age. In the modernist regime of gender, human characteristics and other categories are disaggregated upon a binary discursive template in which one term is dominant and the other subordinate and devalued. Though the two terms exist in and through relation to each other, the regime of gender conveys a license to forget the mutuality of dependence. The dominant term thus becomes independent – in other words, its dependence upon its other for its very existence is forgotten – while the subordinate term is unable to exist without its opposite; it is defined negatively, as all that the dominant term is not.

It is not difficult to see in the story of Man and his body the interplay of an infinite set of gendered oppositions – a brief list might include mind/body, reason/passion, man/nature, subject/object, transcendence/immanence. What is interesting, however, is the way in which the regime of gender is a *colonizing* regime, one that is able to capture other dualities and to partially subsume them. Thus as soon as we produce a dualism incorporating two related terms, gender may operate to sustain meanings of wholeness, positivity, definition, dominance, reason, order, and subjectivity (among others) for the first term and incompleteness, negativity, unboundedness, subordination, irrationality, disorder, and objectification for the second.[16]

In this way it becomes possible to understand the bizarre dance of dominance and submission through which Man addresses the economy. When Man is positioned as the first term in their binary relation, he is the master of the economy and of its processes; but when Man (perhaps in the guise of "society") is positioned as the second term, he bows to

[16] The colonizing aspect of the regime of gender has to do with its embeddedness in what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence in which true identity (or presence) involves exclusion and demotion (of the absent, or what it is not). Feminist theorists, including Irigaray and Kristeva, have long argued that this metaphysics is "implicitly patriarchal; the very structure of binary oppositions is privileged by the male/non-male (i.e. female) distinction" (Grosz 1990a: 101). One could also say, however, that it is racist, heteronormative, and many other things; in other words, it is not necessary to privilege gender in the construction of identity/presence and the consequent devaluation of difference or the "other."

the economy as to his god. Each positioning is informed and constituted by an infinity of binary hierarchalizations.[17]

Man and economy are related by analogy and conflation as well as by hierarchical opposition. Each is a body governed by Reason or a locus of Reason in an irrational domain. Each is an organic unity that maintains itself by subsuming or displacing its exterior, producing integration and wholeness as an effect.

In Man's discursive constitution, dominant (male) human characteristics are represented as universal while subordinate (female) characteristics are externalized or suppressed. They subsist as the Other – woman or nature – to Man, by whose absence or suppression he is defined. Through the operation of the regime of gender, Man becomes a creature who is fundamentally rational and whose fate is mastery and control – of nature, of woman, of all non-Man (Sproul 1993). He is the arrogant knower, whose thoughts replicate and subjugate the "real."

By analogy and by extension, the economy is the locus of Reason in the social totality; it is therefore the dominant social instance. It is the social site of rationality and order, to which the irrational disorder of non-economic life must submit. This hierarchical ordering of the social body, with the economy at/as its head, can be translated into relations of determination. The economy's ability to author its own causation – and to produce its own wholeness and sufficiency as an effect – confers upon it the status of *determinant* with respect not only to itself but to its insufficient other, the external *determined*. Thus the organismic conception contributes to the emergence and prevalence of economic determinism, positing the non-reciprocal relation of economic cause to social effect. As Man is the subject of history, and all the world his object, the economy is the subject of society and enacts its effects upon that passive terrain.

Man and the economy are masters of themselves and of their external domains, and it is through Reason that their internal and external mastery is attained. The analogous operation and dominance of Reason in both beings guarantees the truth of rationalist economic knowledges and techniques. Through Man's logical powers, the orderly operations of the economy can be mirrored, its functioning preempted by his deductions. It is this subjective conflation that gives Man the organic knowledge

> to invent forms of production, to stabilize, prolong, or abridge the validity of economic laws by means of the consciousness he attains of them and by means of the institutions he constructs upon or around them, . . . (Foucault 1973: 369, speaking about the historicity of man)

[17] E.g., man(mind)/economy(body) or economy(god)/man(humanity), ad infinitum.

Given its qualities of wholeness, transcendence, and rationality (for which one might read "perfection") the organic economy is sometimes seen as functioning appropriately without intervention. From certain perspectives, the economy is the word to which the flesh is always and necessarily subsumed. From others, the existence of reason in the economy signals the possibility of successful intervention but also and simultaneously the limited need and scope for intervention. Thus the economy may need its "pump primed" or its life force "re-ignited"; it may need to be "whipped into shape" or "kick-started" to get it "rolling" again. Someone may need to take the helm, pulling on the "levers" that govern the speed and direction of the machine:

> ("Mr Keating emerges from his bunker"): headlines shouted that he was picking up the reins, handling gears and pulling levers again. (Morris 1992: 24)

> Once Labor was elected, the labour movement made a number of assumptions about taking control of the economic levers of power. (Comment by Chris Lloyd, a left-wing union researcher, from an interview by Curran 1991: 27)

Ultimately, however, these interventions are subservient to the logic and functioning of the economy itself.

Finally, there are those for whom the determinist logic of the economy, and its replicability in the rationalist formulations of the mind, make possible the invention of model economic experiments, rationally operating creatures wholly sprung from the mind of Man. These often represent the economic organism transmuted into the noncapitalist form of socialist or libertarian utopias.

In all these conceptions, the economy is both the master of Man and the site of his mastery, whether that mastery be gained through knowledge or through action. This paradox reflects Man's dual existence: as mind and as embodied Reason, he governs and controls; but as mere and mortal body, he looks to the economy, the perfect face of Reason, and submits to it as to his god. This back and forth is the signature of the binary and hierarchical regime of gender. Man cannot escape it, for it is his creator. Instead he plays it out in the discourse and practice of economic intervention.

Bypass surgery: tinkering with the ticker

The organismic economy calls forth a particular discourse of intervention that establishes the masculinist subject position of intervener/controller. Thus the affective discourse of economy is always to some extent a discourse of mastery: the terrain of the economy is laid out by economic

theory, with its entryways and pathways clearly marked and its systems interconnected. Spreading the economy before him as his dominion, economic theory constructs Man as a sovereign/ruler. And the familiar terrain of the body is his domain.

It is not hard to see lurking in the vicinity of economic and industrial policy a body engaged in a battle for survival. Couched in the language of the living body or machine, the economy is portrayed as an organism (machine) whose endemic growth dynamic (or mechanical functioning) is in jeopardy. Diagnoses usually focus upon two key areas of economic physiology, obstructions in the circulation system and/or malfunctioning of the heart. The faltering national economy is often compared to healthier bodies elsewhere, all poised to invade and deprive the ailing, or less fit, organism of its life force. Economic and industry policy is formulated to remove the internal, and create immunity to the external, threats to reproduction.

The analogy of the blood's circulation system and the role of the heart in keeping the volume and rate of flow sufficient to ensure reproduction enables a specific set of interventions and manipulations. In recent years, for example, in most industrialized nations the call for wage restraint has been justified in terms of the presumed negative effect of wage increases upon profitability and economic growth. Wages, it is argued, have been the problem, the obstruction in the system of capital circulation that has prevented growth. In the United States wage cuts have been implemented through such tactics as union decertification, two-tier wage structures, and concession bargaining. In Australia, federally legislated policies of wage restraint have been supported by the unions through the Accord.[18]

Visions of an organized and interconnected economic system in which interventions have predictable (and even necessary) effects have facilitated the acceptance of cuts in real wages in Australia. Wage increases have been portrayed as blocking (via their influence on the rate of profit) the generation of a pool of funds available for investment in the expansion and modernization of Australian industry. The backwardness of national industry has been seen as the major constraint upon the international competitiveness of Australian products. By the straightforward logic of organic reproduction, in which specific and focused interventions have a noncontradictory and presumably restorative effect on the whole, wage cuts have been proposed not only to free up investment capital and

[18] The Accord is the tripartite agreement established in the early 1980s between the newly incumbent Federal Labor Government (then under the leadership of Bob Hawke), business interests and established labor unions. In its various incarnations, the Accord has established the guidelines for industry and work practice deregulation and reregulation. It was built upon Hawke's reputed strengths as a conciliator and arbitrator of traditionally opposed interests.

increase competitiveness, but to "overcome the problem of a deficit in the current account of the balance of payments" by "curtailing the demand for imports" and "cutting the costs of exporting and import-substituting industries" (Stilwell 1991: 32).

When a totality is centered, internally connected, hierarchically ordered and governed by laws of motion that can be replicated by reason in the mind of man, the strategist has only to identify the right place to start the treatment (tinkering) and soon the whole will be healthy (working) again. Curtail wages, it is argued, and the flow of investment into the crucial parts of the body economic will take place. At the base of this curative vision is the metaphoric heart of the economy – manufacturing production. It is here that the life blood of the system, capital, is most efficiently created and it is from this site that it is pumped to peripheral sectors and the unproductive extremities.

Given its presumably critical role in economic development and social well-being, it is not surprising that manufacturing investment has long been a concern on the left. In the US in the 1980s, Bluestone and Harrison's influential book *The Deindustrialization of America* (1982) focused attention on disinvestment in the domestic manufacturing sector, identifying foreign investment by multinational corporations and unproductive expenditures on mergers and acquisitions as its principal causes. In Australia, lack of generative investment in manufacturing has variously been attributed to the unwarranted expansionism of the mining sector or the alluring rewards of speculation.[19]

In the context of the prevalent discourse of manufacturing-centrism, it becomes clear that the organicist notion of a hierarchy of functions within the economy – and specifically the essentialist conception that one or several parts are critical while others are peripheral or supportive – has constrained and directed the possibilities of economic intervention. In this as in other centered formulations, the growth dynamic is perceived as emanating from a single economic location.[20] Manufacturing is viewed as the driver of the economy, and all other parts of the economy (including agriculture, services, government, and households) are seen as ultimately

[19] In the 1980s, the problem was seen to lie less in the alternative conduits that drained investment away from Australian manufacturing than in the volume of investment itself which could be derived from the capital–labor relationship. The Accord, with its focus upon wages and industry policy, was established to remedy this.

[20] In many types of economic theory and industry policy discourse, this location is something other than manufacturing (such as tourism, finance or other producer services) but the effects of producing a centered and hierarchically ordered vision are the same. As long as there is a position in theory for a dominant process or instance, analysts will produce a knowledge and politics oriented toward developing and managing that social site to the exclusion of others.

deriving their growth from growth in manufacturing. These other sectors may contribute to the reproduction of capitalist society but they are not the key to its survival – perhaps because they are seen as not generating surplus value, or because they are viewed as low productivity sectors that do not contribute sufficiently to growth, or for some other reason. Growth in these sectors is portrayed as flab, not the hard muscle required for a taut and terrific body economic:

> in order for the shift of employment to services to be developmental and not become a shift to poverty, we (the United States) must maintain mastery and control of manufacturing production. (Cohen and Zysman 1987: 16)

Many types of economic activity are thus relegated to secondary status as targets for resources and attention.[21]

Indeed the organicist conception contributes to a very familiar hierarchy of policy priorities. While some types of economic activity are seen as essential to social survival, and as therefore necessitous of intervention, others are viewed as frosting on the social cake. Though it may be widely recognized and lamented that child-care and its low wage providers are in difficult economic straits, policymakers will remind us that unless we take care of manufacturing we are *all* up the creek.[22]

Buttressed by the conception of the organism as a self-maintaining self-rectifying body, strategists may argue that restoring growth in key or lead sectors will set the entire economy upon a path of growth or recovery. In this view, the principle of efficiency dictates that interventions be targeted at the critical locations. When economic conditions are dire, intervening to improve child-care centers is like offering a bandaid to a patient with a heart attack.

The interconnectedness of the parts, and the accessible logic of their interconnection, enables intervention at some distance from the problem (symptom). It thus becomes perfectly reasonable to argue that if we want decent child-care centers we must start with productivity increases or wage cuts in manufacturing. It is also acceptable to ignore or to postpone

[21] One of the few interventionist strategies to challenge the productionism and manufacturing-centrism of much industry policy was the London Industrial Strategy. Among the political economists and economic geographers who provided the background economic analyses for this broad-based strategy there appeared to be a genuine willingness to question the role of manufacturing in the economy, the reliability of profitability as an indicator of performance, and the marginalization of unpaid labor and non-market activities in economic discourse (Massey 1988). Industry strategies were formulated for cultural industries, child-care and the retailing sector in London (Greater London Council 1985).

[22] In the more mean-spirited version, it is argued that child-care helps those with children while manufacturing helps us all.

dealing with problems in most parts of the economy since presumably these will be rectified by the healthy functioning of the heart.

The truth of all these representations is guaranteed by a rationalist conviction that the reductive logic of economists reflects the orderly and parsimonious logic of the economy itself. These logics dictate that economic interventions will have predictable and noncontradictory outcomes and they define the relation of policymakers to the economy as that of Man to machine. Thus you may quite easily arrive at the bizarre conclusion that general economic well-being will be enhanced by wage cuts; and by associating this vision with an invincible and deific figure, you may sell this program to an entire nation of wage earners and economic believers.

Matters of life or death

In economic policy discourse, whatever the diagnosis, there is seldom a question that we are dealing with a unitary system, whose future must necessarily involve reproduction that can only be achieved through growth. To return to the anorexia analogy, the economy is an individual whose survival instinct has been waywardly misplaced, and who must now be forced via gentle or rough persuasion to eat and grow. It is not a collectivity of bodies, which in their diversity are variously getting fat, giving birth, dieting, dying, transforming, and coupling as calories pump into and out them in a decentered, almost directionless way. Rather the economy is an organized and purposeful whole governed by laws of survival that cannot be countervened.

The lawful self-regulation of the economic organism dictates that interventions must ultimately serve or operate within the organism's telos of organized growth. Policy then is affected not only by the essentialism of the organic metaphor, which ascribes generative power and causality to certain aspects of the totality and withholds it from others, but also by the functionalism of this conception.[23] The economy is reduced to a set

[23] This functionalism could be seen as another form of essentialism, in that the economy (or society) itself is the "founding totality of its partial processes" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 95).

The charge of functionalism has been made against Marxian economics by countless anti-Marxists as well as by some neo-Marxists (e.g., Elster 1982 and Barnes 1992). Elster and Barnes trace functionalism within Marxism to the inappropriate adoption of biological metaphors of organism and reproduction within a social science that values the reflexivity and individualism of human behavior. But this judgment of inappropriate theoretical choices rests upon the assumption that there is an arbiter of appropriateness (the rules of correspondence or coherence notions of truth) or that objectively "better" metaphors could be found. Such an assumption cannot grasp Foucault's idea of an episteme, which sidesteps questions of appropriateness in search of the rules and conditions of possibility of an historically grounded knowledge.

of functional relations that are coordinated by the rules and requirements of capitalist reproduction. Thus no matter whether an intervention is well or ill conceived and managed, its effects are necessarily to perpetuate "capitalism" and capitalist class relations. This invisible prescription circumscribes and constrains even the most left-wing economic proposals and analyses.

Stilwell (1991) argues, for example, that the expected effects of wages restraint in Australia – deflation, reduction of the balance of payments deficit and growth – were easily subverted by the inflationary effects of monopoly pricing, the increased demand for imports from those on non-wage incomes, and the flow of newly created investment funds into paper entrepreneurialism or property speculation rather than production. Stilwell's economy may not have gotten the infusion that the social democrats intended; the actions of "individuals" (functioning according to the logic of individual self-maintenance rather than in their alternative role as parts of the larger economic and social organism) may have betrayed the common interests represented by the body of which they are a part. Yet this did not ultimately threaten the capitalist organism. Lack of effective management resulted in reproduction locally of the ugly face of capitalism – workers with wages cut and no revitalized national economy to show for it. But the organism remains intact because the organicist discourse allows for no other proximate outcome.

Organic functionalism subsumes the future to the contours of the present. But it also precludes envisioning diversity and multiplicity in the consequences of economic intervention. Society as organism is a set of conformable interests in which all benefit from the healthy functioning of the whole:

> Functionalism has been developed on a foundation of organismic metaphors, in which diverse physiological parts or subsystems are coordinated into a harmonious, hierarchical whole. Conflict is subordinated to a teleology of common interests. (Haraway 1991: 24)

Certainly, in Australia, the interests of business and the organized labor movement have been represented by political and union leaders as effectively harmonious:

> *Australia* needs a sustainable high growth strategy that avoids or minimizes the effects of the boom-bust cycles of the past. Metal workers and *all Australians* simply cannot afford a vision of nation building which leads to low growth and another one or two boom-bust cycles during the 1990s decade. (MEWU 1992: 24, emphasis mine)

In the face of this kind of assertion, which is buttressed by a notion of common "national" interests, it is difficult to maintain a sense that any

"growth strategy" – indeed, any intervention in a complex totality – will have uneven and contradictory effects.

That the strategic unionism advocated by leftists has so easily been led into strategic functionalism, that is, into advocating policies that help materialize the reproduction of capitalist practices, has long been a matter of concern to those whose economics focuses less upon reproduction and more upon the potential for economic dysfunction (MacWilliam 1989). Bryan (1992) argues, for example, that the Australian left had no business supporting any form of wage restraint, as this only served to shore up the accumulation process and avert, once again, the threat of imminent crisis.

The life/death opposition that lies at the nub of the organic metaphor presents the opportunities for political intervention in the form of a simple duality. If I don't wish to pursue industrial strategies for patching up or resuscitating capitalism, I can upend the analysis and concentrate upon exacerbating the pre-conditions of death. Though most leftists now abjure the millennial goal of promoting "the revolution" by promoting organic dysfunction, organic functionalism has locked them into the alternative goal of promoting capitalist health. In order to create employment and rebuild communities, they must participate in strategies and programs to foster capitalist development, capitalist reindustrialization, and capitalist growth (see chapter 7). Many on the left would like to see an alternative to capitalism, but they face a unitary economy that allows for no such proximate possibility. Their options are to promote the healthy functioning of capitalist economies or to see working people and others marginalized and impoverished. This is not a particularly inspiriting choice, yet its grounding in humanism and organicism is seldom questioned or even brought to light.[24]

Beyond life and death

Donna Haraway argues that if the future is given by the possibility of a past, then an "open future" must rest upon a "new past" (1991: 41–2). This could involve, I would argue, a new conception of totality, one that abandons the organism as we know it. Haraway gives some

[24] Callari (1991) argues that the economistic (and organic) theoretical framework of classical Marxism effectively "economized the political" by focusing political discussion upon the economic conditions under which capitalism would fail, rather than the moral and legal, that is, political, processes which determined the future of capitalist practices. By defining political subjects in terms of their economic interests and positions predetermined by the "closed economic mechanism that constituted capitalism" (p. 203) socialists have been strait-jacketed into the logic of this mechanism, perpetually waiting for the "revolutionary moment."

encouragement that such a discontinuity is possible:

> One is not born a woman, Simone de Beauvoir correctly insisted. It took the political-epistemological terrain of postmodernism to be able to insist on a co-text to de Beauvoir's: one is not born an organism. Organisms are made; they are constructs of a world-changing kind. (1991: 208)

In a similar vein, Foucault prepares the way for a rethinking of totality in non-organic and non-anthropomorphic terms. Having shown how the vitalism of organic structure could not have been thought within the discourse of the sixteenth century and thus how Man's body could not have existed as the "ground for discourse" before the nineteenth century (Amariglio 1988: 589), he speculates in the conclusion of *The Order of Things* upon the end of the modern episteme and the fundamental arrangements of knowledge that made it possible for the figure of Man to appear:

> As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.
>
> If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility – without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises – were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea. (1973: 387)

In a search for a new social and economic totality, born of the old but perhaps not its semblance, I sometimes turn to discourses of economic change.[25] Certainly, I tell myself at these moments, it is in the

[25] The question of course arises whether we want to dispense with the concept of totality entirely. This is certainly an option, but one which leaves the concept untouched, whereas the alternative option of reworking the concept of totality will always be to some extent compromised by the organicist meanings of the term (see Cullenberg 1994b). Each strategy has its strengths and its pitfalls. In this paper, I have chosen to rework rather than abandon "totality" as a concept, taking inspiration from feminist projects of retheorizing the body. Feminist rethinkings of the body (its boundaries, its hierarchical ordering, its psychological and social topography, etc.) have not meant purging the body from discourses of the subject and society; on the contrary, they have been partially responsible for reinstating the body as a prominent focus of such discourses, one with important theoretical implications and social effects.

Laclau and Mouffe are engaged in an interesting project of retheorizing the social totality, though one different from the project I am pursuing here: "Our vision is to a large extent holistic, since it presupposes that any identity is differential . . . and that the systems of differences are articulated in totalities which are 'historical blocs' or 'hegemonic formations.' But unlike classical sociological holism . . . we do not feel these configurations or social totalities to be self-regulating totalities but precarious articulations that are always threatened by a 'constitutive outside'" (Laclau 1990: 221–2).

iscourse of economic restructuring, produced over the last twenty years y Marxist political economists in a variety of social science fields, that have had the most experience of (re)constructing the organic economy. erhaps it is also in this context that I might have the greatest chance f perceiving an emergent totality,[26] one that is no longer constrained y essentialism and reproductionism, or inflected with the arrogance of nterventionist humanism. Perhaps I might find the ground from which o move beyond the outmoded but still unreplaced "progressive" options f socialist "revolution" or capitalism with a human face.

The ladder of evolution

Genealogies of capitalism, metaphors of organic development

The discontinuity which, in Foucault's archaeological terms, marked the beginning of the modern age brought the rise of History as the organizing principle of knowledge. Along with History came an interest in the internal organic relations between elements of a totality, the life and death of organic structures, and the linear sequencing, or succession, of analogous structures (1973: 218–19).

Certainly in the discourse of economic change there has been no shortage of coherent structures succeeding each other in orderly progression. In recent years, for example, one of the distinctive features of Australian left-wing industrial policy has been the promotion of a new "model of industrial development." This model is none other than post-Fordism, an industrial "paradigm" that focuses upon the developmental role of small and medium-sized firms and the reorientation of business and work cultures around flexibility, computerized technology, networking, and strategic alliances both within sectors and between producers and consumers (Mathews 1990). The aim of industry interventions is to create the conditions under which a fully fledged post-Fordist economy might be born, unimpeded by obstructionist union regulations or demarcations, business attitudes, or statutory barriers. Underlying the vision of the new industrial model are the familiar metaphor of the economic organism

[26] The literature on internationalization is a good example of a discourse that constantly undermines the notion of organic boundary. One of the difficulties still faced in this literature is the problem of how to replace the conception of a "national economy" (a bounded organism) with any meaningful unit. While some political economists have substituted international capitalism as the mega-organism (Bina and Yaghmaian 1991; McMichael and Myhre 1991), others have abandoned the search for a self-reproducing, holistic totality in favor of an overdetermined totality of processes (capitalist and noncapitalist) that occur over space (global and non-global) (Ruccio, Resnick and Wolff 1991; McIntyre 1991).

and an associated conception of capitalist development as a succession of organic structures, or "models of development" (this term is taken from Lipietz 1992), each structurally similar to but qualitatively different from the last.[27]

In his collection of "popular scientific" essays on origins and evolution, Stephen Jay Gould (1991) tells the wonderful story (entitled "Life's Little Joke") of competing depictions of the evolutionary development of the modern-day horse. Until recently, the case of the horse has served as the common illustration of species evolution up a ladder of continuous development from primitive to modern. Each lock step of the ladder is marked by increasing size and height, decreasing number of toes and an increase in the complexity of the grinding teeth. This standard iconography of evolution has, according to Gould, "initiated an error that captures pictorially the most common of all misconceptions about the shape and pattern of evolutionary change" (p. 171). The metaphor (and illustrative device) of a ladder portrays evolutionary development as an unbroken continuity. It encapsulates the view that horses developed through a series of sequential stages of development, each adapted to the changing environment at hand. In similar fashion, the current penchant for representing the history of twentieth-century capitalist development in terms of a series of progressive steps from pre-Fordism to Fordism to post-Fordism places economic organisms on a ladder of sequential adaptation (see figure 5.1).[28]

Gould's reading of the fossil evidence, and that now commonly accepted, has caused a radical rethinking of the ladder metaphor and the adaptive functionalism it embodies. He argues that the metaphor of a bush might better suit the evolutionary drama that is partially revealed by the fossil record:

> Evolutionary genealogies are copiously branching bushes – and the history of horses is more lush and labyrinthine than most. To be sure,

[27] In *Working Nation: The White Paper on Employment and Growth* recently issued by the Labor government in Australia, not only is a post-Fordist model of development represented as the optimal way forward but the body of the economic region has undergone a marked transformation. No longer starved and anorectic, in need of force-feeding with infusions of outside investment, the regional economic body is now pregnant with possibility: "[The post-Fordist model] portrays the region as already full of economic potential that needs only to be liberated by intervention" (which will mainly take the form of) instilling a new business culture within local areas . . . Now regions are the homes of 'stakeholders' who have it in their power to make their regions into 'pockets of excellence,' 'entrepreneurial hotspots,' in short, industrial growth centres" (Gibson-Graham 1994a: 149).

[28] Alternatively, capitalist development has been theorized as a succession of social structures of accumulation, regimes of accumulation and modes of regulation, or as the supersession of organized by disorganized, or competitive by monopoly, capitalism.

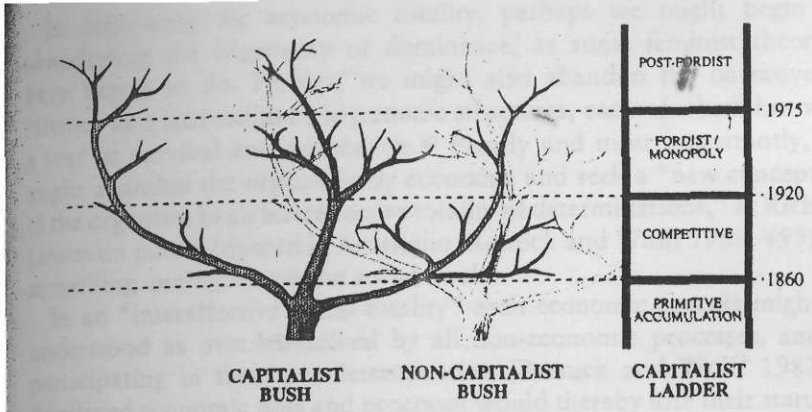

Figure 5.1: Metaphors of economic evolution

> Hyracotherium is the base of the trunk (as now known), and Equus is the surviving twig. We can, therefore, draw a pathway of connection from a common beginning to a lone result. But the lineage of modern horses is a twisted and tortuous excursion from one branch to another, . . . Most important, the path proceeds not by continuous transformations but by lateral stepping . . . (Gould 1992: 175)[29]

Within economic restructuring discourse some empirical studies likewise question the hegemony of the ladder of economic development. Storper (1991), for example, has produced an interesting discussion of four different models of technically dynamic industrial development that have coexisted during the twentieth century within different cultural contexts. Only one of these models (found, not surprisingly, in the United States) is consistent with what we have come to call Fordism.[30] Piore and Sabel (1984) have highlighted the viability of forms of flexible specialization within capitalist industry in northern Italy throughout the so-called Fordist era. The work of economic sociologists and anthropologists suggests a vision of a diversity of industrial structures, firm types and models of development interacting in different combinations. The selection of particular models as "universal" or "dominant" in the accepted narratives of capitalist development reflects, I would argue, the power of metaphors of organicism and ladders of evolutionary change.

[29] The imposition of the model of a ladder upon what, in Gould's reading, is "the reality of bushes" places at the forefront of evolutionary progress only unsuccessful lineages on the very brink of extinction "for we can linearize a bush only if it maintains but one surviving twig that we can falsely place at the summit of a ladder" (p. 181). The familiar iconography of evolution shows, then, rather than a ladder of progressive adaption and evolution, a pathway to extinction. Life's little joke is that humankind is often portrayed at the pinnacle of a similarly structured hierarchy of living things, highlighting, for Gould, the imminence of our species extinction rather than our evolutionary superiority.

[30] Criticism of the generalizability of the (US based) Fordist mass production industrial paradigm has come from many quarters. Hudson and Sadler (1986), for example, have questioned its relevance in the UK.

In economic development theory as in biology there has been a tendency to run "a steamroller over a labyrinthine pathway that hops from branch to branch through a phylogenetic bush" (Gould 1992: 180) of economic forms (see figure 5.1). In the process the many capitalist and noncapitalist forms that have co-existed with the "dominant" form have been obliterated from view. This discursive marginalization functions powerfully to constrain the visions and politics of the future, prompting, for example, industry interventions designed to facilitate the step into post-Fordism (seen as currently the most adaptive, advanced, and efficient form of capitalism) and thereby making it less likely that non-post-Fordist and noncapitalist forms will continue to exist (see chapter 7).

As Gould's story shows, the representation of history as a sequential ladder has the effect of reducing eco(nomic)-diversity. By denying the existence of other branches and pathways, the image of development as a ladder of evolution promotes the monolithic capitalism it purports to represent. In its most egregious and easily recognizable manifestation, the development ladder ranges the countries of the world along a unilinear hierarchy of progress, calling forth attempts to eradicate "traditional" economic forms and replace them with capitalist industrialization.[31]

Modern Darwinian evolutionary theory constructs a vision of the "naturalness" of domination. During the early nineteenth century, the representation of the body or population (animal, vegetable, or human) as an organism which is somehow internally motivated by a fight for survival became inextricably linked to concepts of natural dominance (Haraway 1991: 42). In economic terms, dominance came to be understood as the dominance of capitalism and capitalist class processes over all other forms of economy and exploitation. Economic evolution has become a story of the progressive emergence of ever more efficient, more competitive, and therefore dominant forms of capitalist enterprise, technology, and economic organization.

[31] Of course it is useful to remember that the ladder metaphor plays not only a central role in the economic development literature, but also in treatises about socialist transition. Socialism has often been seen as the lock step above capitalism in the development ladder, a vision that has now lost most of its potency, even on the left.

In rethinking the economic totality, perhaps we might begin by abandoning the hegemony of dominance, as some feminist theorists have begun to do. Perhaps we might also abandon the narrative of History as a succession of hegemonic structures, each of which has won a war of survival and adaptation.[32] Finally and most importantly, we might abandon the organic body economic and seek a "new conception of the organism as an intereffective totality of determinations," as Richard Lewontin puts it (quoted in Amariglio, Resnick and Wolff 1988: 499), or something analogous on the social level.

In an "intereffective social totality" each economic process might be understood as overdetermined by all non-economic processes, and as participating in their overdetermination (Resnick and Wolff 1987).[33] Privileged economic sites and processes would thereby lose their status as causes that are not simultaneously effects. Lacking its unifying rationale or essential life force, the economy would be deprived of its integrity and its commitment to reproduction. As the desiccated shell of the organism fell away, we might glimpse a region of infinite plurality and ceaseless change, in which economic processes scatter and proliferate, unhampered by a ladder of development or a telos of organized growth.

Here again Gould's story may contribute to a reconceptualization:

> Who ever heard of the evolutionary trend of rodents or of bats or of antelopes? Yet these are the greatest success stories in the history of mammals. Our proudest cases do not become our classic illustrations because we can draw no ladder of progress through a vigorous bush with hundreds of surviving twigs. (1991: 180)

My analogous question is "Who ever heard of the development in the contemporary western world of noncapitalist class processes[34] like feudalism or slavery as prevalent forms of exploitation, or of independent commodity production as a locus of "self-appropriation"? Yet these are the greatest survival stories in the history of class. Our focus on the development of the different forms of capitalist enterprise (and by implication

[32] As poststructuralist and some forms of post-Marxist theory urge us to do (e.g., Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Consider, for example, the plea of Soja in his essay on "History: Geography: Modernity" for a liberation of the geographical or spatial imagination from "an overdeveloped historical conceptualization of social life and social theory" (1989: 15).

[33] The concept of overdetermination (see chapter 2) involves the mutual constitution and intereffectivity of all social and natural processes. This concept allows for a decentered vision of social sites and a nondeterminist reading of historical eventuation.

[34] By class process I mean the process of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labor which involves an exploitative moment (in which surplus labor is appropriated from its direct producer) and a distributive moment in which it is distributed to various social uses and destinations (see chapter 3).

of capitalist exploitation) has made it difficult to conceptualize the persistence and establishment of many noncapitalist forms of exploitation in households, shops, small factories, farms and communes (represented in figure 5.1 as a shadowy bush). Our metaphor of the organism, in its functionalism and holism, has contributed to the portrayal of all noncapitalist class processes as subordinate to and reproductive of "capitalism." It has fostered an understanding of capitalism as a unitary figure coextensive with the geographical space of the nation state (if not the world)[35] rather than as a disaggregated and diverse set of practices unevenly distributed across a varied economic landscape. On the metaphorical ladder of evolutionary development, noncapitalist forms of exploitation have been denigrated as primitive remnants of a dominance long past, perhaps still existing in Third World countries but not consequential in the social formations of the so-called developed world. Ignored by socialists focused and fixated on capitalist dominance, these noncapitalist forms have been neglected as sites of political activity and class transformation or dismissed as the revolutionary ground of populists and romantics.

No organism, no guarantees

By centering the organic economy on capitalist class processes and on ostensibly dominant economic forms, economic policy discourse curtails and truncates the possible avenues of economic intervention, to the cost of all those interested in the political goal of class transformation (Ruccio 1992). The ladder of development that places post-Fordism (or some other successful form of capitalism) at the pinnacle of contemporary economic adaptation precludes the possibility that noncapitalist adaptation may be simultaneously taking place and, at the same time, precludes the possibility of successful socialist projects and interventions.

In the face of this restrictive vision and the set of possibilities it allows, some feminist theorists have abandoned the conception of the economy as a unified and singular capitalist entity, emphasizing the role of the household as a major site of noncapitalist production in so-called advanced capitalist social formations (see, for example, Folbre 1993, Waring 1988). Eschewing the formulations of what is sometimes known as dual systems theory, in which patriarchy and capitalism are viewed as two forms of exploitation situated respectively in the household and industrial workplace, certain feminist theorists have identified a variety of forms of household class relations (Fraad et al. 1994; Cameron 1995).

[35] This conception is certainly the distinctive and most powerful legacy of classical economics.

They represent the household as a site of difference and change in terms of both the types of production that take place there (including use values for domestic consumption, like clean rooms and cooked meals) and the ways in which surplus labor is produced and appropriated by household members.[36]

This feminist attempt to retheorize and displace "the economy" has powerful and potentially far-reaching implications. It effectively decenters the discourse of economy from the capitalist sector without at the same time establishing an alternative center for economic theory. At the same time, its emphasis on the diversity of *household* forms of economy and exploitation opens the possibility of theorizing class diversity in the *non-household* sector. Once that possibility exists, we may begin to produce a knowledge of diverse exploitations in "advanced capitalist" social formations. Such a knowledge is one of the conditions of a politics of class diversity, and the absence of such a knowledge is one of the conditions that renders such a politics unthinkable and obscure.

The hegemony of the organism and the ladder within certain types of Marxian (and much non-Marxian) economic theory has prevented a complex, decentered knowledge of an overdetermined economic and

[36] Some have argued that, in certain households, the feudal domestic relation (see chapters 3 and 9) in which a woman produces use values that are appropriated by a male partner is being politically renegotiated under the influence of feminism and the growing acceptance of gender equality (e.g. Fraad et al. 1994). In these households communal processes of surplus labor production and appropriation are being invented and explored. It is interesting to note that many industry interventions are actively undermining the viability of noncapitalist class processes – both within and outside the household – rather than supporting them. In the push to establish post-Fordism in Australia, for example, the centralized wage fixing system that has prevailed throughout most of the twentieth century is being dismantled. The move to enterprise bargaining threatens to destroy the established tradition of flow-ons whereby the gains of the organized labor movement have been generalized across the economy as a whole. Negotiation of a communal class process in households rests, in part, upon the growing economic independence and equality of women *vis-à-vis* their male partners. In Australia, at least, any trend toward gender wage equity, or comparable pay, has come through industry union representation. Under this system many women workers have earned industry standard award wages and regulated working conditions that have helped to secure their economic rights in household negotiations. The adoption of enterprise bargaining has little to offer most women as, in the deregulated but still segregated labor market, it is they who are often employed in smaller, more risky companies in which their bargaining positions may be weak. Indeed the first Annual Report on Enterprise Bargaining (1994) reveals that women covered by certified agreements and nonunion deals are less likely than men to receive wage increases (Martin 1995: 4). The class effects of such an industry policy may well be to resuscitate the capitalist class process of surplus value production and appropriation within capitalist enterprises, large and small, while at the same time undermining one of the conditions of existence of communality in households.

social totality from emerging. These metaphors have generated a simple and restrictive vision of "the economy," one that – in ironic counterpoint to the assessed failure of most economic policies and programs – is associated with a discourse of masterful intervention and mechanical eventuation. To the extent that this vision has currency, economic discourse and the economic policy it gives rise to is a drama in which Man aspires to the state of transcendent Reason and mastery. Unfortunately, arrogance and failure are the shadows that play upon the stage.

To envision the economy as an overdetermined social location, no more susceptible to logical or active mastery than is the world in its contradictory fullness, proliferative rather than reductive of forms, profoundly unstable yet immoveable from the fulcrum of economic intervention, is to forego the ecstasy of rationalism and the arrogant security of determinate effects. Yet it is also to give up the organic totality and its linear path of evolution and to see beyond reproducing capitalism with a human face.

Though it is not therefore malleable to our manipulations, our totality is what we discursively make it. Perhaps we can make it a site for the envisioning and enactment of new class futures.