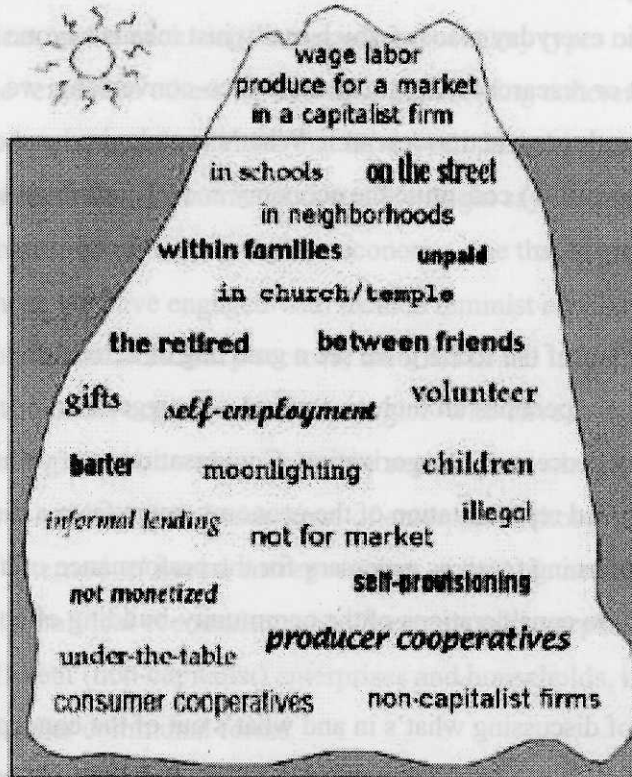


(<http://www.communityeconomies.org/papers.php>)

A diverse economy: rethinking economy and economic representation

J.K.Gibson-Graham



The economic iceberg (drawing by Ken Byrne)

The iceberg is an economic representation we use in our action research projects to stimulate conversations about 'the economy.' This image is one way of illustrating that what is usually regarded as 'the economy'—wage labor, market exchange of commodities and capitalist enterprise—comprises but a small subset of the activities by which we produce, exchange and distribute values. It honors and prompts into expression our common knowledge of the multifarious ways in which all of us are engaged in economic activity. It opens up conceptions of economy and places the reputation of economics as a comprehensive and scientific body of knowledge under critical suspicion for its narrow focus and mystifying effects.

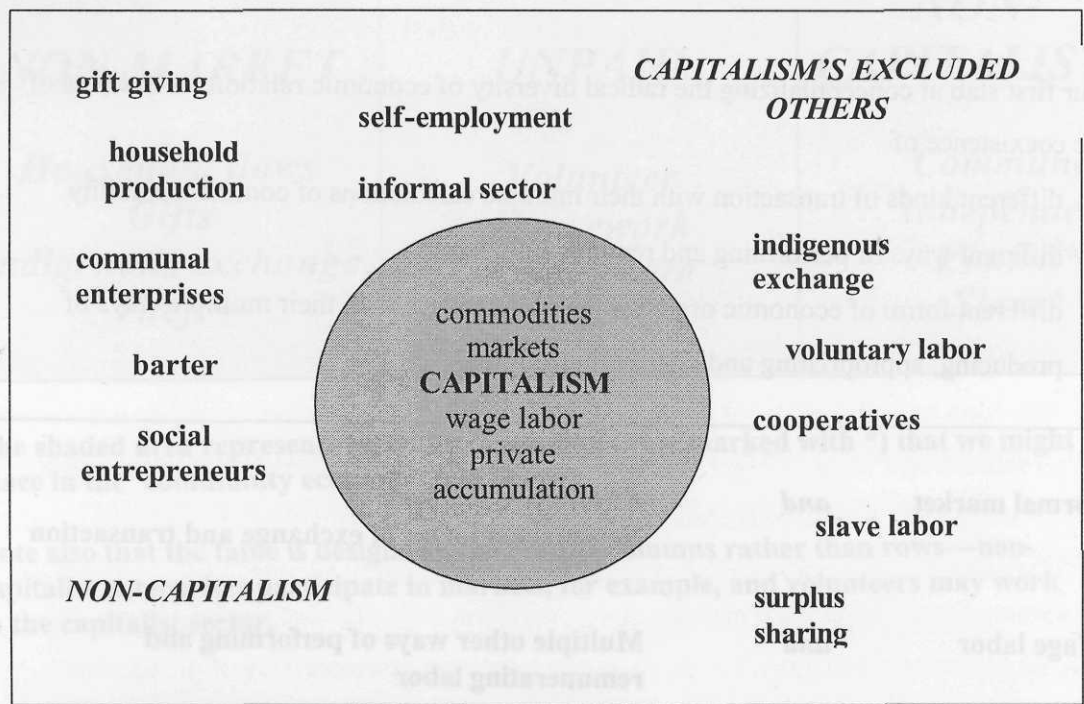
Everyday people in everyday places (which really just means anyone who is not an economic theorist or researcher) are the principal co-conversants we are engaged with in rethinking economy through action research. What's at stake in these conversations is **who** and **what** is seen to 1) constitute the economy and 2) contribute to economic development.

In the submerged part of the iceberg we see a grab bag of activities, sites and people. The chaotic, laundry list aspect has an inclusive effect—it suggests an open-ended and ultimately arbitrary process of categorization. Conversations we've had around what to include in an expanded representation of the economy range from a discussion of putting on makeup in the morning (seen as necessary for the performance of a worker identity and thus as 'work') to considerations of the community-building effect of giving.

The very process of discussing what's in and what's out of the conception of economy is democratizing, involving people in the practice of 'making the economy' (a politics of discursivity). The discussions help to generate new economic imaginaries and strategies for ourselves, local economic activists, economic development agencies and NGOs interested in economic activism.

The iceberg diagram is an explicitly pedagogical version of what we have called our diverse economy framework (see below), a representation that has emerged from more academically oriented conversations with theorists of economic difference. In these academic interactions, what's at stake for us is **capitalocentrism**, the hegemonic representation of all economic activities in terms of their relationship to capitalism—as the same as, the opposite of, a complement to, or contained within capitalism. Our attempts to destabilize capitalocentrism have included a number of theoretical strategies: 1) deconstruction of familiar economic representations, 2) production of different representations of economic identity, and 3) development of different narratives of economic development.

Our deconstructive project is engaged in unhinging economic thinking from the singular law of value inscribed in capitalocentric discourse. As with any deconstruction, our first step has been to show how a representation of the ECONOMY as essentially CAPITALIST is dependent on the exclusion or suppression of many types of economic activity. Interestingly, the ‘excluded others’ upon which the seeming coherence of capitalism is based include a range of activities that have been the subject of inquiry by non-economists or non-mainstream economic analysts. We might say that these theorists are constructing an alternative common sense of the economy, one that is growing in influence worldwide. Those we have engaged with include feminist economists who have problematized the **household** and **voluntary sectors**, theorists of the **informal sector** in both the ‘third’ and ‘first’ worlds, economic anthropologists who have focused upon **indigenous kin-based** and ‘**gift**’ **economies**, economic sociologists who have problematized the cultural and social embeddedness of enterprises, those interested in the **social economy** and its ‘alternative’ **social entrepreneurs**, economic networks and organizations, and marxist political economists who have pursued a **surplus-oriented** economic analysis of different (non-capitalist) enterprises and households, including worker cooperatives and other communal forms.



Marshalling work on the ways in which social value is produced, transacted and distributed other than those traditionally associated with capitalism has transformed the subordinate term of the CAPITALISM / NON-CAPITALISM binary, rendering it a positive multiplicity. But we have also attempted to deconstruct the dominant term, making capitalism different from itself. In particular we have been interested in mapping the multiple logics and registers of value that vie for preeminence within capitalist corporations. This work on capitalist difference parallels the rich literature on culturally embedded forms of capitalist enterprise.

The project of producing radically heterogeneous economies motivates our commitment to multiplying registers of value, commensurabilities, and strategies of surplus appropriation and distribution. We find ourselves engaged not in establishing a new, more socially acceptable law of valuation, but in opening up for question the ethical decisions involved in the momentary fixing of value, commensurability, and surplus appropriation and allocation.

Our first stab at conceptualizing the radical diversity of economic relations is in terms of the coexistence of

- different kinds of transaction with their multiple calculations of commensurability
- different ways of performing and remunerating labor
- different forms of economic organization or enterprise with their multiple ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus

Formal market	<i>and</i>	Alternative markets Non-market forms of exchange and transaction
Wage labor	<i>and</i>	Multiple other ways of performing and remunerating labor
Capitalist enterprise	<i>and</i>	Other forms of enterprise where private accumulation of surplus is not core business

A Diverse Economy

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Organizational Form</i>
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
<i>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</i> <i>Local trading systems Alternative currencies Underground market* Co-op exchange Barter</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE PAID</i> <i>Cooperative Self-employed Indentured* In kind</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</i> <i>Environmental ethic Social ethic State enterprise Non-profit</i>
<i>NON-MARKET</i> <i>Household flows Gifts Indigenous exchange Theft*</i>	<i>UNPAID</i> <i>Volunteer Housework Family care</i>	<i>NON- CAPITALIST</i> <i>Communal Independent Feudal* Slave*</i>

The shaded area represents activities (excluding those marked with *) that we might place in the 'community economy' (see below).

Note also that the table is designed to be read as columns rather than rows—non-capitalist enterprises participate in markets, for example, and volunteers may work in the capitalist sector.

This framework is not attempting to be comprehensive but is always developing and changing according to context and use. It is so provisional that it feels uncomfortable even to write it down and circulate it in a semi-permanent textual form. What we have presented are various lists organized in columns that denote certain economic processes. We could, presumably, go on adding dimensions and indeed some people have urged us to add columns for finances, resources and the environment. We look forward to conversations that might help us specify other processes around which economic multiplicity is generated (for example, ways of interacting with the environment), but at present our most developed thoughts revolve around the processes of transaction, labor, and organization of surplus appropriation and distribution.

What's at stake for us in this representation of the diverse economy is the ability to begin to identify and construct a **community economy** in which decisions about commensurability, labor remuneration, and surplus labor production, appropriation and distribution are brought to the fore as ethical practices—practices through which selves, communities, regions and societies are formed and sustained. The community economy is to some extent a normative representation of the diverse economy, one in which certain ethics are valued over others. For example, while the diverse economy recognizes the contemporary prevalence of slavery as a mode of economic organization, or indentured labor as a form of remunerated labor, or theft as a mode of transaction, it is difficult in the abstract to imagine the place of these things in a community economy where contemporary ethics of justice and democracy are assumed to prevail.

One salient question that emerges for us concerns the role that capitalist enterprise might play in a community economy. In the table we have located capitalist enterprises that recognize an environmental or social ethic and state enterprises and non-profits that do not operate according to the dynamics of accumulation in the shaded sections associated with the community economy. In this sense our normative representation of the economy is not anti-capitalist. Instead we are interested in incorporating our understanding of capitalist difference into the community economy and in constructing a variety of

(mutually transformative) relationships between non-capitalist economic practices and capitalist ones.

This brings us to one of the creative edges of our project of rethinking economy where we are beginning to explore the dynamics of economic development outside of a capitalocentric framing in which the (uni)linearity and dominance of capitalist progress have too long held center stage. Here we are moving beyond the issue of representing economic **identity** to that of representing economic **dynamics**. Increasingly we are drawn to conversations with theorists of post-development who reject the discursive grip of Eurocentrism, unidirectionality and growth on narratives of economic change. And we are interested in what we can learn from new ecological theories of interdependent co-development. At stake in these conceptual ruminations is the possibility of novel economic interventions but also the recognition that these will have unpredictable outcomes. This brings us back to our conversations with communities, local economic activists, NGOs and planners. If we abandon any faith in certainty and embrace the implications of overdetermination and mutual constitution, what might economic interventions be and become? How might ethics enter into discussions of economic experimentation and evaluation?

The other edge to our project involves working on producing subjects of non-capitalism. In our action research projects we have found that while recognition of the diversity of the economy comes easily to people, what is hard is to imagine oneself as an active agent capable of building and sustaining non-capitalist economic practices. While most of us may already be operating in this role in our households and communities, our **non-capitalist economic identity** as such is not brought into language and visibility and our desires for non-capitalism are not kindled. Indeed the desire for recognition as a subject of capitalism is what appears to be uppermost. In countless ways popular representations fan the desire to be a consuming subject of capitalist commodities, an investor with a claim on capitalist wealth, or a participant in capitalist enterprise. Working against and with these desires, unraveling their 'capitalist' versus their inchoate non-capitalist

economic nature, kindling desires for different kinds of identification and connection via economic practices—these are the goals and substance of our action research.

Feminizing the economy: metaphors, strategies, politics

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Introduction

Feminists have long seen ‘the economy’ as a gendered site. In the nineteenth century writers like Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Harriet Taylor Mill focused on the exclusion of many women from paid economic activity and women’s consequent economic dependence on men. In the twentieth century the emphasis shifted somewhat to the exclusion of women’s unpaid economic activities, like housework and childrearing from understandings of economy. In this paper we bring together the work of a range of contemporary feminists examining the approaches used to redress the exclusion of women, the different metaphors and strategies drawn upon to feminize the economy, the political concerns that set the context for each approach and their effects.

In terms of our own political location, this paper is part of a larger project in which feminist theorizing and empirical research has been an inspiration and guide to help us make visible and promote non-capitalist forms of economy. Our interest is in developing alternative ways of thinking economy outside of dominant capitalocentric conceptions. Such conceptions position non-capitalist economic activities with respect to capitalist economic activities in the same way that woman is positioned with respect to man in a phallogocentric symbolic order—as the *same as*, a *complement of*, *subordinated to* (and we

have added *contained within*) the dominant term (Gibson-Graham, 1996:35).ⁱ A concern to liberate the subordinate term from the inevitable structure of valuation associated with phallo/capitalo-centric logic motivates our interest in the ways other feminists have gone about rethinking economy.

Within contemporary feminism we can identify a number of different but related strategies of feminizing the economy. All seek to bring about some sort of change in policy or economic practices. All employ a discursive politics, producing the 'whole economy' in terms of new metaphors of representation along with techniques of enumeration that will bring into view something which has been previously hidden. In this paper we problematize this strategic quest for completeness by setting it along side a deconstructive strategy, comparing the different politics that emerge from each.

Metaphors of Economy

Feminist rethinkings have responded to the exclusion of feminized activities from the economy by challenging and shifting the boundary between what is considered economic and non-economic. In doing so they have worked within a discursive terrain that sees the economy as a bounded whole that is transparent and knowable. Mary Poovey (1996) traces the emergence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries of an economic domain separate from politics and theology. Writing in 1623, Edward Misselden, a prominent English merchant, conceived "an abstracted economy . . . literally realized in the form of a giant glass globe that the king can enter and consult at will" (p. 4). He proposed that merchants, with their newly developed double-entry bookkeeping system of accounting, were able to keep track of the ebb and flow of goods and bills of exchange

and provide accurate economic advice to the king as he contemplated the management of trade and commerce from within his giant glass sphere.

With the formal academic definition of political economy as “the study of any activity relating to the production and distribution of wealth”, Gillian Hewitson notes that the political economist Nassau Senior, writing in 1836, included the “study of female labour market activity ..[as].. within the scope of political economy” but “excluded female activity within the home”, “since the former and not the latter result in transferable objects for an explicit exchange price” (2001:6). If the activity of women in the household was not considered wealth-generating, it was not completely ignored by political economy. Drawing on organicist metaphors prevalent in the field of nineteenth century evolutionary biology, Marx, for example, saw household activities as important forms of social *reproduction* that supported and sustained capitalist economic *production* but did not quantitatively contribute to capital accumulation (Gibson-Graham, 1996:100).

Timothy Mitchell (1998) drawing on Mirowski (1987) attributes the contemporary idea of ‘the economy’ as a separate, closed and self-regulating system with distinct physical dynamics like equilibrium, stability, elasticity and inflation to the emergence of physics as a coherent scientific discipline in the late nineteenth century (p. 85). Importantly, he identifies two processes through which this self-contained sphere of the economy has today become fixed and self-evident (p. 92). One involves what we saw Senior doing in the nineteenth century, that is, *excluding* what does not belong to the economy, for example, the household or the state, thereby defining certain areas of social life as “non-economic” (p. 92). The other involves what Poovey saw the merchants of the seventeenth century doing, *counting and measuring* everything within the ‘economic’ sphere. In the

twentieth century measures such as Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product powerfully reinforced the idea of a distinct and measurable economic space.

Feminist thinkers interested in enlarging the scope of the economic have challenged these processes of exclusion and measurement head on by proposing strategies for **adding on** and **counting in** activities that have been ignored or hidden. We turn now to examine some of the strategies they have used to re-present and re-enumerate the economy.

Expanding the ‘Whole Economy’

Adding On

Feminizing the economy has firstly involved adding a new sphere to market production and exchange, or what is formally recognized as ‘the economy’. The economy is thus expanded by conceptualizing it as a dualistic whole comprised of a masculinized realm of paid work and a feminized realm of unpaid domestic, child-based, nurture-oriented, voluntary and community work. These two realms have been named and conceptualized in different ways.

Production and reproduction

Drawing on socialist feminist analysis, economic geographers such as Suzanne McKenzie and Damaris Rose proposed that what is usually thought of as the economy, the *sphere of production*, is only half the picture (1983). Missing is the *sphere of reproduction* which consists of women’s unpaid domestic and community work as well as home work for the market, associated with the social reproduction of labour power. Feminist geographers argue that the sphere of reproduction is necessary for a more complete understanding of the capitalist economy because without the reproduction of labour power on a daily and

generational basis productive activities would grind to a halt.ⁱⁱ Given its Marxist lineage, this expansion of the economy reinforces an organicist image of a capitalist economic system with life-like capacities for reproduction and death.

Hand and heart

In *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (2001) Nancy Folbre argues that market economies are sustained by caring and nurturing activities that she associates with the heart. She writes “We must stop assuming that norms and preferences of caring” for others come from “ ‘outside’ our economic system and can therefore be taken as given” (p. 210). While Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* of the invisible hand of the market that ensured the supply and demand of goods and services through competition he also believed in the moderating effects of human benevolence, which he elaborated in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Since Smith’s time, however, the unbridled pursuit of self-interest through the market has eroded values of care, obligation and reciprocity. Folbre’s remedy is to include within the economy both the monetized values exchanged by the invisible hand of the market and non-monetized values generated and distributed by the invisible heart of care (p. 231).

Exchange and gift

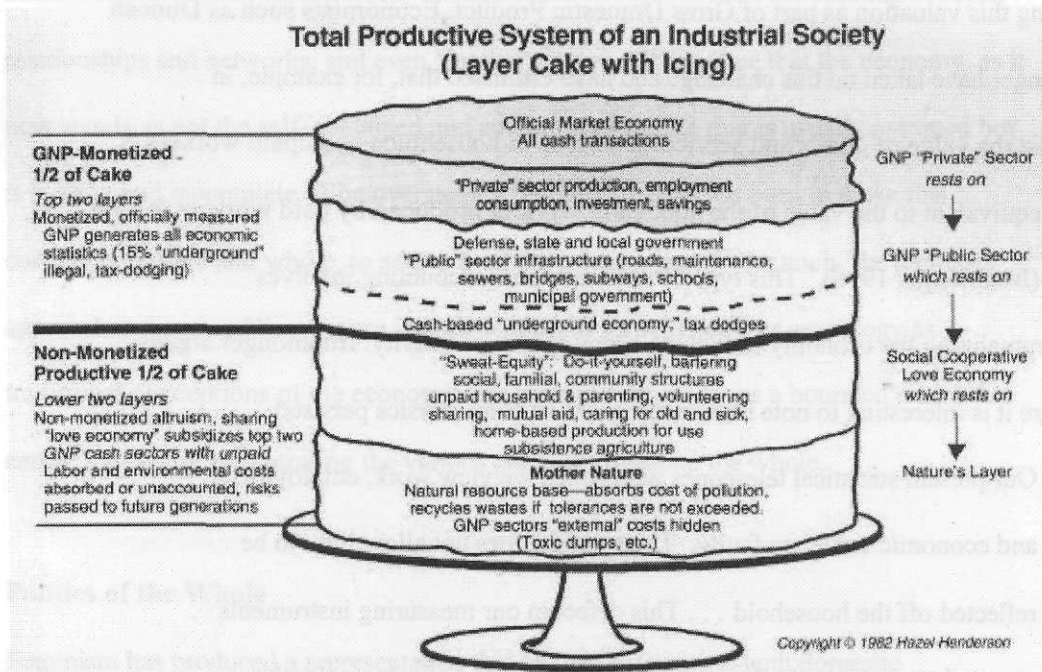
In *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange* (1997) Genevieve Vaughan talks of the gift paradigm that “emphasizes the importance of giving to satisfy needs”, that is “need-oriented rather than profit-oriented” (p.30) and that coexists alongside the exchange paradigm where “calculation and measurement are necessary” and transactions are “ego-oriented rather than other-oriented” (p.31). For Vaughan gift giving is an extension of mothering and nurturing and is a practice that resists measurement and calculations of commensurability. The relationship she sketches out between the two paradigms is one of plunder, rather than prolonged sustenance, as relations of exchange and commodification

invade realms where the emotional and nurturing labour of mothering /gift-giving once prevailed.ⁱⁱⁱ

Icing and layer cake

Feminist environmental and community activists such as Hazel Henderson (1991) and Barbara Brandt (1995) also add to the economy demonstrating how so-called productive economic activities depend on a set of currently invisible processes. Henderson's representation of the 'total productive system of an industrial society' as a triple layer cake with icing has been taken up by many (e.g. Brandt, 1995). The bottom non-monetized layer of the economic cake is mother nature whose gifts are shared and largely unaccounted. The second layer of non-monetized economic activities is the "social cooperative" (variously subtitled the counter, love or informal economy) in which unpaid labour is given, shared and volunteered. Upon these two layers rests a third layer with icing—the whole cash economy, divided into an underground economy, the public sector and finally the private sector, the "official market economy" that is merely the icing on the cake. The argument goes that traditional economics focuses on the icing and what is immediately under it (the public sector) while ignoring the bottom two layers, yet it is these two layers that make possible and sustain the public and private sectors. While Henderson's image represents the economy as having multiple sectors, the / monetized/non-monetized (or in Brandt's terms visible/invisible) dualism remains a major conceptual division.^{iv}

Figure 1 Hazel Henderson's Layer Cake With Icing



Counting In

As we have seen, from the seventeenth century on instruments of measuring economic activity have been developed. Today, the United Nations System of National Accounts measures national production and growth by accounting for national expenditure (on items like consumption, investment, government purchases) and income (derived from items like wages, rent and dividends) (Waring 1988). So too feminist approaches to economy propose that the 'whole economy' can be understood through accounting for the full range of economic activities in different sectors.

In *Counting for nothing: what men value and what women are worth* (1988) Marilyn Waring proposes that women's unpaid work be counted by giving it a monetary value and

including this valuation as part of Gross Domestic Product. Economists such as Duncan Ironmonger have taken up this challenge and have estimated that, for example, in Australia the value of goods and services produced in households by unpaid workers is almost equivalent to the value of the goods and services produced by paid workers for the market (Ironmonger 1996).^v This type of imputed value accounting involves reconceptualizing the economy to include a new sphere of activity. Ironmonger argues (and here it is interesting to note how imagery drawn from physics persists):

Our present statistical telescopes with which we view work, employment and economic value are faulty. Their design does not allow light to be reflected off the household . . . This defect in our measuring instruments means that we see only the market part of the economy. In reality the economy has two parts, a market section and a household section; both are essential for the economy to function effectively. (p. 59)

Ironmonger proposes that the value of unpaid household work be called Gross Household Product (GHP). And he argues that the System of National Accounts should be revised so that the total measure of economic performance, Gross Economic Product, be “comprised of Gross Household Product and Gross Market Product” (p.38-9).

Nancy Folbre also makes a strong case for including, counting and giving economic value to what are currently seen as non-economic activities. She proposes indicators of ‘economic health’ to supplement the Dow Jones Index such as the Dolly Jones Index that tracks changes in the imputed value of time people work in their homes and communities. At the same time, she is wary of reducing “the value of everything we do to a dollar estimate, particularly where care-giving is concerned” (p. 66).

Taken together all of the feminist approaches of **adding on** and **counting in** aim to demonstrate the importance of what were once thought of as non-economic activities – housework and other unpaid work, caring and nurturing activities, the building of social relationships and networks, and even ‘mother nature’. They argue that the economy, as it now stands, is not the self-contained and autonomous sphere that is usually assumed but is lacking and incomplete. The overarching feminist strategy has been to make this concept complete and whole, to add to it all the missing parts.^{vi} As such, the feminist approaches discussed thus far are located within the same lineage or genealogy as traditional conceptions of the economy that have constructed it as a bounded entity that can be known by enumerating the various parts that make up the whole.

Politics of the Whole

Feminism has produced a representation that aligns the feminine with domestic production/the sphere of reproduction/the gift economy/the economy of care, but that separates this and opposes it in some way to the market or the sphere of production that is aligned with the masculine. Each part of the whole tends to be seen as distinct and arranged in opposition to the other. The strategy of ‘completing’ the economy has implications for emancipatory and transformative projects like feminism and left politics.

For those who adopt a conservative feminist politics, the feminized economic domain is understood as equal to the masculinized domain. The task is to explain the dynamics of the hitherto unrecognized economic sphere and bring about a shift in policies to eliminate the disadvantages that women face because of their association with one particular sphere of economy.^{vii}

For those who adopt a liberal or leftist stance the association of the feminine with the domestic realm has been seen as a key source of women's oppression that might be overcome by ensuring that women have the same access as men to the market sphere or sphere of production. From this political vantage it is difficult to imagine that domesticity might contain emancipatory potential, for women's liberation is to be secured largely by renouncing that part of the economy associated with the feminine. The growing divisions between women who work in well-paid jobs outside the home and women (who in the US are frequently illegal migrants) employed as their domestic workers can be seen as one "unintended side-effect" of feminism's focus on getting women "out of the home" (Mattingly 1998, 1999).

For others more attracted to a radical feminist reversal of masculinist valuations the invisible layer, the feminine realm, or the gift paradigm is seen as holding the key to salvation, while the visible layer, the masculine realm, the exchange paradigm, contains the seeds of societal devastation. In the layer cake model, for example, the icing and top layer are seen as masculinized, money-making and exploitative, while the bottom two layers are seen as feminized, governed by need and non-exploitative relationships. This compartmentalizing of the economy makes it difficult to imagine that market-based production might contain any features of worth, and that the social cooperation sector might, for example, produce inequitable relationships. In these dualist models of economy one side of the binary is privileged as the source of emancipation while the other side is renounced. If you like, one of the legacies of the double-entry bookkeeping system is the desire to account for the world in terms of a ledger with credits on one side, debits on the other.

Underlying all these stances is the view that a more complete representation of the economy will inform a political transformation. In the epilogue to her book, Marilyn Waring takes it further asserting that ‘the system could not stand the pressure [of fully enumerating women’s economic contribution] and would be transformed by the additions’ (p. 256). She suspects that the strategy of counting in will bring about the sort of economic revolution advocated by radical feminists; in Audre Lorde’s terms, Waring hopes to use the tools of the master to dismantle the master’s house.

But can the feminist political project be this simple?

We are concerned with some of the consequences of the realist project of analytic completion and empirical measurement that characterizes much feminizing of the economy. And we are wary of expecting that by producing a more complete understanding of what is included in the economy a transformative feminist politics will be enacted.

In our view a representational politics is not necessarily strengthened by recourse to an empiricist argument about inclusion and accuracy. Indeed the attempts by mainstream economics to redress the invisibility of women’s work through, for example, Gary Becker’s ‘new home economics’,^{viii} or the World Bank’s advocacy of social capital, point to entirely acceptable and depoliticized (in feminist terms) efforts to enlarge the scope of the economy. It seems that the strategies of adding on and counting in might fall short of generating a feminist politics of transformation. They add to the picture of what contributes to the production of goods and services but they do not necessarily help us think differently about the economy. Furthermore, by staying within a binary framing of

economic activities (masculinized/market and feminized/household, etc) the ‘added in’ sectors, though recognized and counted, remain locked in the subordinate, under/devalued position vis a vis the ‘core’ economy. It is hard to extrapolate from this vision a positive politics of transformation that really shakes up what we think of as economy and helps us to enact economy according to feminist economic ethics (whatever they might be).

Deconstructing the Economy

Hazel Henderson’s promotion of an alternative economics that might enable ‘a saner, more equitable, gender-balanced, ecologically-conscious future’ (1995, p.9) comes closest to the kind of project that interests us—of imagining and enacting alternative or noncapitalist economies. Both Henderson and Brandt offer examples that open up ‘the economy’ to difference. Consistent with her interest in renewable energy sources Henderson uses the environment as an axis of differentiation within the monetized economy to distinguish between green and brown capitalist enterprises. For example, she distinguishes between traditional businesses that have no interest in environmental values, and the ‘contrarians’: ‘mostly smaller, younger, innovative enterprises, investment funds, venture capitalists and investors already positioned in the cleaner “greener” social markets of the 21st century. (1998, p. 8).

Brandt on the other hand identifies what she calls ‘empowering businesses’—those enterprises that empower people as an integral part of their economic activities. As she points out these businesses may be small or large, privately or cooperatively owned, profit-making or not-for-profit, organized by private individuals, community groups, religious organizations, government agencies or a combination of any of these (1995, p. 113). Through her interest in community activism and empowerment, Brandt opens up

the economy to multiple axes of differentiation that include a variety of styles of decision-making, forms of ownership and organization, and emphases on profit or other core values. In so doing she provides a picture of a diverse economic landscape made up of all sorts of capitalist and non-capitalist enterprises.

In all these moves a rigid and oppositional dichotomy is dissolved. It is possible to see greater diversity within the layers of the economic cake and, importantly, we think, connections across what were previously thought of as separate and opposed layers. The multiple axes of differentiation that Brandt identifies suggests that economic practices and enterprises can be conceived as having multiple identities, rather than a singular and essential identity that places them on one or the other side of the ledger.^{ix}

The work of Henderson and Brandt provides an example of deconstructing ‘the economy’, as well as adding to it. They take characteristics more readily associated with the non-monetized part of the economy, ‘mother nature’ and ‘social cooperation’, and find these within the monetized part of the economy. In so doing they provide insights into the variety of ways goods and services might be produced in the market sector outside of mainstream capitalist firms—through nonprofit initiatives, cooperatives, alternative capitalist enterprises that operate according to a social or environmental ethic. This strategy resonates with our own efforts to represent a diverse economy in which multiple and unfixed economic identities can be conceived (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 A Diverse Economy

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Organizational Form</i>
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
<i>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</i> <i>Local trading systems</i> <i>Alternative currencies</i> <i>Underground market</i> <i>Co-op exchange</i> <i>Barter</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE PAID</i> <i>Cooperative</i> <i>Self-employed</i> <i>Indentured</i> <i>In kind</i>	<i>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</i> <i>Environmental ethic</i> <i>Social ethic</i> <i>State enterprise</i>
<i>NON-MARKET</i> <i>Household flows</i> <i>Gifts</i> <i>Indigenous exchange</i> <i>Theft</i>	<i>UNPAID</i> <i>Volunteer</i> <i>Housework</i> <i>Family care</i>	<i>NON- CAPITALIST</i> <i>Communal</i> <i>Independent</i> <i>Feudal/Peasant</i> <i>Slave</i>

In our representation, the economy is emptied of any essential identity, logic, organizing principle or determinant. In place of the view that the economy is a whole comprised of a pre-established number of parts or sectors, we see the economy as an open-ended discursive construct made up of multiple constituents. Our first stab at conceptualizing the radical diversity of economic relations has been in terms of the coexistence of

- different kinds of transaction with their multiple calculations of commensurability
- different ways of performing and remunerating labour
- different modes of economic organization or enterprise with their multiple ways of producing, appropriating and distributing surplus labour

In the diverse economy we cannot easily read off credits and debits but are forced to inquire into the specific conditions of any economic activity before we can advocate or oppose it. While this renders the project of political transformation more complex, it does not preclude proposing interventions inspired by feminism.

To illustrate this point consider the many ways and contexts in which the caring labour of childcare is practiced in the diverse economy. Figure 3 describes a range of possible situations in which the 'work' of childcare is done.^x Many of these locations outside of the traditional household where mothers care for children (unpaid, unregulated and traditionally undervalued) have arisen as a result of feminist struggles. Certainly in Australia the community cooperative childcare movement, successful agitation for government-funded childcare and community trade networks and baby-sitting clubs are directly attributable to a variety of different kinds of feminist politics. That the corporate sector has responded with capitalist childcare and domestic service agencies is likewise a by-product of the feminization of the paid workforce. The diversity of economic relations that currently characterize child care-giving reflects the unparalleled success of a

Figure 3 The Diverse Economy of Childcare

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Organizational Form</i>
<p align="center">MARKET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic service market • Childcare market 	<p align="center">WAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired housekeeper • Worker in corporate childcare centre 	<p align="center">CAPITALIST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body-hire agency eg Dial an Angel Inc. • Work-based childcare center • Capitalist childcare centre
<p align="center">ALTERNATIVE MARKET</p> <p><i>Local trading systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare offered on LETS network <p><i>Alternative currencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby-sitting club (hours calculated) <p><i>Underground market</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash-in-hand to neighbourhood teens <p><i>Barter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and equivalent exchange of childcare hours 	<p align="center">ALTERNATIVE PAID</p> <p><i>Cooperative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare cooperative worker <p><i>Self-employed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family day care mother <p><i>Indentured</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic servant who is an overseas contract worker (paid in cash and kind) <p><i>In kind</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live-in student who does childcare in return for room and board 	<p align="center">ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</p> <p><i>Environmental ethic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steiner kindergarten <p><i>Social ethic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious kindergarten <p><i>State enterprise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based (government funded) childcare centre
<p align="center">NON-MARKET</p> <p><i>Household flows</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents sharing childcare <p><i>Gifts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and friends offer to baby sit <p><i>Indigenous exchange</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child 'given' to kin to raise 	<p align="center">UNPAID</p> <p><i>Family care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care at home by parents <p><i>Volunteer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare by friends and neighbours • Volunteer-provided care at church, meetings 	<p align="center">NON-CAPITALIST</p> <p><i>Communal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare cooperative <p><i>Independent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family day care <p><i>Feudal/Peasant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended family with obligatory childcare

transformative feminist economic project which has multiplied the options for how women and men raise children in our society as well as achieving other interests and objectives.^{xi} Within this diverse economy on both sides of the market/non-market, paid/unpaid, capitalist/non-capitalist divides there are opportunities for economically exploitative and emotionally oppressive conditions as well as fair and emotionally creative ones. It seems to us that a feminist economic politics would champion the latter in all locations of the diverse economy in which childcare is performed.

To take this point one step further we join with Henderson, Brandt and Matthaei (2001) in suggesting that a transformative feminist economic politics might advocate the proliferation of diverse economic forms that promote in *all* sectors of goods and services provision what Brandt calls the “positive social values and self-directed structure” of the invisible economy (1995, p.55). In all economic activities across the board we could promote the valuing and strengthening of traditionally coded ‘feminine’ qualities such as nurture, cooperation, sharing, giving, concern for the other, attentiveness to nature, and so on, *as well as* traditionally coded ‘masculine’ qualities such as independence, experimentation, leadership and adventurousness. We are particularly committed to strengthening the viability of non-capitalist activities in which social surplus is communally produced and distributed on the basis of ethical principles to collectively decided upon ends.^{xii} Our interest is in fostering an economy in which the interdependence of all who produce, appropriate, distribute and consume in society is acknowledged and built upon.

There can be no doubt that feminists have produced a truly inspirational figure/ground shift in how we see the economy. Our emerging feminist economic politics takes

sustenance from the incredible insights of feminist interventions that have, in so many different ways, forced a recognition of the creativity, productivity, resilience and solidarity of that half of the economy that has traditionally not been seen or accounted for. Feminizing the economy via the deconstructive move extends this powerful representational politics in a different direction, opening up a myriad of ethical debates in all nooks and crannies of the diverse economy about the kinds of worlds we as feminists would like to build.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ See Grosz, 1990 for the concise elaboration of phallocentrism upon which our conception of capitalocentrism was modeled.

ⁱⁱ Early analyses saw the sphere of reproduction as a dependent creation of capitalist development that changed in response to changes in the nature of capitalist production (e.g. Mackenzie and Rose, 1983). Later analyses emphasized a more open set of determining relations between the two spheres (Mackenzie, 1989; Parr, 1990). Outside of geography other socialist feminists had theorized the dualism in terms of different modes of production—the capitalist and the domestic (or patriarchal) modes of production (Delphy, 1984; Folbre, 1987). This allowed for more independent dynamics of articulation (rather than dependence) to be posited between the two spheres/modes.

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course there is a much more extensive literature on the gift within mainstream anthropology in which the dualism between gift and exchange is not necessarily mapped onto gender difference, nor is the study of gift-giving used to rethink notions of economy. Recent 'non-feminist' attempts to do the latter by focusing on the gift include Gudeman (2001) and Godbout (1998).

^{iv} For Henderson it seems that almost everything is part of 'the economy'. The same could be said of the recent 'non-feminist' conceptualizations of social capital. Along with economic capital, human capital and natural capital there is now social capital—that network of social relationships based on trust and reciprocity on which effective economic development and growth are seen to depend. Building social capital, it is argued, builds economic capital (Woolcock, 1998). Use of the term capital shifts the boundary between the economic and the non-economic in such a way that social relations are included as part of 'the economy'.

^v See Luxton, 1997 for some international comparisons.

^{vi} It is interesting to note how the metaphor of wholeness reoccurs in this literature. Barbara Brandt's book is entitled 'Whole Life Economics' and includes a chapter on 'Discovering the whole economy', and sections on 'Men reaching for wholeness', 'Women reaching for wholeness'. Likewise one of Hazel Henderson's chapters is subtitled 'Re-membering wholeness'; and Marilyn Waring has a chapter on 'Glimpsing the whole'.

^{vii} This leads to a range of interventions from supporting 'women who want to be mothers' to assisting women to become entrepreneurs.

^{viii} The argument is that women's work has been included in economic theory since the 1960s when the neo-classical paradigm was extended "to add time to the resource constraint faced by the household, permitting the integration of labor economics and home economics through a unified theory of economic decision making". Hence "decisions such as those to have children and the allocation of market and non-market work within the family could be theorized as the utility-maximizing choices of families" (Hewitson, 2001, p.7).

^{ix} In Vaughan's work we can see a similar deconstructive move when she identifies the many forms of gift-giving that take place in the mainstream exchange economy. While it might be a stretch of the imagination to construe the extraction of surplus value by capitalists from workers as a gift, it is less so in the context of worker cooperatives when, for example, decisions are taken to distribute part of the surplus generated by the business to the community or to members who are building houses, rather than to plough it back into business expansion. Similarly we could take Folbre's work and inquire into the ways in which the

characteristics of the invisible heart—care, obligation and reciprocity—inform transactions otherwise governed by the invisible hand of market.

^x It should not go unremarked that feminist geographers have produced some of the most insightful empirical analyses of many of these sites in which caring labour is performed. See, for example, Gregson and Lowe (1994); Hansen and Pratt (1995); England (1997).

^{xi} This is not to ignore the significant threats currently posed by so-called family-friendly governments to the viability of this diversity, especially where community-based and cooperative child care is concerned.

^{xii} Our recent paper on the Mondragon Cooperatives has begun to flesh out one guiding framework for enabling ethical economies (Gibson-Graham, 2003).



The economic iceberg (drawing by Ken Byrne)

in economic representation we use in our action research projects to
 discussions about 'the economy.' This image is one way of illustrating that
 regarded as 'the economy'—wage labor, market exchange of
 and capitalist enterprise—comprises but a small subset of the activities by
 use, exchange and distribute values. It honors and prompts into expression
 our common knowledge of the multitudes ways in which all of us are engaged in
 economic activity. It opens up conceptions of economy and places the reputation of