

Hidden Economies

A seminar on economic possibility

Economic Meltdown, or what an iceberg can tell us about the economy

BY J.K. GIBSON-GRAHAM

Do you feel part of the economy? That thing that we are told grows or stagnates? That thing that is monitored by financial analysts (our modern day sooth-sayers) who interpret fluctuations in interest rates, share prices, trade balances and investment patterns, and take up more time on the nightly TV news than the weather report?

The economy, as we have come to know it, is presented as a machine that dictates our lives—it enrolls us as employees and employers, as consumers, as property owners, as investors, and tells us what is and is not contributing to the economic bottom line. It churns up people and spits them out when their wages rise too high. It ‘develops’ by accessing cheap resources, ignoring the environmental consequences of depletion and degradation. This machine-economy is seen to operate best when left to its own devices—though of course governments are frequently called in to repair this part, or regulate that, or bail out some large institution or other. In this vision we are not part of the economy, the economy is something that does things to us.

The more we go along with the idea of the economy as an engine that must be fuelled by growth, the more we are locked into imagining ourselves as individual cogs—economic actors only if we work to consume. But there are many other ways that we contribute economically. The machine-economy vision ignores the myriad ways that people and organizations interact to provide material well-being, social and psychological sustenance and environmental care in our world.

There is work to do to fully reject the idea that the economy is a machine and recognize that it has no existence apart from us. This is where our iceberg comes in. We are all familiar with the fact that what we see of the iceberg above the waterline is just its tip, perhaps not more than 10% of its mass. Well the economy that supports our lives is like that too.

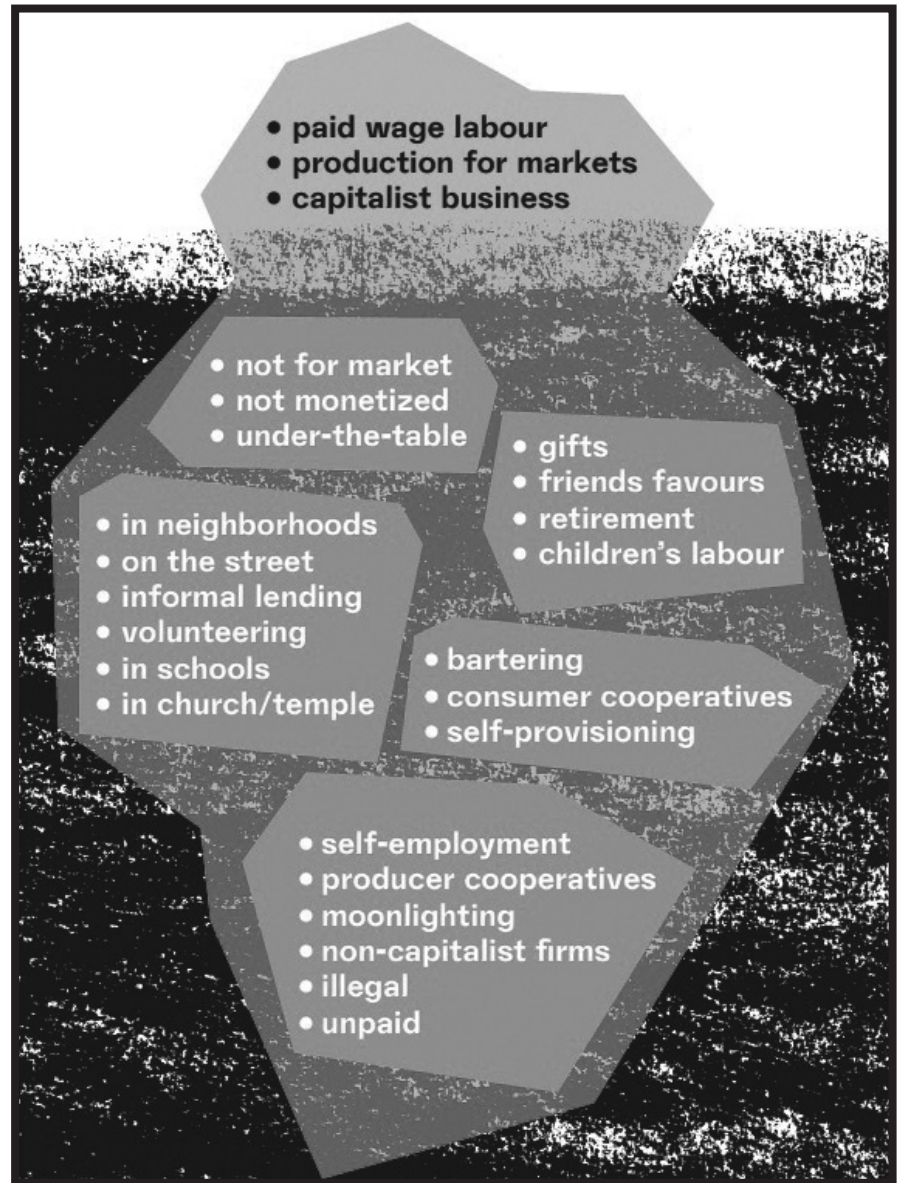
If we see only the paid wage labour, production for markets, and capitalist business that are the focus of the business press,

governments and economists, we miss out on a host of other practices that constitute our economy. In fact we are only seeing the tip of the economic iceberg. Under the waterline are all those activities, organizations, interactions and places that play a role in supporting livelihoods. Just think of all the ways we work to meet our daily needs apart from having a job and a regular wage. There is the unpaid work that is done in households making food, washing clothes, providing clean and nourishing living spaces. There is the volunteer work that is done in families and neighbourhoods to care for the young, the elderly, animals and the environment. There is the work people do in gardens and kitchens, sheds and workshops to self-provision. And we can’t forget the dark side of our diverse economy—the hidden unpaid labour of slaves who work for no return, other than mere existence, in coercive situations all over the world.

On top of this there’s the work that’s done for payment of a different kind. The self-employed often work for very little, other than the rewards of independence that being your own boss (and worker) affords. Those in cooperatives work for a negotiated share of the value they create. Some people work and are paid in-kind, for example with food, shelter or a share of the harvest. Others perform reciprocal labour in that they offer their labour to others in return for the same at some later date to harvest, or build, or make something.

Most of us do more than one form of work and yet it is only paid employment in formal business institutions that up till now is valued as contributing to the ‘real’ economy. And when we look around we see that needs are being met by a whole range of different types of labour that is enacted in all kinds of places, not just ‘work-places’. Once we are attuned to the diversity of economic practices that surround us the economy is reframed as something that we can start to take back and make to work for people and planet.

Continued on page 3



Design: James Langdon for Katherine Gibson, see page 3 for details.

Imagining Non-work

BY KATHI WEEKS

The concept of a “jobless recovery” offers just one more example of the many ways that work is not working as a system of income allocation, pathway to individual achievement, or mode of social belonging. And yet, the only solution we are offered by political and corporate leaders is more business as usual: austerity and job creation; tighten our belts and put our noses to the grindstone. Although there is no scarcity of possible reforms that could help us better to cope with the problems of unemployment, underemployment, precariousness and overwork in the contemporary economy—a shorter legal working day and a guaranteed basic income are two—the gospel of work and its central teaching, the work ethic, have so colonized our lives that it is difficult to conceive a life not centered on and subordinated to work. What would we do with more non-work time and who would we be if we were not workers?

In some instances the only imagined existence of non-work is defined by sloth, as in the frequently voiced fear that if it were not for work there would be no reason to get out of bed or off the couch. If activity itself is so strictly identified with and reduced to work, then non-work is defined by its absence: pure indolence. In other cases, non-work is conceived not as work’s flip side, but as its mirror image, as when it is described in terms of doing the same things for the same long hours we now do on the job or at home, but under different conditions: time for industrious creativity. A further option is leisure time. But that is too often conceived either in terms of activities that are intended to compensate for work or as time to recover from work, what Bob Black describes as a “managed time-disciplined safety-valve,” or “non-work for the sake of work.”¹ In the first case non-work is cast as unproductive, in the second it is posed as differently productive, and in the third it is figured as reproductive of the subject as a worker. Although they may appear to be categories of non-work, they do not escape the imaginary of produc-

Continued on page 5

THE SEMINAR & BEYOND

BY THE HIDDEN ECONOMIES ORGANIZERS

Hidden Economies: A seminar on economic possibility brings together artists, activists, and scholars to discuss hidden economies—existing within, next to, beside, and around capitalism. The seminar is inspired by the work of feminist, economic geographers JK Gibson-Graham (Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson). Gibson-Graham worked on several publications and projects that sought to destabilize and introduce ruptures in the “monster” of capitalist economy. Today, Katherine Gibson continues the work she and the late Julie Graham began with projects like Community Economies Collective, which they co-founded in 2009, and the publication of the book *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (2013, University of Minnesota Press).

The foundation laid by Gibson-Graham frames how we understand and perceive the economic realities that shape our everyday lives and our larger social structures. Capitalist processes shape our daily experiences but do they define them? How and where are people creating economies that ignore the dominant economic system? How do these economies—shared, exchange based, micro-local, etc.—function and what do they look like? Are they temporary or are they sustainable?

Hidden Economies includes pre-

sentations and workshops from artists, activists, and scholars focused on issues of economy within their work. We are interested in how cultural work may contribute to shedding light on economic difference and articulating new economic realities. Central for this project is the idea that economies are always diverse and in the making.

From the 22-24 of October, 2014, there will be presentations and workshops from the following: Geoff Cox (DK), Andrea Creutz (SE) and Elizabeth Ward (SE), Marina Vishmidt (UK) and Melissa Gordon (UK), Caroline Woolard (US) and Susan Jahoda (US), Vladan Jeremic (SRB) and Rena Rädle (DE), René Ridgway (NL), Esra Erdem (DE), Jakob Jakobsen (DK), Leone Contini (IT), Florian Wüst (Haben und Brauchen) (DE), Sandy Kaltenborn (Kotti & Co.) (DE), Andrea Francke (PE/UK), Maliha Safra (US), and Zeenath Hasan (SE).

To create a larger discussion, the *Hidden Economies Seminar* is partnering with Pixelache in Finland, Tapori Tifins in Sweden, and the Centre for Ecological Economics and Ethics in Norway to host newspaper distribution events and film screenings of works by Mari Keski-Korsu (FI), Eva Bakkeslet (NO), and René Ridgway (NL), among others in the months following the seminar. This is a way of connecting with and supporting artists, activists, and researchers in this region involved in developing new economic realities.

This newspaper can be downloaded as a PDF at:

www.hiddeneconomies.net.

THANK YOU to Sanne Kofod Olsen, the Royal Danish Art Academy, and the Jutland Academy of Art, for supporting for *Hidden Economies—A Seminar on Economic Possibility*.

This seminar is also supported by: The School of Walls and Space, The Danish Arts Council, the Nordic Culture Fund, and the Copenhagen Business School.



DANISH ARTS FOUNDATION



ARTIST PROJECT: Capitalism, as we live it

BY ANDREA CREUTZ AND ELIZABETH WARD

Presented as part of the *Hidden Economies Seminar* on October 22, 2014, by Andrea Creutz and Elizabeth Ward at Walls and Space, Kongens Nytorv 2.

Capitalism, as we live it is a research project and ongoing collaboration initiated by artist Andrea Creutz (SE), artist Liv Strand (SE) and choreographer Elizabeth Ward (US), 2011

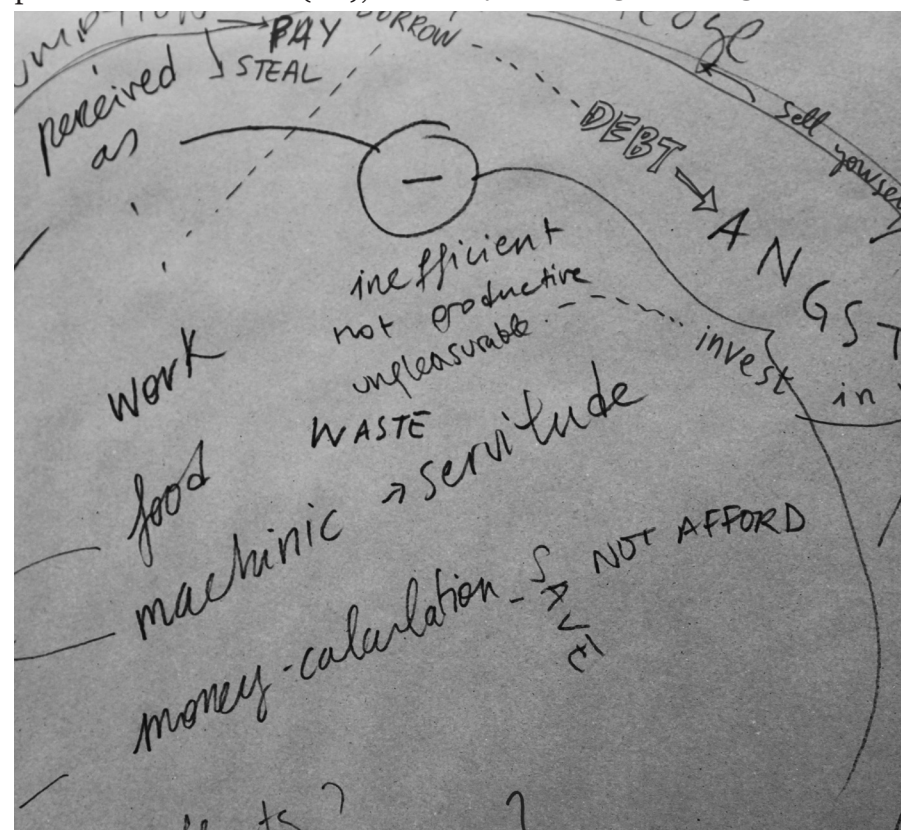


Photo: Andrea Creutz

in Athens. *Capitalism, as we live it* looks for formats to collectively reflect on what capitalistic structures and conditions bring into everyday life.

The work *Capitalism, as we live it* departs from the assumption that everyone in the community participates and is implicated in capitalist structures and therefore has access to first hand knowledge about this on many different levels. We think this kind of knowledge can be taken into consideration to a larger extent, and be better formulated through exchange and analysis of our collective and individual experiences.

For many the sympathetic nervous system, the part of the automatic nervous system which activates the fight, flight or Freeze reaction, is constantly triggered by the stresses of contemporary life. With the awareness of the body as a vessel for knowledge we also engage our physicality as one important sensory channel for experiences and reactions to structures of

capitalism while asking in what other ways is economic subjugation inscribed in the body. This is conducted through a series of formats involving discussion and body activity. Some economical and cultural theory is included, but we aim to avoid going into the activity of comparing knowledge on the latest books about capitalism, in favour of examining what an every day approach can be. We use formats coming from different times and movements such as feminist, pacifist, anarchist, and somatic studies movements. All are marked and problematic, but we have chosen to use formats as originals: openly declaring their origin.

This choice is an attempt to include different ways to discuss the topic and attempting to avoid hierarchy between the different formats.

Capitalism, as we live it performs itself via the participants. The project has been presented in collaboration with Flutgraben E.V. in Berlin, Konsthall C and IASPIS in Stockholm. The next workshop will be held in the spring of 2015, as part of the Trade Test Site—a platform project on economic possibilities in Aarhus.

“**How to smash capitalism at home in your spare time...**

— J.K. Gibson-Graham

Continued from page 1

Trade is one activity that is being taken back from those markets where the machinery of supply, demand and price setting stands in the way of ethical encounters. Markets connect us with others, especially distant others. They enable us to obtain the things we need that we can't produce for ourselves. But while supermarkets and shopping malls are convenient, this convenience is a form of 'selective seeing'—it is easy to overlook the cost of our transactions on others and feel disconnected from the people and environments that produced the products we buy.

Increasingly people are becoming more aware of the multiple roles they play as producers, traders and consumers and are looking to build more direct connections with those who make what we need. Transacting does not have to be faceless or exploitative. Fair-trade networks, for example, help us to learn about and respect the distant others who produce

Despite what the economists say the market is not all there is. Our survival is ensured by many other transactions that are not mediated by markets that calibrate values, using prices or hours.

the coffee we consume or the clothes we wear. This movement ensures that distant producers can lead decent lives and their environments can be maintained and cared for. Direct people-to-people trade and reciprocal exchanges are other ways of enacting ethical interconnections with others. In Japan a national system of reciprocal exchange, *Fureai Kippu* or caring relationship tickets, documents unpaid hours of in home care for elderly and disabled people. You can provide care for a disabled neighbour and give the tickets to your elderly mother who lives in another part of the country. She, in turn, can receive these hours of care from another person who is part of the reciprocal exchange system. You can even store up the hours of care you give for use in your own old age!

In a world where certain kinds of expertise are valued way above others, there is a huge range in the monetary returns to different kinds of labour. Local trading systems can use time-banks to override this by valuing an hour of any kind of labour the same.

Hour Exchange, in Portland, Maine is a time bank that includes doctors at the local health-care centre and low income residents. A one hour medical appointment earns the same amount of credit as one hour of window cleaning, fixing cars or teaching painting. The ethical negotiation of value comes into community supported agriculture as well. Here consumers provide a guaranteed market and income for farmers, and farmers reciprocate with fresh food to meet the needs of consumers. This means that producers and consumers share the risk of farming—if it's a good growing season, consumers will receive larger shares of produce, but if it's a poor season, shares will be smaller. In either case the farmer is supported to maintain a decent livelihood and not to place too high a demand on the land that sustains us all.

Despite what the economists say the market is not all there is. Our survival is ensured by many other transactions that are not mediated by markets that calibrate values, using prices or hours. Think of the transactions that involve direct connections such as gifting, gleaning and gathering. All these activities involve some kind of (often unsaid) ethical negotiation with other people and environments. Whether it is gathering berries or mushrooms, dumpster-diving or free-cycling, presenting wedding or birthday gifts, these interconnections contribute to material well-being and thus keep our economy afloat.

As we learn to appreciate the economic diversity that co-exists in our world, we see ourselves occupying multiple economic identities, producing many different kinds of value and benefiting from the gifts given by our earth and our community. Now, more than ever before, we are being called upon to build a different economy—one that nourishes life in all its forms. How we do this is up for grabs. One place to start is where we are right now in the public realm of an art space.

Art is a production, a located practice, a trade or transaction with materiality, with viewers, with buyers. An art space is like a shop, when we step across the threshold we become consuming subjects. Our curiosity is aroused. Our taste is challenged. Neither school nor court, the shop/gallery is yet a place of learning, negotiation and judgment. Can it be a site for enlarging our economic sensibilities? Can we use this familiar site of trade to enter into an expanded realm of transactions and interconnections?

The image of the economy as an iceberg is one way of reframing

which practices are included and valued as 'economic'. When we see the whole iceberg above and below the waterline, the economy as we have known it melts away. We start to recognize the vast range of practices, places, organizations and relationships that contribute to daily survival. What was once seen as 'alternative' is but part of the already existing diverse economy.

While many practices have been ignored and thus effectively devalued in mainstream economic thinking, this is starting to change. Feminists have finally convinced national statistics agencies to collect information on caring and domestic labour and volunteer labour. There is increasing interest in the contributions of cooperatives and social enterprises towards socially just wealth generation. And mainstream business is starting to notice the impact of collaborative consumption in the sharing economy and name it as a threat to business as usual. All across the globe people are creatively re-engineering economies, innovating with new ways of transacting labour and goods, new mechanisms for distributing surplus and different temporalities of investment and return.

The economy is ultimately what we make it. We can take it back so that it serves the needs of people and the planet more directly.

This text is loosely based on ideas presented in *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, by J.K. Gibson-Graham, J. Cameron and S. Healy (University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

J.K. Gibson-Graham is the pen-name of Katherine Gibson and the late Julie Graham, feminist political economists and economic geographers based at the University of Western Sydney, Australia and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA. Their 1996 book *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* was republished in 2006 by Minnesota Press along with its sequel *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Julie and Kath are founding members of the Community Economies Collective: www.communityeconomies.org.

This version of *Economic Meltdown*, or what an iceberg can do for the economy by J.K. Gibson-Graham was originally

published as part of *Trade Show* (www.t-r-a-d-e-s-h-o-w.org) an exhibition that first ran from December 7 – February 22, 2014 at Eastside Projects (www.eastsideprojects.org) in Birmingham, UK. Curated by Kathrin Böhm and Gavin Wade, *Trade Show* was a group exhibition that exercised "the function of art to exchange, present and enact economic practices and cultures of trade." Gibson-Graham's essay was written as an exchange with graphic designer, James Langdon who created a re-design of the "iceberg poster" originally drawn by Ken Byrne for Gibson-Graham.

James Langdon's design can be seen on the front page of this newspaper in English. A version of the poster is available in Danish during the *Hidden Economies* seminar (October 22-24, 2014) and online at:

www.hiddeneconomies.net

“*Taking back the market for people and the planet means recognizing a variety of ways that we transact goods and services. There is a dominant conception that markets are the most efficient and equitable mechanism for securing what we need from others. Certainly markets are critical, especially in today's interconnected world. But there are other ways of transacting goods and services that build connections and meet more than our own material needs.*

– ***Take Back the Economy!: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Communities (Minnesota, 2013)***

Solidarity Art Worlds

BY CAROLINE WOOLARD

I cannot describe the future for you because I am writing this alone. In Solidarity Art Worlds, no one person will understand what we currently mean by “alternative” or “my ideas.” Solidarity Art Worlds grow from collective spaces of listening, not from immediate reactions to coercion and individual accumulation. Solidarity Art Worlds are not just small alternatives to inevitable structures of greed, hoarding, and isolation. Solidarity Art Worlds emerge as we share authority and sense our collective power. I find hope and strength when I engage with Third Root community health center, the Rock Dove healing collective, the open source computer engineers

invitation to publication, the Rail will seldom hear collective contributions. I cannot describe the future for you because I am writing this alone. One statement cannot communicate the lived experience of collective analysis, action, and collaboration. I cannot describe the future for you because I am writing this alone. The declaration below, from organizers and advocates affiliated with the Alternative Economics Working Group of Occupy Wall Street, sets forth a foundation that I feel applies to Solidarity Art Worlds:

As we organize to resist, subordinate, and displace corporate power and a self-destructive economic system, we hold in our hearts a vision for an economy based on justice, ecological sustainability, cooperation, and democracy. We look to sites of creation and imagination, where we are forging new systems of exchange which prefigure a society

As we organize to resist, subordinate, and displace corporate power and a self-destructive economic system, we hold in our hearts a vision for an economy based on justice, ecological sustainability, cooperation, and democracy.

eration, ecological sustainability, justice, and reciprocity.

These economic practices include:

Creation: Ideas and Resources
the commons: ecological and intellectual
free and open source software and technology
community land trusts
skill shares
free schools

Production: How things are made
worker cooperatives
producer cooperatives
nonprofit
artisan collectives
self-employment
labor unions
democratic employee stock ownership programs
local self-reliance

Transfer and Exchange: The Way We Share Goods and Services

barter networks
freganism
sliding scale pricing
time banks
gifts
clothing swaps
tool shares
community currencies
fair trade
community supported agriculture
community supported kitchens
consumer (usually food) cooperatives
housing cooperatives and collectives
intentional communities
self-provisioning
nonprofit
buying clubs

Surplus Allocation: The Way We Create Economic Security

credit unions and community development credit unions
cooperative
loan funds
rotating savings/credit associations
mutual aid societies
cooperative banks
community development banks

While we must continue to experiment and refine ways of creating local self-reliance, we also acknowledge that without supporting the existing alternatives, and bringing them into our communities, we continue to uphold the very economic power that is destroying our communities and our planet. Likewise we recognize we must challenge and transform the existing forms of economic power to create room for more just forms of economic activity to take root and grow. In other words, we need a complete transformation of the dominant economic system. Let's assert our economic power through exercising our right to move our money credit and create restorative systems of exchange to replace extractive corporations. We can also learn about the alternatives that already exist in our communities, and where none exist, we can form them in the spirit of direct democracy! Together, we can create a world free of greed and oppression. Each day our very existence proves the possibility of other, more just and cooperative, economies.

I want to thank the Alternative Economies Working Group for creating such an inspiring document. As I struggle to avoid the busy lifestyle of workaholic Cultural Capitalists, where artists make time for careers rather than friendships, for work rather than healing, I openly struggle as a member of Trade-School.coop to share authority and information. I am dedicated to sharing the resources I have: I open my studio space to friends during the day, and I have committed the \$30,000 I received as a Fellow at Eyebeam: Art and Technology Center to a collective house. I'm currently seeking a dedicated group of people who want to organize a low-income community land trust with spaces that do not allow for speculation on land. When I bind my livelihood together with artists and activists, I find the emotional and financial support to dream. I am excited to see more Solidarity Art Worlds, more collective projects, and longer timeframes so that I can open the Rail and read statements of collective struggle and desire.

Caroline Woolard's text was originally published February 5, 2013 in [The Brooklyn Rail: Critical Perspectives on Art, Politics and Culture](http://www.brooklyn-rail.org/2013/02/artseen/solidarity-art-worlds), available online at www.brooklyn-rail.org/2013/02/artseen/solidarity-art-worlds. It is reprinted with permission.



Caroline Woolard, *Barricade to Bed*, open access toolkit, 2013

at Eyebeam and NYCResistor, the readings at Bluestockings, and the ongoing work at Ganas, Fourth Arts Block, Interference Archive, Black Women's Blueprint, TimeBanksNYC, Picture the Homeless, The Foundry Theater, WOW Cafe, The Church of Stop Shopping, OurGoods.org, Milk Not Jails, INDIGNación, 596Acres, CallenLorde, O4O, CUNY's Public Science Project, Brooklyn Cooperative Credit Union, the Park Slope Food Coop, and Black Urban Growers.

Solidarity Art Worlds exist in places where people acknowledge each other with care and dignity, linking common struggles so that the next generations can work towards a world without structural violence, without worrying that solidarity, cooperation, redistribution, or guaranteed housing, universal health care, and education are alternative. I experience Solidarity Art Worlds when a wide range of struggles, desires, and needs are discussed. Without these spaces, I cannot dream of a better world. With two-week timelines from

that puts people and the planet before profit and growth.

We use direct democracy and cooperation to clothe, feed, heal, nurture, celebrate, educate, and challenge each other. We do all of this not to profit individually, but to meet the human needs of our community. Our internal economies are the antithesis of the greed and oppression we have been taught to expect from each other and acknowledges and addresses the myriad injustices that people bear everyday. Together we are moving beyond “jobs,” something someone gives you or takes from you, towards shared livelihoods that increase our collective economic security.

As we create new spaces, new relationships, and new systems, we acknowledge the existence of a solidarity economy outside of our occupations. The concept of a solidarity economy emerged from the global South, as *economía solidaria*, to describe economic practices and models which advance values of democracy, mutualism, coop-

Continued from page 1

tivity or the models of the subject that would deliver it. These notions of work's refusal are still under the sway of its ethics.

In a section of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 with the title "The Meaning of Human Requirements,"² Marx offers some suggestive ideas about how we might begin to think about how to spend non-work time and produce post-work selves by casting non-work in terms of an expanding realm of needs. In his indictment of bourgeois political economy, Marx describes it as a moral doctrine parading as if it were value-free science, a "science of asceticism" that shapes the worker in accordance with its own moral ideal: "Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its cardinal doctrine" (1978, 95). This is how these political economists make workers out of human beings: by reducing our needs—from needs for food and shelter, to needs for activity, pleasure and sociality—to a specific functional minimum.

Marx's characterization of who we become as workers in this model of the work society include references to the impoverishment of our senses and "a dulled capacity for pleasure" (94). Our affective capacities and modes of sociality are equally diminished, since if we "want to be economical," we should spare ourselves "all sharing of general interest, all sympathy, all trust, etc." (96), leaving self-interest free rein. Becoming an economical subject means managing what today is referred to as our employability: according to this economic ethic, "you must make everything that is yours saleable, i.e., useful" (96).

The problem is not that we need and want too much, as those who preach the ethics of hard work and decry our "entitlement attitudes" would have it, but that we have too few needs and too little desire. Our needs and passions are reduced to two: one is for work, the other for "acquisition." As Marx describes it, the only need cultivated rather than stunted by a capitalist economic system is the need for money (93): the need to earn it and spend it. "The worker may only have enough for him to want to live, and may only want to live in order to have [enough]" (96). We might imagine consumption as a reward for production and the enjoyment of new products as an escape from work, but consumption and production are only two sides of the same system. These needs for consumer gratification are the kinds of needs that drive us "to a fresh sacrifice" (93), requirements that "lead the fly

to the gluepot" (94). These are needs that are functional to and complicit with the very system that demands that we work our lives away in order to live. We should not forget, Marx admonishes, that "extravagance and thrift...are equal" (96, emphasis added). What Marx characterizes as the submerging of all passions and all activities in avarice (96) is central to the construction of the subject as worker.

But it is worth noting here that Marx's critique in this text is not an example of the usual ascetic diatribe against the pleasures of consumption. Consider his mocking description of the teachings by which we are made into the ethical subjects of a capitalist work society: "the less you eat, drink and read books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public-house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence etc., the more you save—the greater becomes your treasure which neither moths nor dust will devour—your capital." In this way, multiple modes of doing, being, and communing are subordinated to having: "the less you are, the more you have" (95-96). The kinds of things we are advised to minimize are not necessarily what we would characterize as unproductive indolence, or productive creativity, or reproductive leisure. Rather, by framing his critical analysis in terms of our needs—their qualities and quantities, their expansion and contraction—he ignores the question of whether such activities or experiences are productive or unproductive, and emphasizes instead the question of what their impact on our subjectivity might be, on who it is we are encouraged—and able—to become.

Besides the above list of non-productive and non-reproductive pastimes that the political economists warn us against, the only other glimpse Marx offers of an alternative comes later in the section, in the form of an example of how we might create new needs. He describes how, as proletarian activists come together as workers to do political work, a different mode of being emerges as a new "need for society" develops (99)—a need for a form of sociality quite different from that orchestrated through the capitalist division of labor. As they come together, their process, their means—"company, association, and conversation"—become ends in themselves (99). In contrast to the ethical subject constituted in relation to the ascetic ideals of "acquisition, work, thrift, sobriety" (97), we are invited by such examples to think instead about how to cultivate a wealth of human needs. This, finally, is how I think we might

imagine what non-work time could be: time to cultivate new needs for pleasures, activities, senses, passions, affects, and socialities that exceed the options of working and saving, producing and accumulating.

Kathi Week's article was originally published March 28, 2013 in the online version of *Social Text Journal* (www.socialtext-journal.org). It is reprinted with permission.

1—Bob Black, "The Abolition of Work," in *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, ed. Howard J. Ehrlich (San Francisco, CA: AK Press, 1996), 237.

2—Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 93-101.

Feminist initiative, foraging and figurations: Notes from a reading group

BY JOHANNA KAAMAN
AND ÅSA STÅHL

Take back the economy! This challenge is posed by J.K. Gibson-Graham (the pen name for feminist, economic geographers Katherine Gibson and the late Julie Graham), Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy to readers of their handbook with the same name, subtitled: *An ethical guide for transforming our communities*. Offering a different take on economy, pointing further than big money, banking systems and the stock market. Economy can be recognised as something that links us together. This interdependence opens up for what is described as "ethical action"; to reflect on how our interconnections with others effects both them and us—humans and non-humans included. And in a wider sense to act, demanding an increasing extent of responsibility in these relationships.

We took up the challenge, or at least the task of reading the book after participating in a meeting with one of the three spokespersons of Feministiskt Initiativ (Fi - Feminist Initiative)²—the charismatic and well-

known Swedish politician Gudrun Schyman in spring 2014. The meeting was one of many "home-parties" organised by Fi, an essential part of their election campaign. Schyman talked about economy and politics. Afterwards, some of us began talking and started wondering whether the feminism of Fi corresponded with socialist politics, or not. This was the starting point of the reading circle of *Take back the economy* (2013), aiming to tackle these questions. We were Åsa Ståhl, Kristina Lindström, Lisa Nyberg, and Johanna Kaaman.

Take back the economy! is related to two previous books by Gibson-Graham. *The end of capitalism (as we knew it)* (1996) introduced their ideas concerning alternative economies. In *Postcapitalist politics* (2006) they write that after decades of academic collaborative work they left the safe havens of political economy as distanced analysts by trying to not only describe, but also *do* economy differently.

An email conversation follows, based on where two members of the reading group are now, after finishing the book:

ÅSA STÅHL: It is an autumn-y Sunday in my urban life. I am making a soup from rosehip that I picked the other day. I am reminded that I often wish I had organised my life so that I could do more of this: forage. It is such a tiny and banal action that it almost does not get registered as a speculative action—neither by me, nor by others. However, that is how the book *Take Back the Economy* has contributed to my thoughts: this household, oikos, action could be part of how to figure economy differently. This means to expand the idea of economy, beyond Capitalism with a capital C into a multitude of capitalisms. It also helps me see how it could be otherwise. To me this is a question worth dwelling on: "In recognising that we are all entangled with also destructive practices of economy, how do we figure something that could be more generative?"

Anna Tsing put it this way at the conference *Anthropocene. Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, in a panel entitled "The Arts of Noticing" [my transcription]:

I actually take seriously the lichens resist capitalism comment. If you can't grow lichen in the lab, it also means you can't grow lichen in a plantation. And if you

Continued on page 9

Circulation economics – An ecological image of man within an organic worldview

BY STIG INGEBRIGTSEN AND OVE JAKOBSEN, Bodø Graduate School of Business

Introduction

To cope with the main challenges we are facing today; over-exploitation of resources, unfair distribution of wealth, food security, and inefficient use of resources it is necessary to make fundamental changes in economic theory and practice. It is essential to look for new forms of interaction, taking into account and respecting the multitude of values. It is difficult to discuss and solve problems connected to environmental and social responsibility, without making fundamental changes in the existing paradigm.

Whitehead's philosophy of organism confronts the established mechanic worldview describing the whole nature (and culture) as big machines. He explained the success of the mechanic worldview by referring to the separation between "the physical world" and "the life world". This dualism is deeply rooted in European philosophy from the beginning of the seventeenth century. "The notion of the mechanical explanation of all the processes of nature hardened into a dogma of science" (Whitehead 1967, p. 60) during the 20th century.

Quite in contrast to the mechanistic worldview Whitehead holds that the world has to be understood in terms of an organism, characterized by interrelatedness and processes of change. The idea of including human beings as integrated parts of nature implicates that values could no longer be excluded from the scientific description of nature.

Circulation economics is an economic model inspired by the principles found in the philosophy of organism. We will describe some of the main differences between circulation economics and mainstream economics along the following dimensions; mechanical worldview vs. organic worldview, economic man vs. ecological man, linear value chains vs. circular value chains, competition vs. cooperation, and value monism vs. value pluralism.

From a mechanic to an organic worldview

The mechanic worldview is characterised by the idea that pieces of matter are isolated atoms, related to each other only externally. One consequence of

the mechanic worldview is that the universe is completely deterministic. There is no capacity for creativity, spontaneity, self-movement, or novelty in the mechanic worldview.

One consequence of a change in worldview and image of man is that the market cannot be reduced to mere parts in a mechanical system, governed by law and scientific rationality. Instead the market consists of interconnected partners integrated in a living natural and cultural system. Organic thinking is based on the concept of culture as a collective phenomenon, not as the sum of individuals. Economy resembles a living organism, which

man behaviour, nor that it leads to optimum economic conditions.

The relationship between the human being and nature can be described beyond economic self-interest and biological survival. Virtue ethics is one of the three major approaches in normative ethics. It emphasizes the virtues that constitute a moral personal character, in contrast to duties/rules or consequences of actions.

A moral personal character is characterized by the ability to be aware of, to identify and to handle moral dilemmas in real life situations. Virtues can be seen as characteristics defining moral persons. In addition, a

actors in a different part of the circle (using a meso level approach). Instead of describing the market as an aggregate of autonomous actors the market is described as interconnected eco-systems where energy and matter circulate.

If systems are established contributing to the inclusion of "waste" as an input factor in a new production process, the "waste" will change character and become a valuable "residue product" or a potential input factor for new production—replacing virgin raw material. The transition from a linear model to a circular model implies that the ends of the value chain are tied up through connective links. In this way it is possible to connect the goals for reprocessing of waste with increased use of recycled materials in production of new commodities.

The circular processes in circulation economics is inspired by the processes in eco-systems. CO₂ provides an illustrative example of a waste product from animals constituting an important nutrient for plants. Dependent on the perspective, CO₂ can thus be both a waste agent and a nutrient.

It is however important to stress that recycling is not always the best solution. Recycling could be inefficient both in economical and ecological terms. The best way to solve environmental problems connected to the handling of waste is to generate less waste. But recycling is an important tool to reduce the amounts of waste on the trash piles and at the same time produce valuable matter for production.

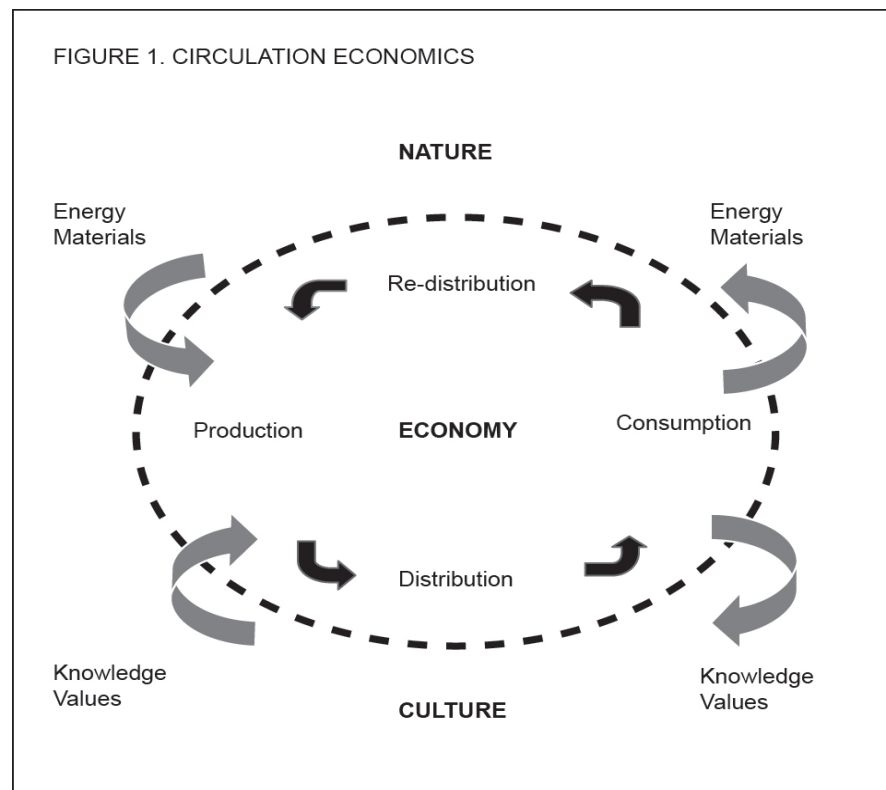
Alternatives to recycling are incineration, through which the energy contents are extracted. But this process can only happen once. When the material is destroyed by fire, it is lost forever.

From competition to cooperation

It has for a long time been common to use the concept "competition" to characterize the principles of interaction between various life forms co-existing within the same niche in an ecosystem. It is, however, interesting to notice that it was the analyses of Adam Smith regarding the competitive market economy that inspired Darwin, not the other way around.

In order to achieve maximum utilization of resources in material and energy cycles, it is necessary with a change at the structural level. It is essential to establish a framework for economic decision-making characterized by cooperative interaction.

It is not the intention that communicative action should replace strategic action in all fields, it is important to clarify in what areas actors should coordinate their activities and in which areas they should compete in order to achieve the best possible



means that its order structure, and function are not imposed by the environment but are established by the humans in the system itself. A consequence is that economics can no longer solely be studied in terms of causal models describing the interplay between isolated egocentric actors in the market. If we change to an organic worldview, we can easily realize that:

the economy is merely one aspect of (...) a living system composed of human beings in continual interaction with one another and with their natural resources, most of which, in turn, is living organisms (Capra 1982, p. 195).

From economic man to ecological man

The economic man is an expression used to explain and predict the behaviour of the rational economic agent, always trying to maximize his own self-interest. But provides economic man the best approximation to the behaviour of the actors in the market? The real issue is "whether there is a plurality of motivations or whether self-interest alone drives human beings" (Sen, 1987, p.19). Sen argues that there is neither evidence for the claim that self-interest maximization gives the best approximation to actual hu-

man and moral life—according to virtue ethics—is a life responsive to the demands of the world and this is also an important point in circulation economics.

In addition to this, Aristotle argued that the existence of virtues provides necessary but not sufficient conditions—external goods are also needed. Both can be seen as central elements in circulation economics and characterizes ecological man.

From linear to circular value chains

Economy normally encompasses everything related to production, distribution, consumption and redistribution of goods and services. An important task of circulation economics is to take care of natural and cultural resources in a manner beneficial for the good of individuals, society and eco-systems in the long run. The linear perspective on the value chain in economics has to be extended towards a circular perspective. At present, we find ourselves at the beginning of the search for an assertive, integrated theory and practice of environmental management (Ingebrigtsen and Jakobsen 2006, p. 581).

This means that the most efficient solution to a problem facing one company can be found in cooperation with one or more

Continued on page 11

The Mealboxes Came a Calling

BY ZEENATH HASAN

Scene from 2012: Sitting with my one-year-old in one of our many restaurant outings it dawns on me that the sum of these outings could transpire into, 'A Series of Introductions to Food as Monoculture for the Next Generation'. This believable scenario sets me in reflection mode on the micro-cookings of the everyday that feeds cross- and inter-generational transfers, transitions and traces. Motherhood encourages one to take matters into one's own hands. I bring out the drawing board to map a practice of subsistence that is part of an ecology of beings and doings. A year later, I find myself standing in my restaurant kitchen project, cooking up with others who care.

My restaurant kitchen project, 'Tapori Tiffins since 2013', is located inside a shopping gallery, Mitt Möllan, in a multicultural district of Sweden's third largest city, Malmö, affectionately referred to by the locals as Möllan. No less than 150 nationalities reside in the city, of which a major set of immigrants reside or make their living in Möllan. Engaging in cooking for better living in a multicultural district, while on the one hand, is to feel a belongingness that is irreducible to a polity circumscribed by the nation-state, and on the paradoxical flip, can also pose the label of gentrification. This precariousness of the self and the other I resolve for myself by considering my restaurant kitchen project as a cosmopolitan practice of social and ethical enterprise.

I have been joined in my kitchen by feminist technoscience researchers articulating care as a discernment of things that matter; youth collectives that aspire to sustainable futures through engagement with the city; families with young children who wish to share recipes and cooking tips with peers; professional chefs looking for a space to experiment with social aspects of gastronomy; artists working with aural and play-based connections to food; foragers; urban gardeners; dumpster divers; food bloggers and more. What began as an invitation to a group of friends to try out our hand at food as memory, has burgeoned within a year to a collective of citizens showing concern for the city and the environment by discerning how and what things go on their plates.

Dehydrating leeks and flax seeds for raw falafel, sprout-



Photo: Zeenath Hasan, Palm Kale Chip. Palm kale, olive oil, sea salt. Dehydrated at 42°C for 8hrs

ing mung beans for pesto, fermenting rice and lentils for pancakes, the Tapori Tiffins menu relies on three food genres, street food, raw food and ayurveda. The three genres tend to be exclusive and are generally perceived through wide sweeping assumptions. Namely, street food is either grease for the road or a high-end dining experience, raw food is either for the cows or for the fully committed, and ayurvedic fare is for those who have the cash to dole out to the experts or only for the ones in the know. Rather than head the purist route, the cooking at Tapori Tiffins works conflates and interweaves through these three cuisine types.

Financially, the Tapori Tiffins restaurant project is able to walk its talk through vegan, vegetarian, ecological catering and cooking courses. Initiated with my life savings, the project has received fresh impetus with the support of corporate social responsibility funds and reciprocity. Posters have been designed and hand-painted, my

delivery bike fixed in return for meals. Reciprocity and external funding have also helped with hosting events run with community and environmentally conscious themes including democratic access to food through 'Pay As You Feel' menus; closed-group dumpster dived dining sessions; Karma Middagar, a series of family cooking and dining evenings appropriating the restaurant table into an extended family dining table; and more recently citizen based mobilisation to reduce food waste. In 2015, the Tapori Tiffins kitchen project aims to facilitate a citizen's kitchen for intercepted foods, that is produce, brought to your plate just before it goes to a landfill.

It has been quite a complicated act financially and operationally. Being a social entrepreneur in a welfare economy brings its fair share of get up and go before one can start to begin. Yes the effort does read like that last sentence, two steps in another direction before gravitating towards the field one wishes

to play in. It has taken a year of coming to terms with insurance companies, equipment maintenance, food hygiene certification, book-keeping, negotiations with an increasingly supportive landlord and union regulations. All this before I can head out to greet the small scale food producers, the guerilla gardener, the urban rooftop bee-keeper, the dumpster diver, the bread maker. Dear Policymakers, Time for radical change in supporting social entrepreneurship for good food and a better environment?

We are at our most forgiving when it comes to the food on our plates. Riddled by media messages, cornered by societal pressure of body image, eager to get on the latest food trend, we consume food as spectacle. The contents of our dining plates become an expression of style and power. Ingestion is thus a mediated act, a taking in of the subliminal and the sublime. What do you digest from your plate?

But why do you call it a restaurant kitchen project and not a restaurant? I knew my kitchen was not to be a restaurant kitchen in the sense of a space that churns out precise, identical products for and with a Goliathan food industry. My kitchen is a space to practice the everyday, a laboratory for learning through experimentation, a sculpture of social meetings. In the words of a colleague from Malmö University, where I occasionally work, "Your kitchen is a living laboratory, your menu is a prototype and the food you produce is research." Digest that.

These 1000 words were fueled by a bowl of millets with pumpkin cream, self-picked chanterelles and hibiscus kombucha brewed by a neighbour who cares.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

A 'tapori' is a vagabond who is at one's peak.

A 'tiffin' box is a container to transport light, home-made meals.

I started Tapori Tiffins as a self-financed, collaborative initiative to explore alternative models of sustainable food production and distribution. Sourcing ecological, vegan, Skanian produce, my kitchen provides artisanal foods that rely on slow cooking techniques. My kitchen produces food exclusively for catering and cooking courses. In prioritising exploration of ways to reduce restaurant food waste, my kitchen opens for lunch and dinner service only for organised events in collaboration with groups / collectives that practice sustainable modes of cooking and eating. Knowing how many to cook for in advance reduces excessiveness and makes time for play with my child.

To keep in touch with sustainable eating events and other news of my kitchen project, see contact info →

**Sustainably and Ecologically yours,
Zeenath Hasan**

Thanks to Tapori Tiffins, a Hidden Economies Seminar partner organization.



ayurvedic vegmat

claesgatan 8
mitt mat, mitt möllan
214 26 malmö

www.taporitiffins.se
www.facebook.com/TaporiTiffins

The Economies of Free

BY ANDREA FRANCKE

Open School East (OSE) is a non-fee paying education programme. Although it has the word school in its name, it is actually an associate programme that gives no accreditation. It cites alternative art education projects as an inspiration and its website blurb introduces it as, "...[A] study programme [...] set up to facilitate artistic learning and to provide an informal environment for the sharing of knowledge and skills between artists, local residents and the broader public."

The aspect of OSE that I would like to focus on here is its lack of tuition fees. Much has been said and written about what it means for OSE to be free¹ in the context of the recent rise in tuition fees in the UK. OSE has successfully addressed the accessibility issue created by fees. The associates come from a range of backgrounds and previous levels of study (in my case a MA from Chelsea College of Arts) and some of them have made it clear that they wouldn't be able to participate if it was a paid-for programme. In this context, I am interested in considering a popular argument about the way students behave after a rise in tuition fees. There seems to be an agreement on the effect tuition fees have had in transforming students into consumers, but what I would like to propose here is that there has been a confusion between causality and correlation. These transformations are the result of a bigger cultural shift in our understanding of what higher education is and what its purposes are. Several anecdotal descriptions can be found that speak of a similar cultural change taking place in American universities where neither tuition fee levels nor the number of scholarships have suffered any recent overhauls.² It has also caught my attention that most of the critique comes from the perspectives of higher education teachers who blame universities' problems on fees and student behaviours without analysing the reproduction of an institutional mindset in which they are actively implicated (along with their students).

The case of OSE can then

offer valuable insights into social and power relations established within a non-fee paying art school, and how they affect our experiences as students. I believe that what we—students, teachers, institutions, society—must redefine our expectations of educational relationships, for only through that process can we effect the changes in policy that are needed. OSE functions, in this essay, as a temporarily enacted utopia; an idealization that has come into being and can now be used to make visible ideologies that are commonly hidden from view through their common sense qualities. If OSE succeeds in its goal to continue while retaining its ability to self-reflect and mutate, it could become an interesting tool for testing different models and approaches to art education outside of the fee paying university system.

The fact that OSE is a non-fee paying education programme is constantly proclaimed, not only as a PR narrative incessantly reproduced and disseminated to and through funding bodies, art institutions and the press, but also internally which functions as a re-enforcement of the school's internal power structure. In this essay, I am not going to discuss the political or ideological interests at play in the decision for OSE to be non-fee paying. The actual reasons behind this decision might be political or they may not be. I do not have any knowledge of the decisions made as I am not involved in the administration of the school. My interest here centres around the use of "free" as a means to make present a monetary transaction while simultaneously attempting to obscure it. The term free becomes a negation of the term fee-paying erasing the history of higher education as a right and generating a new type of debt.

I went to a state funded university in Brazil. No fees were involved, yet this was never discussed as "free" because higher education was and still is considered a common right (though a meritocratic one). I've spoken to several friends who had the opportunity to study in Britain before tuition fees were instituted, and to them, much like in Brazil, higher education was never described as free, it was seen as a right. At OSE, education is not framed as a right.³ It is, instead discussed as, a privilege granted to us by the generosity of funding bodies, individuals and art institutions; a privilege we should be grateful for. When the school's structure was created, a choice was made to make these funding relations and expectations visible, and, unlike in a MA Fine Arts structure, we constantly have to deal with their presence. Knowing the funders' expectations in relation to what should be produced or what the school and students

should be like generates a constant feeling of guilt: the guilt of having something for free and never being grateful enough, compounded by the fear that by failing to conform to expectation we could threaten the continued existence of the school and of this community we have built ourselves into. These feelings permeate, even shape, all our relations to the school. It is hard to know how this vicious cycle began. Did the institution project this guilt onto us or vice-versa? Inevitably, we are all implicated in replicating and reacting to this model, which quickly shaped itself into a quotidian experience.

I would posit that the main problem with transactions that are framed around an idea of free, is also the way in which they become so powerful: a "free" transaction monetizes a relation, but its price is not agreed upon before the transaction takes place. Consequentially, you enter a situation of indeterminate debt. When does our debt to OSE end? Should we consider that every subsequent career development actually increases our debt? Though we instinctively self-identify with those debts, it is hard to identify whom we are indebted to. Is it OSE as an institution, its directors, the other associates, or the community? This is not a simple debt. It is a chain of debt. We are indebted to the school, its directors and founders. They are indebted to all the funding bodies. The funding bodies get their money from government bodies or private funders to whom they are in turn indebted. But because the relations between these organizations are professional, I would argue that the individuals—contracted and salaried—working for those organizations don't carry this invisible debt. As for us, associates of OSE, debt is reproduced and projected onto us. We owe the funders, we owe the institutions, each of whom has expectations of what they should get from their investment (in case it isn't clear enough, we are their investment). This debt is like a shadow hovering over our everyday experience at the school; and it interferes one way or another with everything we do.

The debt itself is never fixed as an amount of money, which would make it repayable. Instead, it is to be paid through our productivity as students and (then) as artists. This makes it feel like we should always be producing. Our time as associates runs out fast and we need to generate content. It can be quite hard to negotiate some of the dynamics of expectation and reaction, what gets thrown at us and what we project onto ourselves, but we often find ourselves trapped in cycles of productivity as we attempt to carry through each and every opportunity we are presented with. These issues of visible productivity also bring to the fore one of the most interesting qualities of OSE, namely, the incredible variety of individuals involved, all at different moments in their art careers. Opportunities that for some of us

could be seen as free labour, are for others an occasion to show work and find a public.

Although OSE is free, we don't receive a stipend to support ourselves or to finance our art projects. This means all of us have to work on the days we have left and sometimes on the days we are supposed to be at school. We are all so busy, all the time. The art world is already accused of paving the way for precarious labour by dressing it up as the freedom of self-employment. We justify the need to constantly provide free labour by thinking of it as a way to build our careers. Self-financing our art production, and interning for free in art institutions are the obvious sacrifices we simply must make because we have faith in art. At OSE, we could be seen to pave the way for a model of the precarious student. This marks a multiple shift in perspective wherein we move from a position in which education is seen as a societal benefit, to that of a consumer relationship, to one in which we must give whatever is needed from us, be eternally grateful and conscious that if we don't fulfill expectations this opportunity will be taken away from us. As such, it makes perfect sense that keeping abreast of next year's funding process and being burdened with the unremitting knowledge that OSE may not survive should be part of our experience as associates.

As we internalize the pressure of our role in the school's survival, our study time is transformed into labour time that needs to be productive and we lose some of the most important characteristics of the time spent in education: we should avoid failure, we should occupy all our time, we should try to make everything public instead of creating a bubble of protection where we can experiment with no defined objective or outcome in sight. In a sense, we have replaced the relation of being education consumers demanding to get what we paid for, with a debt relation to the institution that is unmonetized and yet also brings monetized value into the picture. The difference between those relations is that, as associates, we behave as objects of consumption rather than as consumers. We have been subcontracted as artists, and commissioned to be art students (and yet as this is a commission, it must be fulfilled so we must be productive, outcome-driven, labouring students).

This essay uses OSE as an example but it hopes to illustrate the fact that our relationship to higher education has not changed only because of fees. We have allowed the rise in tuition fees to happen because our understanding of what education is and is for has violently changed. I am not arguing that there is a historical model that we can go back to or try to replicate, but I believe that we need to rethink our expectations and understanding of those struc-

Continued on page 10



UNIVERSITETET I
NORDLAND

The University of Nordland:
Bodø Graduate School of Business

The **Centre for Ecological Economics and Ethics** focuses its work on issues related to the interdependence between economics, nature and culture.

www.uin.no

Thanks to the Centre for Ecological Economics and Ethics, a *Hidden Economies Seminar* partner organization.

Feminist Initiative *cont.*
from page 7

can't grow something in plantation, that is you want to make it a commodity, you have to do a whole lot of work translating it into something that can't have the attributes of a commodity. And so that kind of entangled world that resists becoming a simple commodity is actually really good to think with in terms of what possible outsides of capitalism might help us think that other worlds are possible.¹

If not lichens, what imaginaries and practices do you use to take back the economy in a way that you find generative? And what limitations are there in those imaginaries of hidden economies? If that is what we want, how could we figure community economy together?

JOHANNA KAAMAN: That resonates with my own feelings of enthusiasm and joy that strike during blueberry picking season, emotions I don't fully understand. Why do I take such pleasure in roaming the woods, fighting flies and mosquitos, trying to fill the tin bucket that was once my mother's grandmother's? Those berries (or at least similar ones) can surely be bought in any supermarket. Maybe it is connected with the fact that foraging in some sense takes place outside the capitalist and financial system. Sometimes it can be really nice to refuse the role of the consumer.

This brings to mind two possible extremes, in terms of how to live in society and with others. Either stop engaging in paid labour altogether, and try to become self-supporting, or to buy everything needed, quit cooking, pay someone else to clean, wash, and take care of the children. Most people lead their lives somewhere in between these extremes. All in all, how to deal with this present, imperfect situation? Should I forage more and buy less, which in addition means doing something that makes me happy? Would it be better for me, my family and the world if I, as a woman (with a male partner), work full time and leave my kids longer hours in daycare, to contradict the prevailing injustices between men and women on the labor market?

Feminist initiative (Fi) is probably the most outspoken political party in Sweden today when it comes to critique of the concept of paid labour. Fi "(...)" opposes the idea that work is an end in itself and that people need to be disciplined into working—regardless of the content, mean-

ing and usefulness of the work performed. Our idea of welfare aims, conversely, to enable participation and solidarity and to create the space needed to allow us to grow as human beings, through culture and meaningful interaction." Fi also propose a new way of calculating the gross national product (GNP), to include the value of unpaid household and caring labour, mostly carried out by women, to highlight these issue.³ Like Gibson-Graham, et. al., Fi thus try to broaden the concept of what is considered economy.

One issue has stayed with me after reading *Take back the economy*; the relation between the "small" (micro) insurrections and the bigger picture; the macro economies and overall the whole capitalist system. How does the individual effort to change (even if it's in connection with other individuals making change) relate to larger structural changes? Even if Gibson-Graham, et. al. stress togetherness, community and common assets, their focus seems to be on individual action. Here the relationship between the state, the individual and the community is pivotal. In a welfare society like Sweden, resources are redistributed through income taxes; a system that relies on the concept of wage labour. To step out or to be pushed out of that system, either by becoming self-employed or by falling chronically ill, can render you very vulnerable as an individual.

ÅSA: I am not so sure that the authors stress individual action. My understanding is tainted by the other readings I have done, but what I see them doing in this book is to rework the foundations of what an individual is. Thereby, reworking what individual action is. The handbook does not outline the full-fledged feminist new materialist philosophy of science or the onto-epistemological paradigm that the posthumanities pull us into. Nevertheless I do read a relational ontology that is deeply entangled with epistemology already in the opening paragraphs. This means that I see them recognise that everything becomes together, that the capacity to act is never determined before hand, but comes through the relations of objects and subjects alike. Therefore it is necessary to keep on asking: "When these are put together, what makes it possible for whom, how, when?" The relationality that I read into this book is also to break away from the discrete entities, such as independent in-

dividuals, that have marked the industrial era. It means that we cannot take for granted who can act how and when. It is also to recognise that it matters how different categories are performed. That Gibson-Graham have written together under a pen name for several decades, for example, has troubled the focus on individuals in knowledge producing institutions. It has also shown us how it is possible to do it differently. The opportunities of this kind of handbook is to be able to reach a wide audience. It is easily accessible and it is hands-on, straight into our everyday lives. However, the limits, I think, are that it gives limited space to explain the serious reworking of the concepts that are the point of departure for the suggestions that are made in the book. Perhaps this is also why I want to try to understand Fi better. They call for reworks of concepts such as labor and economy, which is expressed very well in the quote from Fi above. But, what are the points of departures for their reworking?

And I do want to understand why it is important to forage; I want to put that into the context of the book, *Take back the economy*. Here is my understanding of the connection between the philosophy of science that I read as the underpinning of the book, community economy and foraging: To forage and allow for a multitude of ways of living rather than solely living off industrial farming and domestication means to become part of a community economy that involves more than humans, more than one generation, and more than me as an individual. However, if one becomes part of a community economy, one is most likely to still need the interface to meet communities that are not part of the local community. That interface is usually cash. For example, the people that I have met while doing research that tell and show rich stories of how they live well off the land, partly through foraging, they still need petrol for the car that they use sparsely. To be able to buy the petrol they need that interface that I mentioned; they need the cash. But to minimise the expenses for which you need cash, of course gives you a certain action space that contributes to, at least, my imaginaries of alternative economies.

Johanna: I'm so glad that you drew my attention to the act of foraging! I don't remember us discussing foraging during the

reading circle (or maybe I missed that occasion). It's such a completely ordinary action to me, but foraging is also thought-provoking since it's highly conditional. It relies on both legal systems for allowing it and on the forests to not be deforested or too polluted.

ÅSA: Exactly! It's the inter- or even intra-dependency between humans and nonhumans, such as forests, laws and concepts of property rights (written and unwritten like the Swedish *allemansrätten*, the legal right to access to private land), that makes foraging possible and it becomes so obvious in how one sees where, for example, mushrooms can thrive and not. It requires a certain intimacy with all kinds of materials, which I think *Take back the economy* is asking us to take notice of, practice and incorporate into our actions. There's a new rosehip soup ready very soon in this oikos (I picked them while my child and I were playing that I was an imprisoned thief). There's enough to share!

This text would not have been possible without the full Malmö Reading Group including Lisa Nyberg and Kristina Lindström, but Johanna Kaaman and Åsa Ståhl are responsible for the actual wording.

1—Tsing, Anna. (2014). [video from panel] "the Arts of Noticing". Conference Anthropocene. Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet, 32 min and onwards: <http://vimeo.com/98663761>

2—Feministiskt initiativ (Fi). (2014). Election platform. <http://feministisktinitiativ.se/sprak/english/election-platform/> (Accessed 2014-10-09).

3—Feministiskt initiativ (Fi). (2013). För en feministisk politik. http://feministisktinitiativ.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/For_en_feministisk_politik_2013.pdf (Accessed 2014-10-09).

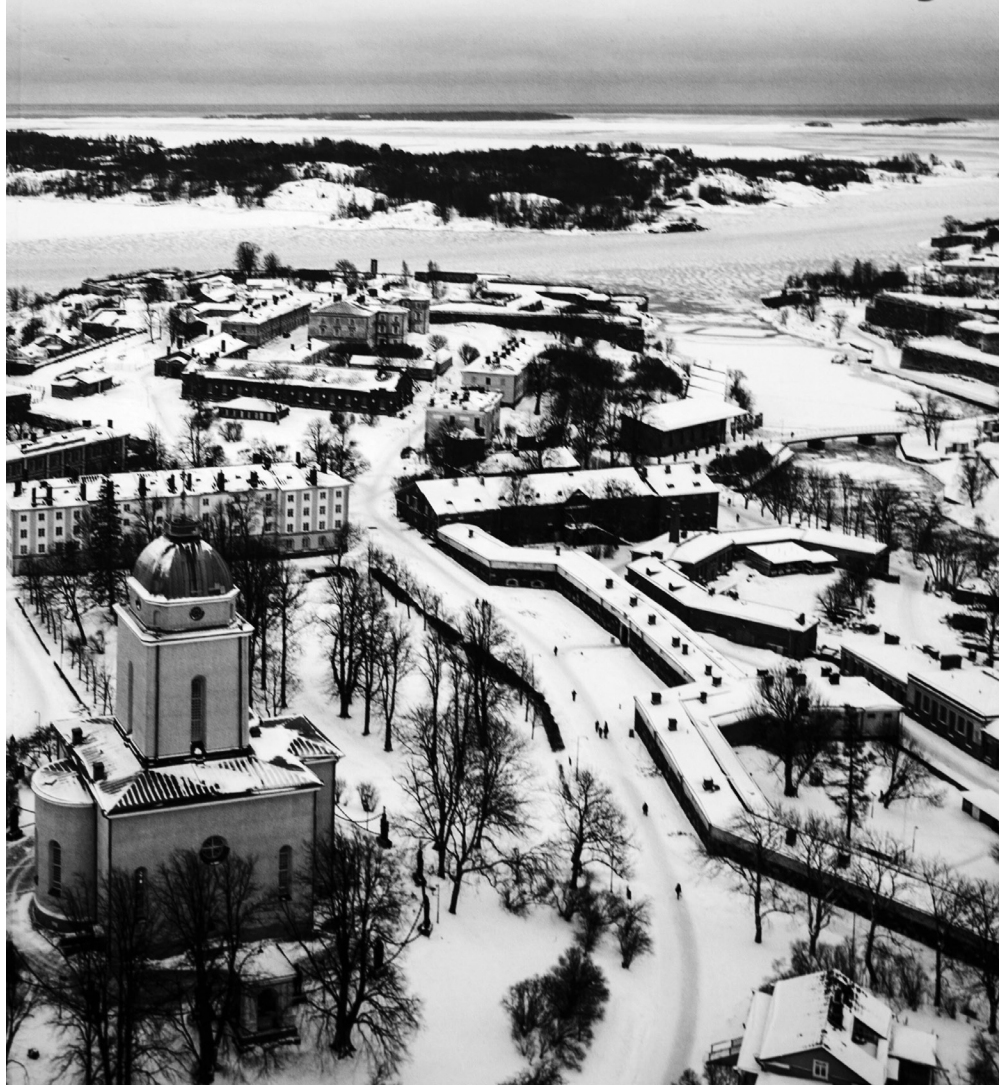
Gabrys, J. (2011). *Digital Rubbish*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, Jenny & Healy, Stephen. (2013). *Take back the economy: an ethical guide for transforming our communities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): a feminist critique of political economy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers

Autopsy of an Island Currency



THE AUTOPSY OF AN ISLAND CURRENCY book documents and reflects on a long-term Pixelache project called Suomenlinna Money Lab, that tried to create an experimental local currency for the small island of Suomenlinna in Helsinki. It looks at the particular challenges faced by the project, as well as the broader topics of participatory practices and money as a social & material medium through a series of essays. The book is composed of the multiple voices—edited by artist Christian Nold, curator Susanne Jaschko and Nathalie Aubret from Pixelache with essays by Antti Jauhiainen, Chris Lee, Dennis Roio aka Jaromil, Pekko Koskinen, and Suzanna Milevska. The book was designed by Wojtek Mejor and produced by Pixelache in 2014.

Available as a printed book & downloadable PDF via:
www.pixelache.ac/autopsy/

Thanks to Pixelache, a Hidden Economies Seminar partner organization.

The Economics of Free *cont.*
from page 8

tures and ideologies. As OSE redefines itself in its second year and hopefully continues to elaborate its own utopian model, it is important to consider how this debt has affected us and how we could have negotiated it differently. The best thing about utopias is not only that they remind us that there is always the possibility of a future different from the one commonly envisioned, but also that they help us see the ideologies that we've been unconsciously reproducing. By making these ideologies visible, we are choosing how to interact with them.

1 - The free that I'm interested in here reminds me of the free we encounter when we are faced with internet companies. The one that uses the discourse of openness to profit by controlling the mediation of the commons. In the dispute between free software and open software it is always imperative to differentiate the free that refers to freedom from the "that doesn't cost you money" free.

The first free is political, radical, liberating and emancipatory. That is not the free that I'm referring to here. The free in this case functions as an enslaving tool. Just as you are expected to give access to all your data in exchange for a service, the real message being that nothing can be really free.

2 - For an example of these debates outside of the UK check, Slate Cultural Gabfest March 19, 2014, episode discussion on trigger warnings in American universities: www.soundcloud.com/slateradio/the-culture-gabfest-prime

3 - When I moved to London just a few years ago I was impressed by the things that were framed as rights: access to health, benefits, legal advice, housing, etc. It seemed to be common sense that these were basic needs that we as a society should ensure were available to all. With the current government attempting to dismantle existing structures of health, welfare and education, it has become more and more common to hear them qualified as privileges.

“ For us, taking back the economy through ethical action means

- surviving *together well and equitably*;
- distributing surplus *to enrich social and environmental health*;
- encountering others *in ways that support their well-being as well as ours*;
- consuming *sustainably*;
- caring for—*maintaining, replenishing, and growing—our natural and cultural commons*; and
- investing our wealth in future generations *so that they can live well*.

An economy centered on these ethical considerations is what we call a community economy—a space of decision making where we recognize and negotiate our interdependence with other humans, other species, and our environment. In the process of recognizing and negotiating, we become a community.

– Take Back the Economy!: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Communities (Minnesota, 2013)

Circulation Economics cont.
from page 6

social, economic and ecological results. An important structural implication of the circular value chain is thus the establishment of a communicative arena where the actors involved exchange information in the fields required to reach effective, efficient and equity-based solutions.

From value monism to value pluralism

To illuminate the differences in the interpretation of values between mainstream economics and circulation economics it is useful to draw a demarcation line between weak and strong sustainability. Weak sustainability requires that the overall stock of capital assets should remain constant over time. This means that as long as one asset is growing, other assets could decrease without coming into conflict with the goal of sustainability, e.g. polluting the environment could be compensated by economic growth. Weak sustainability paves the way for; "trade-offs between different elements of environmental stock, and indeed between environmental and other capitals, i.e. the social and economic" (Zadek 2001, p. 119).

Strong sustainability demands that it is not sufficient to protect the overall stock of capital because some sorts of environmental and social capital are non-substitutable. It is the integrated combination of factors, irreversibility, uncertainty that counts in the definition of strong sustainability.

Strong sustainability re-

quires that man-made and natural capital each be maintained separately, since they are considered complements. Weak sustainability requires that only the sum be maintained intact, since they are presumed to be substitutes (Daly 1999, p. 56). Economic sustainability refers to a development which "can continue indefinitely because it is based on the exploitation of renewable resources and causes insufficient environmental damage for this to pose an eventual limit" (Allaby 1988, p. 374). Even though in a global perspective it is necessary to increase production of several vital goods and services, this does not necessarily have to mean debilitated sustainability.

As for economic and ecological sustainability, cultural sustainability demonstrates to what extent social systems and the interaction between social systems are sustainable over a certain period of time. In order to gain an impression of what the concept social sustainability implies, it may be beneficial to direct our thoughts in the direction of what the American moral philosopher Rawls (1971) has referred to as "the just society". In this perspective, basic elements of a sustainable society will be based on freedom, justice, and welfare.

In this context the most immediate question arising is what will happen if the economy assumes such a dominating position that it replaces the other value systems. Many social philosophers

(for example Habermas 1990, Taylor 1998 and Skirbekk 2002) have offered important contributions to the discussion regarding the consequences of the growing economism in the wake of globalization.

Concluding remarks

We have argued that circulation economics, based upon the organic worldview and a humanistic image of man, indicates that sustainability presupposes the best possible conditions for reaching the common goals of individual, social and environmental well-being. Mainstream economics is not able to find sustainable solutions to the complex, interrelated economic problems that face the world to day. We must therefore analyse the problems we are facing from a new perspective.


Circular value chains are necessary and we have to introduce re-distribution as a connecting function between the ends of the linear value chain (consumption and production). The tendency to single out profit as the only value in economics must be replaced by a multidimensional perspective in which economic, natural and cultural values are harmonised. Cooperative processes are necessary tools for harmonising the different agents' means and ends. To arrange this co-operation we launched the communicative arena as a practical solution. All kinds of economic activity are interrelated and interconnected with nature

and culture in a holistic perspective. The relationship between the ecological man and nature is "beyond (economic) self-interest and biological survival" (Becker, 2006, p. 20). Therefore, we advocate that it is necessary to change from a mechanistic to an organic world view.

In sum we argue that these changes enable, and require a new understanding of many of the complex problems related to the interdisciplinary fields of economics, ecology and society. Since process and change is an important hallmark in the organic world view, it is of great importance that economic systems are flexible. Circulation economics represents a dynamic solution to the problems, in that it does not remain fixed once and for all.

1 Abstractions based on limited worldviews, is dangerous, because we tend to forget that they are abstractions. Even worse, we also tend to mistake the abstractions for the concrete actuality. Whitehead calls this error, "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead 1967, p. 51).

For a full reference list, please visit www.hiddeneconomies.net/newspaper



Redigeret af Jakob Jakobsen

Bidrag til kritik af den politiske vidensøkonomi

politiske

kritik af den

vidensøkonomi


NEBULA

Bidrag til kritik af den politiske vidensøkonomi præsenterer en samling kritiske tekster om den såkaldte vidensøkonomi, som har været hyldet som det nye vækstområde for den postindustrielle kapitalisme. Teksterne viser, hvordan denne økonomi ikke alene udbytter vores kroppe, men også vores følelser, vores indlevelse, vores omsorg og vores seksualitet i dens vedholdende jagt på profit. Teksterne viser også, hvordan vi kan dæmme op for denne udbytning gennem forskellige modstandsformer, som blokerer eller angriber vidensøkonomiens semiotiske kredsløb.

Michael Hardt: Affectivt arbejde
Franco "Bifo" Berardi: Skizo-økonomi
Kathi Weeks: Livet inden for og imod arbejde. Affectivt arbejde, feministisk kritik og post-fordistisk politik
Claire Fontaine: Menneskelig strejke inden for den libidinale økonomis domæne
Stewart Martin: Den menneskelige kapitalens pædagogik
Colectivo Situaciones: Om den aktivistiske forsker
George Caffentzis: En kritik af vareliggjort uddannelse og viden (fra Afrika til Maine)

Redigeret af og med en indledning af Jakob Jakobsen

ISBN 978-87-992651-7-3



A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

This book presents a collection of critical texts on the so-called knowledge economy, which has been hailed as the new area of expansion for post-industrial capitalism. The texts point to how this economy, not only profits from our bodies, but also from our emotions, our empathy, our care and our sexuality in its unrelenting desire of expansion. The texts also show how we can stem this exploitation through diverse forms of resistance that block or attack the semiotic circuits of the knowledge economy.

Michael Hardt: Affective Labor
Franco "Bifo" Berardi: Schizo-Economy
Kathi Weeks: Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique and Post-Fordist Politics
Claire Fontaine: Human Strike Within the Field of Libidinal Economy
Stewart Martin: Pedagogy of Human Capital
Colectivo Situaciones: On the Militant Researcher
George Caffentzis: A Critique of Commodified Education and Knowledge (from Africa to Maine)
All texts in Danish translation.
Edited and with an introduction by Jakob Jakobsen, Nebula Press, 2014

Monetizing the Crowds

BY RENÉE RIDGWAY

In Marxist theory capitalism is unified through the exchange of commodities that mediate the interaction between people and their relations. Unlike feudal societies where people interacted subjectively and were familiar, in capitalism the producers of the products of labour in the factory are invisible and anonymous, and people relate to each other through the 'universal equivalent' or 'money form'.¹

The social relations, then, appear as material objects or things, along with money as a fetishized commodity as a result of the reifying effects of this universalised trade in commodities. Nowadays, with the increasing advancement of digital technologies, microfinance enables monetary exchanges between willing and known parties through crowdfunding campaigns. This presents a deepening of the impersonalisation of social relations with their mediation through exchange and money.

The monetization of our social relations is the causality of crowdfunding. Instead of just giving one's time, or attention – those of us who are online and participating are coerced into contributing. This network, then, becomes the commodity.

When something without value is assigned a market value that absorbs and displaces social value, these social relations are expressed as monetary relations between things and as a result are, de facto, commodified.

Unlike the factory's position in the supply chain where the manufacture and the labour involved in the production of goods is obfuscated, reward crowdfunding² attempts to make transparent the production process of the social factory including services (the future project) offered to the consumer, the quantification of the amount contributed and by whom it is contributed, along with the acquisition of these goods (rewards). However the campaign does not reveal the enormous amount of unpaid labour involved in the production by the campaigner. In order to crowdfund one has to do a lot of lobbying, social media advertisement and emailing (along with

other forms of interpersonal communication to draw attention to the campaign).³ Other labour includes managing software developers, service providers, help desk support, etc. and the production of the rewards (for example photographs, lim-

from people we know instead of mass-produced, popular items. Yet the micropayment does not buy into a collective or a communal project, it rather supports the authorship of the designated campaigner. The future project that is produced from most

ble, the crowdfunding model encourages financial risk carried by individuals rather than through state-support.

How will the crowds be funded? As surplus increases for the wealthy will this be kept in their private pockets or distributed elsewhere, perhaps toward sustainable communities or even socio-ecological crowdfunding campaigns?⁴ Or will this surplus be invested back into forthcoming reward crowdfunding projects, with the campaigner retaining the 'relations of production' along with sharing the spotlight with the crowdfunding platform? This will only help promote a neo-feudalistic society by gearing all cultural production to the market, supported by private individuals or entities who invest in futures—the presale of crowdfunding projects—which have yet to be determined.

Renée Ridgway's article was originally published November 2, 2013 in the online journal, *Open! Platform for Art, Culture, and the Public Domain* (www.onlineopen.org/columns/monetizing-the-crowds/). It is reprinted with permission.

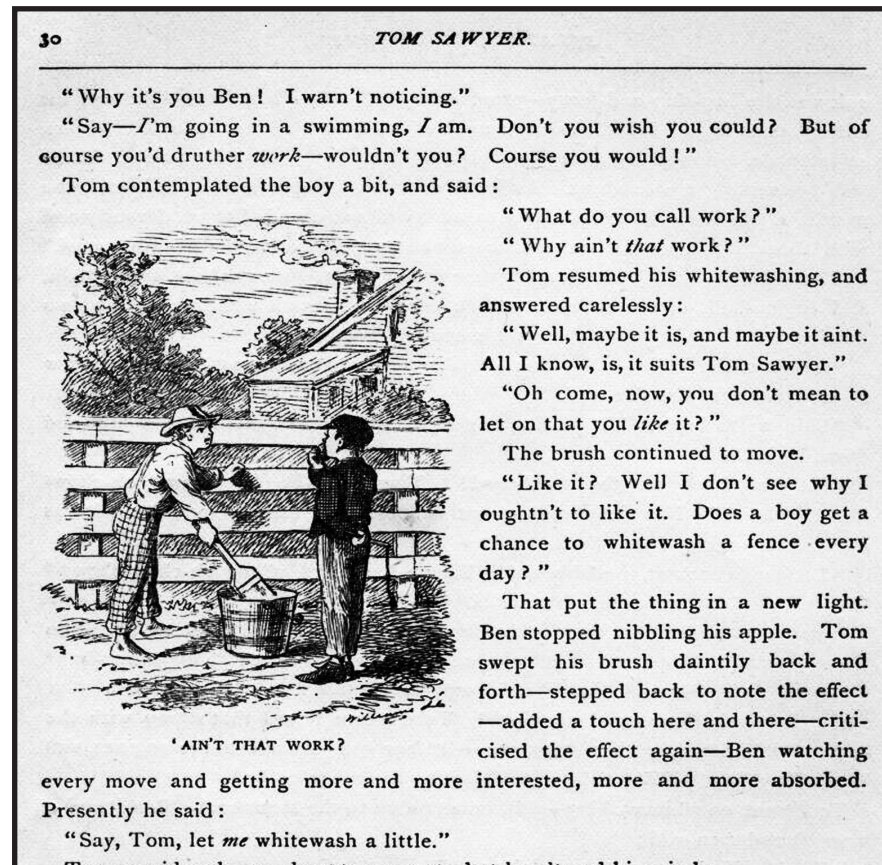


Image: Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain (1876)

ited edition of prints, artworks) along with the cost of postage to the contributors or patrons.

In reward crowdfunding the 'backer' or micropatron is usually known (75%) and especially during the 'financial crisis', with the state implementing massive cuts to the cultural sector, individuals feel increasingly obliged to contribute to the projects of others. Friends, family, neighbours and colleagues are all contributing their private wealth in order to maintain their social relations within their networks. Alienated labour is replaced with community activities in the form of participation with backers making contributions using the universal equivalent in the form of digital micropayments. In this way these networks of micropatrons become commensurated through the online money-form and the social relations between the individual workers (campaigners) and the donors (backers) are objectified and reified.

This monetization of our social relations is the causality of crowdfunding. Instead of just giving one's time, or attention – those of us who are online and participating are coerced into contributing. This network, then, becomes the commodity. The crowdfunding platforms in turn sell their data about these networks to third party profiteers for future systems of advertisement, notwithstanding all of the campaign's contributors who can be seen as future backers of subsequent crowdfunding projects.

Crowdfunding is being touted as part of the digital 'new economy' within the 'long tail' of online purchases of obscure, personal or hand-made commodities (rewards) online

crowdfunding campaigns corresponds to exclusive access to the commodity ownership. As with the contributions that are private surplus from backers, the rewards in the crowdfunding production process remain only private consumption with indebtedness being imparted to the backers (micropatrons) by the campaigner. The campaigners accrue symbolic capital with the help of social media, rumour, publicity and contributions, along with the impending production of their 'future project', in which their visibility and attention increases within the 'valorisation' process—the value realised in exchange. In a similar sense a crowdfunding campaign is a bet on the future; it mimics the production of commodities thrown onto the 'open' market. The campaign and the future project reinforce the circular course of capitalist production by enabling the productions of new commodities, to be generated from the labour power-producing surplus of the backers.

Crowdfunding is then yet another model of surplus redistribution as part of a larger economic shift, brought about through technology in the form of digital transactions and exacerbated by neoliberal austerity measures. Although the private distribution of wealth is on the rise, it becomes progressively difficult to create a surplus for those who work precariously because of the financialization of debt. Many people are forced to pay back education, loans, credit cards and mortgages with higher interest. Debt rises yet wages do not. Instead of protecting individuals from this form of exposure, thus ensuring production is affordable socially and accessi-

1—'As against this, the commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things.' Marx, Karl (1869) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1. Trans. Ben Fowkes, (New York: Vintage Books, 1976) 168-169.

2—There are four different types of crowdfunding: reward-based, donation-based, equity-based and lending-based crowdfunding. The focus within the cultural sector is reward-based in which a non-financial reward, or 'perks' such as a cultural artefact, is manufactured in exchange for monetary contributions. See www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowd_funding

3—First, there is the labour involved in organizing the campaign on the crowdfunding platform: making the introductory video, sending out emails, posting on all social media sites and lest we forget, emailing reminders. The time, energy and labour involved in running the campaign, (some campaigners even outsource the work to professional PR firms) not to mention the numerous updates and "thank-you's" afterwards all add up to indebtedness to others for successful campaigns.

4—Goteo promotes itself as a 'social network for co-financing and collaborating with creative projects that further the common good.' www.goteo.org