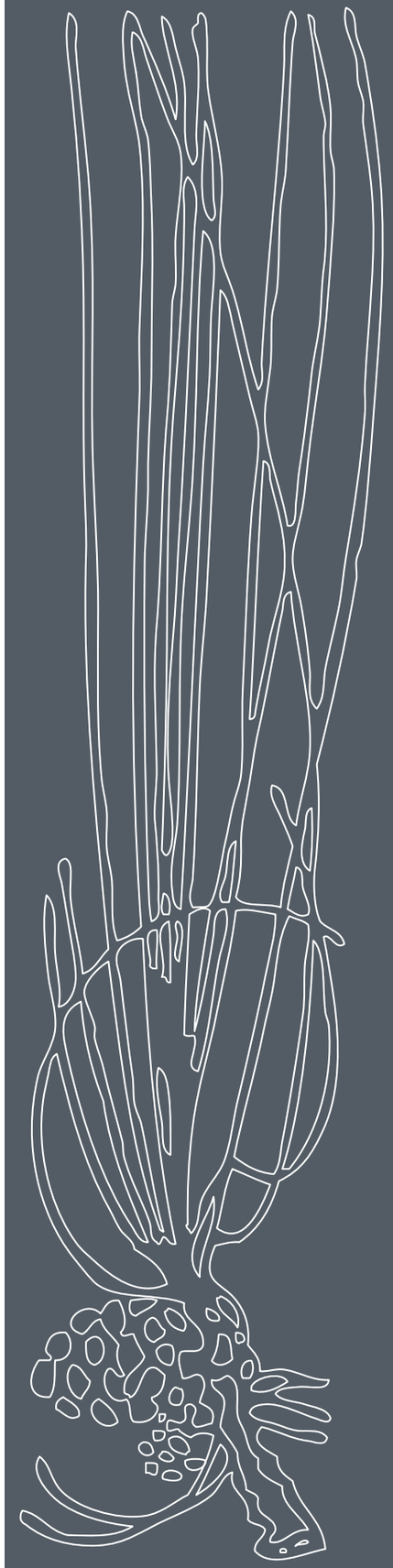
Tuomo Alhojärvi is a geographer immersed in postcapitalist praxis. In this study, he seeks to negotiate problematic legacies within the thinking of 'other worlds' by bringing together JK Gibson-Graham's feminist economic geography and Jacques Derrida's deconstructive philosophical practice. From this meeting emerges a fresh challenge for renegotiating the inherited futures of space and economy. Postcapitalism becomes a code word for trouble. In addition to thinking impossible things, Tuomo is keen on fathering, running and vermicomposting.

University of Oulu Graduate School

Publication of The Geographical Society of Northern Finland & Geography Research Unit at University of Oulu

ISBN 978-952-62-2868-6 (print)
ISBN 978-952-62-2869-3 (online)

PunaMusta Oy 2021



Alhojärvi — For Postcapitalist Studies: Inheriting Futures of Space and Economy

nordia geographical publications 50:2

nordia geographical publications

50:2

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nordia
geographical
publications

volume 50 issue 2

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Academic dissertation to be presented with the permission of the Doctoral Training Committee for Human Sciences of the University of Oulu Graduate School (UniOGS) for public discussion in the lecture hall L10 on the 30th of March 2021 at 12.

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Nordia Geographical Publications is a publication of The Geographical Society of Northern Finland and Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu. Address: PO Box 3000 FIN-90014 University of Oulu. Web: www.nordia.journal.fi. Editor-in-chief: Ville Kellokumpu ville.kellokumpu@oulu.fi. Layout editor: Maija Toivanen. Cover and layout design: Maija Toivanen. Back cover photo: Aron Sandell.

ISBN 978-952-62-2868-6 (print)
ISBN 978-952-62-2869-3 (online)
ISSN 1238-2086 (print)
ISSN 2736-9722 (online)

Printed at PunaMusta Oy, Joensuu, 2021

Contents

Abstract

The worldwide social and ecological unravelling of the 21st century presents an unprecedented challenge for thinking and practising liveable economies. As life support systems are annihilated in view of the sustainable accumulation of capital, social and economic alternatives are rapidly emerging to shelter possibilities for life amidst the ruins. *Postcapitalism* has gained increasing attention as an invitation to amplify existing alternatives to systemic scale. The transformations required are the focus of social movements, political projects and academic research that demand the theorisation and organisation of alternatives to capitalist realism *today*. What has often received less attention is how such emancipatory alternatives are burdened with problematic legacies living on *within*, in the epistemic heritage enabling and organising societal transformation. The 'post-' prefix, and the break from capitalism that it announces, has largely been treated as a given. This study resists such temptations of the affirmative in order to ask how restrictive and counterproductive burdens are carried along in emancipatory thought and practice, and how their continuous negotiation might have to redefine postcapitalism itself. Taking the 'post-' seriously demands critical and theoretical skills capable of examining the complexity of our inherited troubles.

This thesis offers a theoretical contribution to this juncture by bringing together the feminist economic geography of JK Gibson-Graham and the deconstructive philosophical practice of Jacques Derrida. Gibson-Graham's framework of diverse economies has become a major contribution to thinking and practising post-capitalist politics. It offers a popular affirmative and experimental approach to collective life, one that discards the givenness of economic truths and power in favour of a heterogeneous landscape of interdependent agency. Here, however, the attention is on Gibson-Graham's early, theoretical examination and critique of *capitalocentrism*: the omission, forgetting and subjugation of existing more-than-capitalist economies. This notion underlines the necessity to unlearn capitalist homogeneity in order for a plural, prismatic economy of coexistence to come to view: the worst forms of exploitation coexisting with the best of emancipations, *both* demanding situated negotiation and collective action. Capitalocentrism functions as a conceptual ground of the diverse economies framework, yet its theoretical, empirical and political complexity has largely been left unexamined. While the concept of capitalocentrism works to motivate its alternatives, its use simultaneously exhibits an unproblematised belief in overcoming the problem of postcapitalist burdens.

To think capitalocentrism as a continuous, unownable task, rather than a solid stepping stone for emancipation, it is theorised here as an *inheritance* with the help of Derrida's deconstruction. Derrida's 'rigorously parasitic' approach towards constitutive givens and his negotiation of troubling legacies offer a distinct approach to received problematics. Here, his writings on heritage, archives and violence are examined as situated practices of reinterpretative work with/in various legacies. This allows a distinct conceptual and methodological approach to inheritances that pivots on a vigilance of (self-)critique and a practice of close, complicit reading. The inheritedness of our textual materiality, with its historical promises and perils all too closely intertwined, becomes the issue. It allows a persistent negotiation of and oscillation between determinate, situated problematics and the incalculable and unlocatable. As an inheritance, capitalocentrism becomes a heterogeneous and unownable legacy that both enables and haunts the thinking of postcapitalist space and economy.

Developing such a conceptual and methodological approach to postcapitalist problems, this thesis studies capitalocentric inheritances in four main chapters. First, the concept of capitalocentrism and its critical role in Gibson-Graham's framework is treated in light of deconstruction's promises. Second, Derrida's economies of violence are studied to conceptualise capitalocentrism as a problem of history. Third, popular and academic debates concerning postcapitalism are explored as negotiations of capitalocentric inheritances. Fourth, the capitalocentrism of language itself becomes the issue as a problematic negotiated in sites and theories of translation. Altogether, this study proposes an attention to postcapitalist economic geographies that supplements emancipatory approaches with a critical-deconstructive attention to their limitations. Amidst immediate demands for social and economic transformation, it underlines what mediates those demands: the troubled language, the complicit sensorium that we inherit. By offering fresh grounds for rethinking the inherited futures of space and economy, it submits a challenge to claims that purport to govern and overcome the postcapitalist problem of constitutive burdens. As an inheritance, capitalocentrism necessitates drastic renegotiations of postcapitalist givens. This task is here called, tentatively, postcapitalist studies.

Keywords capitalocentrism, deconstruction, diverse economies, inheritance, Jacques Derrida, JK Gibson-Graham, postcapitalist studies

Tiivistelmä

Maailmanlaajuinen sosiaalisen ja ekologisen monimuotoisuuden romahtaminen on ennenkokematon ongelma elinkelpoisten talouksien ajattelulle ja käytännöille. Elämää ylläpitäviä järjestyksiä hävitetään pääoman kiertokulun jatkuvuuden nimissä, mutta samalla nousee esiin myös vaihtoehtoja: raunioiden keskellä vaalitaan elämän mahdollisuuksia. *Postkapitalismi* on kerännyt yhä enemmän huomiota kutsuessaan tarkastelemaan, miten näitä talouden ja tilan organisoinnin olemassaolevia vaihtoehtoja voidaan laajentaa systeemiseen mittakaavaan. Tähän kutsuun vastanneet yhteiskunnalliset liikkeet, poliittiset projektit ja akateeminen tutkimus haastavat kapitalistisen realismin vaihtoehdottomuuden tässä ja nyt. Sen sijaan vähemmälle huomiolle on usein jäänyt tällaisten emansipatoristen vaihtoehtojen mukanaan kantama ongelmallinen tiedollinen ja kielellinen perintö, joka pohjustaa ja jäsentää yhteiskunnallista muutosta. Postkapitalismin 'post'-etuliitteen julistama taitekohta ja murros suhteessa kapitalismiin on otettu pitkälti annettuna ja hallittuna. Tämä tutkimus hangoittelee murtuman oletusta ja lupausta vastaan kysyen, miten rajaavat ja haitalliset taakat periytyvät emansipatorisissa ajattelutavoissa ja käytännöissä, sekä millaista postkapitalismin uudelleenajattelua tällaisen perinnön selvittely vaatii. Postkapitalismin ongelman ottaminen vakavasti edellyttää kriittisiä ja teoreettisia taitoja, jotka harjaannuttavat perittyjen hankaluuksien moniin muotoihin: *jälki*kapitalistiseen ongelmistoon.

Väitöskirja osallistuu postkapitalismia koskevaan keskusteluun yhdistämällä J.K. Gibson-Grahamin feministisen talousmaantieteen ja Jacques Derridan dekonstruktiivisen filosofisen otteen. Gibson-Grahamin moninaisen talouden viitekehys on noussut tärkeäksi osaksi postkapitalistisen politiikan ajattelua ja käytäntöjä. Se tarjoaa helposti lähestyttävän, kannustavan ja kokeilevan menetelmän yhteiselon organisoimiseksi toisin. Lähestymistavassa talouteen liitetyt itsestäänselvät totuudet ja valtasuhteet hylätään, ja niiden sijaan avautuu monimuotoinen, keskinäisriippuvaista toimijuutta korostava talouden maisema. Tässä tutkimuksessa keskiössä on kuitenkin Gibson-Grahamin varhaisempi teoreettinen työ ja kritiikki, joka koskee *kapitalosentrismiä*: talouden kapitalististen muotojen teoreettista ja käytännöllistä ensisijaistamista sekä enemmän-kuin-kapitalististen talouksien ohittamista, unohtamista ja alistamista. Kapitalosentrismin käsite alleviivaa tarvetta oppia pois yksipuolistavista talouskäsityksistä, jotta talouden moninaisuus kaikessa kirjavuudessaan voi tulla esiin. Moninaisessa taloudessa ei ole kyse kapitalistisista normeista eroavien talouden muotojen ja käytäntöjen idealisoinnista, vaan riiston raaimmat muodot, prekaarit ja monitulkintaiset positiot sekä kollektiivisen emansipaation saavutukset asettuvat siinä rinnakkain ja limittäin. Tällaisessa taloudessa jokainen tila(nne) vaatii omanlaistaan, paikantunutta neuvottelua ja yhteistoimintaa. Kapitalosentrismi toimii siis moninaisen talouden käsitteellisenä ennakkoehtona osoittamalla talouden muotojen ensisijaistamisen järjestyksenä, joka vaikeuttaa talouden olemassaolevan moninaisuuden tunnistamista. Kuitenkin käsitteen teoreettinen, empiirinen ja poliittinen monimutkaisuus on pitkälti jätetty huomiotta. Näyttäytyessään rajattuna ja ratkaistavana ensisijaistamisen pulmana kapitalosentrismi sekä rohkaisee rakentamaan postkapitalistisia vaihtoehtoja että todistaa uskosta ongelmallisten perintöjen ylittämiseen ja hallitsemiseen.

Tarkastellakseen kapitalosentrismiä jatkuvana, ratkeamattomana työsarkana pikemmin kuin emansipaation vakaana astinlautana tämä tutkimus kääntyy Derridan dekonstruktion ja erityisesti sen *perintöä* koskevien ajattelukäytäntöjen puoleen. Derridan tapa työstää ongelmallisia perinteitä ja hänen täsmällisen parasiittinen tapansa lähestyä ajattelun perustavia lähtökohtia tarjoavat ainutlaatuisen lähtökohdan kapitalosentrismin

perittyjen hankaluuksien neuvottelulle. Tässä työssä keskiössä ovat hänen perintöä, arkistoja ja väkivaltaa koskevat kirjoituksensa, joita lähestytään erilaisten perinteiden sisäisinä, tilanteisina uudelleentulkintoina. Derridan ajattelun tarjoama käsitteellinen ja menetelmällinen lähestymistapa pyrkii valppaaseen (itse)kritiikkiin, läheiseen ja osalliseen luentaan sekä perinnöissä piilevien lupausten radikalisointiin. Ydinkysymykseksi muotoutuu tekstuaalisen materiaalisuuden perinnöllisyys – historian lupausten ja vaarojen sietämättömän likeiset yhteenkietoutumat. Derridan tulkinnat sallivat liikkuvan neuvottelun määrättyjen, tilanteisten kysymysten ja ratkeamattomien, paikantumattomien ongelmistojen välillä. Kapitalosentrismistä tulee tällöin monimuotoinen, hallinnalle vieras perintö, joka sekä mahdollistaa jälkikapitalistisen tilan ja talouden ajattelua että varjostaa sitä. Asetelma ei kyseenalaista Gibson-Grahamin moninaisen talouden viitekehystä itsessään, vaan valottaa ristiin postkapitalistista emansipaatiota ja sen kapitalosentristä, aivan-liian-kapitalistista perintöä.

Tämä tutkimus kehittää käsitteellistä ja menetelmällistä lähestymistapaa jälkikapitalistiseen ongelmistoon neljässä pääluvussa. Ensiksi tutkitaan dekonstruktion valossa kapitalosentrismin käsitettä ja sen Gibson-Grahamin viitekehyksessä tekemää kriittistä työtä. Toiseksi tartutaan Derridan kirjoituksiin väkivallan taloudesta kapitalosentrismin historiallisen perinnön käsitteellistämiseksi. Kolmanneksi käännytään yleistajuisen ja akateemisen postkapitalismia koskevan keskustelun puoleen siinä neuvoteltavien kapitalosentristen taakkojen tunnistamiseksi. Neljäntenä huomion saa kielen itsensä mukanaan kantama kapitalosentrismi sikäli kuin sitä neuvotellaan käännöstyössä ja kääntämisen teoretisoinneissa. Tutkimus rikastaa jälkikapitalismin talousmaantiedettä ehdottamalla emansipatoristen lähestymistapojen täydentämistä niiden rajoitteita tutkivalla kriittis-dekonstruktiivisella otteella. Suhteessa vaatimuksiin välittömistä yhteiskunnallisista ja taloudellisista muutoksista tällainen ote alleviivaa noiden vaatimusten välitteisyyttä: hankalaa kieltä ja osallista aistisuutta, jotka peritään. Tarjoamalla raikkaita aloitteita tilan ja talouden perittyjen tulevaisuuksien ja tulevien perintöjen ajattelemiseksi tutkimus haastaa lähestymistapoja, jotka pyrkivät ylittämään ja hallinnoimaan ongelmaista taakkaansa liian suorasukaisesti. Kapitalosentrismi perintönä edellyttää postkapitalististen oletusten radikaalia pöyhintää. Tätä tehtävää kutsuttakoon alustavasti jälkikapitalistiseksi tutkimukseksi.

Asiasanat dekonstruktio, Jacques Derrida, J.K. Gibson-Graham, jälkikapitalistinen tutkimus, kapitalosentrismi, moninainen talous, perintö

Acknowledgments

Recording the debts of a thesis is as impossible as it is necessary. Like an iceberg, this text has its visible tip, its restricted economy of gratitude. The acknowledgments mark the most easily accountable debts by naming some indispensable people without whom none of this would exist. But there is always more to it – like with the iceberg – a submerged but constitutive part that is harder to acknowledge and thank. With proper accounting, I could enlist the meals eaten while writing this text and the cooks and farmers involved, the cleaners and carers of spaces I have utilised, the energies and resources that have metabolised such accounts… not to mention the felled trees and carboniferous collaterals predicated by this seemingly innocent study. Textual knots have their sewers whose diverse economies demand a much more retentive account than what can, alas, be found here. Still, all such calculations fail in some way, at some point. Can I single out and thank all those who have given me language? Or pin down the way Oulujoki river flows in between these lines? Or know who and how, when and where, will read these words – and what this means for this work's indebtedness to the unknowable? The iceberg of acknowledgments melts into attempts at its comprehension, making the term 'monograph' a memory of its own impossibility.

Still, remember we must. This thesis would not exist without my supervisor Anssi Paasi. Anssi believed in my capacities from the very beginning. His instructive blend of laissez-faire and strategic interventionism created spacious and enabling circumstances to undertake this study. Anssi also suggested that I write a monograph, for which I am grateful, as it has enabled me to cultivate some necessary layers and complexities in this text. While acting as my co-supervisor during the first years, Toni Ahlqvist's enthusiasm illuminated my initial steps with this study, and I cherish his eagerness to encourage and practice creative thought.

Clive Barnett and Ceren Özselçuk kindly reviewed my thesis. Their encouraging and critically constructive comments were elemental to enabling some finishing strokes on this text, yet they also offer provocations for future work. I also warmly thank Mitch Rose for agreeing to serve as my opponent. Additionally, I want to thank Eeva Jokinen, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola and Juha Ridanpää who formed my supportive, encouraging and kindly pressurising follow-up group.

No one has endured the reading of my writing as much as Aron Sandell. For the past decade, Aron's friendship has been elemental to my joy of thinking. His critical and patient scrutiny has clarified much that is written and thought in this study. Also, this thesis would not be the same without Pieta Hyvärinen and Eeva Talvikallio and our collective translation project discussed in some detail in chapter five. The ripples of our work are much more constitutive to my general argument than what the relegation of translation to an issue covered by a single chapter can capture. It is from the fleeting traces of translation that we need to reassemble promises of a future.

My colleagues, both former and current, at the Geography Research Unit deserve a collective thank you. To be able to work with these people, within this strange post-disciplinary mesh also known as the discipline of geography, is a source of wonder and delight. Johanna Sitomaniemi-San taught me the kinship and difference between a deadline and a lifeline. Her support especially during the long last stretch of my PhD research has been invaluable, and I could not be happier about our current experiment of collective work. Heikki Sirviö knows what I talk about when I talk about the necessity of translation problems and linguistic-cultural opacity. The editing projects with Heikki on political ecologies (*Nordia*) and radical geographies (*Terra*)

have been crucial experiences, and many of their traces can be read here, in-between the lines of 'my' thinking. Mark Griffiths' warmth and encouragement have often kept me afloat. I have aspired to learn from Mark's unique blend of ruthless criticism and kind supportiveness. Ville Kellokumpu, Marika Kettunen and Outi Kulusjärvi have been wonderful company in thinking and practicing towards an engaged, involved geography irrespective of institutional boundaries.

Fellow geographers and other oddities keep making Finnish universities vivid places. In particular, I want to thank Päivi Rannila and Lea Rojola, and their respective research groups at the University of Turku, for their kind invitations to give talks. Luckily, I have had too many important teachers and mentors to enumerate all of them. Suffice it to thank Eric Clark, Hannu Linkola, Aili Pyhälä and Juha Uitto, each of whom has encouraged my endeavours for a long time. I also want to extend my gratitude to all the brilliant teaching assistants and students I have worked with during the past years. Let us take pedagogy very seriously, laughing our way through it and cherishing our capacities for collective transformation.

Friends in and around Alue- ja ympäristötutkimuksen seura, BIOS, Kohtuusliike, OulUtopia, Tutkijaliitto, Typpilaakso and our anonymous, militantly stumbling cell of urban imagination have been crucial for me during these past few years. Although this thesis is hardly the kind of tool for concrete emancipation that I once hoped it would be, all my concerns here echo the collective work around solidarity economies and commoning in this country. I thank my friends and comrades, accomplices and challengers – you know who you are. The past collaborations with my radiant friends Otto Bruun, Tero Toivanen, Juhana Venäläinen, Noora Vikman and Ruby van der Wekken have all marked this study in pronounced ways. Talking of companions in collective transformation, Markku Aho's warm radicality is greatly missed. My friends Inari Alanko and Olli Salmi have both been ridiculously hospitable and kind as my hosts in Oulu. And in Helsinki, our wonderful neighbours make this city a lot more imaginative.

Thinking of friends and colleagues overseas, nothing compares to the Community Economies Research Network (CERN). It is slightly redundant to thank Katherine Gibson in a study that would literally not exist without her. I would not have *this* language – nor that much to say with it. Not only have JK Gibson-Graham's writings been elemental to my research interests and directions, they have also transformed much of what I thought knowing was about. Thank you Katherine for all this trouble. Katherine, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy were all extremely kind and generous during our translation project, and their work remains to be retranslated in countless ways. I also want to acknowledge the Julie Graham Community Economies Research Fund, whose fellowship allowed me to participate in the 2019 Community Economies Theory and Writing Retreat in Bolsena, Italy. I also had the opportunity to co-teach the inaugural Community Economies Summer School with Katherine and Katharine McKinnon, as well as to participate in Bianca Elzenbaumer's wonderful practice exchange in Vallagarina. My sincere thanks to everyone involved. I also want to extend my gratitude to friends in CERN-Europe and the wider community for your brilliant initiatives and all the support.

The chapters of this thesis have varying histories. Chapter two presents a revised and extended version of an argument published in *Rethinking Marxism* in 2020. In addition to people already mentioned, I wish to thank Nate Gabriel, Ethan Miller, Eric Sarmiento and Boone Shear for their help with this piece. I also thank Taylor and Francis for the permission to reuse the material. Chapter three might be the most

theoretical piece in the thesis, but in fact, it emerged from my empirical research during 2017 and 2018 on postcapitalist cartographies. During that time, I had the chance to interview people working with various mapping projects. The maps dropped out from focus as my questions developed. Nonetheless, I warmly thank the people who so generously talked with me and shared their visions and problematics around mapping. Chapter four presents an argument that I presented on three occasions in 2018: at the Critical Theory Workshop in Paris, at Tutkijaliitto's Reading the Enemies summer school in Salo and at the CERN-Europe mini-conference in Berlin. Chapter five owes much to the comments of Pieta Hyvärinen, Eeva Talvikallio, Tere Vadén and the Bolsena retreaters in 2019. I also presented some of the material at the 2019 Nykyaika event of Nuoren Voiman Liitto. I thank all friends and comrades for thinking through these issues with me.

The Geography Research Unit in Oulu has graciously supported my work for many years. I also want to thank the University of Oulu Graduate School and the University of Oulu Academics for their support of my travel expenses along the years. The Geographical Society of Northern Finland has agreed to publish this text; a decision I am truly delighted by. I thank Ville Kellokumpu and Maija Toivanen, in particular, for all their work on this publication. Merl Storr read my manuscript with care and wit, graciously clarifying an innumerable amount of my textual mumblings. Pieta Hyvärinen and Hannu Linkola kindly did the same with my Finnish abstract, patiently correcting my atopic commas.

It is not an exaggeration to say that nothing here would exist without the kind and generous people who respond to email queries from random people, share texts and thoughts online and practice mutual aid of all kinds. If there is anything radical about scholarly contexts, it is because of these people and this postcapitalist mesh of cooperation and solidarity. Thank you all, anonymous toilers.

Lastly, there would be no writing without friends and family. Friends, you have stayed with me during these past, silent years. Äiti, Isä ja Anu, Lauri, Raija and wider families in Helsinki and Joensuu, kiitos kun olette. Thank you Iina-Maija for sharing the everyday, and for your trust in this study coming alive. Ilmi, you are why I breathe joy.

Helsinki 5 March 2021

Tuomo Alhojärvi

1 Introduction: Inheriting Ruins

1.1 A Postcapitalist Fold: Inheriting the Ruins of Future

An economic geographer of the future might find themselves today in *a postcapitalist fold*. On the one hand, recent years have seen a surge in imaginaries, projects and movements that make it increasingly clear that turbulent futures can be and are being organised in drastically more democratic and sustainable terms than the systematised profit-driven system allows. Transformative alternatives abound, legitimating claims for "a novel agenda for postcapitalist geographical enquiry and praxis which combines critique of the current capitalist system and propositions of alternatives beyond it" (Chatterton & Pusey 2020: 28). All over, people confront the emerging climate emergency, the Sixth Mass Extinction, and the unravelling of human sociality, solidarity and cooperation with an endlessly differentiated social life that echoes a postcapitalist promise of collective survival and indebtedness. On the other hand, such openings are pressed by an equally real sense of exhausted futures. The epoch sometimes named 'the Capitalocene' (Moore 2016) continues to scar collective futures in increasingly disastrous and violently differentiated ways. Postcapitalist futures not only threaten not to come; they are marked in advance by inherited foreclosures:

> "The next generations of humans will inherit debt, resource depletion, high levels of environmental toxicity, a warmed and warming planet, and acidified oceans, along with embedded structures of nepotism, finance, and bureaucracy that will exacerbate the effects of that inheritance" (Colebrook & Weinstein 2017: xiii; see also Morton 2013).

While postcapitalist futures are both thinkable and practicable, they will have inherited an unending horizon of disastrous and extinctive ruination. Whatever the postcapitalist emancipations ahead, they will have needed to accommodate themselves to conditions not of their own choosing. This is what it means to inherit in the postcapitalist fold. The task, within this fold, presents itself not solely in the force of the political and theoretical projects needed, but as seeking to distinguish between the two sides of the fold: separating emancipation from ruination. Yet we *also* know that such separations bear their own risks in the idealisation of alternatives, in the insulation of utopias, in the omission of violences committed in the name of emancipation, and in the externalisation and idealisation of problematics. A questioning of fossil capitalism, for instance, demands a simultaneous questioning of the frameworks energised by its infrastructures, including, for example, 'humanity':

> "Fossil fuels are a material context that has shaped corporeality, not just for those who have partaken of their gifts, but for the people to come that have been transformed by the conversion of that matter-energy. Gifts need to be acknowledged rather than disavowed" (Yusoff 2016: 24; see also Salminen & Vadén 2015; Yusoff 2015).

Questioning the omnicidal energetic economy of fossil capital thus must include questioning ourselves – every emancipatory or civilisational heritage powered and constituted by a history of fossil gifts.

It might be impossible to cleanly distinguish a sense of emancipation from the ruination, both being sides of the same inheritance; but it also is necessary to seek to

do so. In this thesis, I propose such a task of inheritance as a central concern for the critical study of postcapitalist horizons. I present here a theoretically driven enquiry into a problematic that is most practical. Whatever the project, promise or opening named 'postcapitalist', or identified as reaching towards some state beyond capitalism, somehow it needs to negotiate the distance between the 'post-' prefix and its '-capitalist' stem. Somehow, sense needs to be made of what is inherited and how its remains are negotiated within practices that purport to overcome capitalist relations. If an 'alternative' is only repetition of the 'mainstream' but with (a crucial) difference, then the strategies, capacities and ignorances of this differentiation will have demanded skilful negotiation and explicit, critical concern. This enquiry addresses, then, the 'capitalist' remains within a host of differently understood 'postcapitalist' practices and the intellectual tools – themselves inherited – that enable us to recognise and practise the difference between the stem and its prefix. The core questions, then, consist not of judging a practice – at least, not *only* judging it – but in assessing the grounds, strategies and responsibilities of such judgement.

That the difference between 'post-' and '-capitalism' ought not to be self-evident but instead a nexus of continuous attention is my guiding light.[1] What is so 'post-' about 'postcapitalism', or about 'postcapitalist X'? How do we know, recognise and rearticulate what remains of capitalism? If what is inherited will have already been (in) ruins, how to forge spaces of relative reparation and sustenance? When and how will we find ourselves in a place worth calling postcapitalist? How are our ways of practising and theorising future spaces and economies inherited from the past? How do we deal with the violences of emancipatory projects and legacies? What is this collective agency, this 'we', if not already an effect of capitalist relations of mediacy and abstraction – of a history of capitalist modernity? Such questions have guided the motivation and rationale of this thesis, and they stem from a theoretical and practical concern with the restrictedness of postcapitalist praxis, and from my doubt that we have barely scratched the surface of everything that will have needed to be 'unlearned' for the sake of the 'post-'.

What these questions point towards is a set of hypotheses that take troublesome inheritances as a key concern for postcapitalist praxis: any postcapitalist practice worthy of its name will warrant an expanding, care-full, and processually developing attention to *inherited* forms of thought and practice that both enable and restrict what is available to and through practice. Also, such attention needs to consider any mode of (self-) positioning and contextualisation within or in relation to structures of space and economy – e.g. as 'part of global capitalism', 'belonging to the grassroots', 'being in

1 The postcapitalist fold that I am staging as the context of this study has a strange resemblance to the 'cybernetic fold' as discussed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (1995). Their 'fold' seeks to capture the historical moment of system-theoretical and structuralist development "roughly from the late forties to the midsixties […] when scientists' understanding of the brain and other life processes was marked by the concept, the possibility, the imminence, of powerful computers, but the actual computational muscle of the new computers wasn't available yet." (508) Thinking this fold through the work of Silvan Tomkins, Sedgwick and Frank aim "to describe structuralism not as that mistaken thing that happened before poststructuralism but fortunately led directly to it, but rather as part of a rich moment, a rich intellectual ecology, a gestalt (including systems theory) that allowed it to mean more different and more interesting things than have survived its sleek trajectory into poststructuralism." (508) We might think of non-, anti-, and despite-capitalist praxis within the postcapitalist fold, on the one hand, as marked by concepts and practices devoid of the 'muscle' needed to achieve systemic transformations and, on the other hand, as already too impoverished, all too gathered under the 'sleek trajectory' of 'postcapitalism' (see chapter four). The task is to explore the richness of this fold, its praxes and the negotiations of post/capitalist heritages – a richness that includes the spectrum of skills for self-critique.

the here and now', being identified as '*post*capitalist' – as inherited, problematic and potentially counterproductive. What is more, attention will need to be given to the contours, movements and forms of that attention itself – the *inherited* conditions of attending to 'our' attention critically. From this sort of troubled and troubling *problem space* can emerge something quite disorienting and interesting: a relational site to negotiate critically.

The specific coordinates of my enquiry are provided by a theoretical meeting I stage between JK Gibson-Graham and Jacques Derrida. Combining the former's feminist postcapitalist approach with the latter's deconstructive practice of inheritance, I seek to reformulate some inherited problematics that might warrant sustained attention. More specifically, I will think Gibson-Graham's concept 'capitalocentrism' – processes that privilege capitalist economic forms and disparage other, more-than-capitalist ones – and Derrida's 'inheritance' – a practice of faithful infidelity and a critical-deconstructive commitment – together in order to frame postcapitalist problematics in terms of their capitalocentric inheritances: constitutive *and* unownable forms of heritage that delimit the sensibility of more-than-capitalist economies and thus the prospects of post-capitalist construction. These inheritances, enabling *and* restricting conditions of our being, are studied through four chapters that present different problematics, mainly in a theoretical register. The three research questions guiding my enquiry are the following (I will return to these in section 1.4 below):

Q1 What kind of capitalocentric inheritances can be identified in postcapitalist praxis?

Q2 How are capitalocentric inheritances (to be) negotiated to differently performative effects?

Q3 How is postcapitalist futurity infrastructured in spatial-economic terms in such negotiations?

These problematics point towards various tasks of *unlearning* that are needed. My strategy is to work with legacies and ruins of various sorts, not only to accumulate various new postcapitalist 'alternatives' or to insist on the necessity to put them into practice (which we know already). While 'postcapitalism' would seem to usher us into the task of unlearning capitalism – departing from it once and for all – my work here is to complicate and reformulate such a task without succumbing to an unproblematised belief in absolute breaks or ultimately governable and forgettable ('unlearnable') processes.[2] Thus, another way to describe my task is as seeking to take such unlearning, its necessity as well as its impossibility, *seriously*.

The rest of this introduction chapter proceeds as follows. First, I introduce in more detail Gibson-Graham's work as it progresses from a feminist and anti-essentialist critique of political economy to the reframing of 'diverse economies' and the affirmative and experimental collective project of 'community economies'. Running slightly against the

2 My characterisation of 'unlearning' here has an ordinary rather than a theoretically rigorous sense. 'Unlearning' here indexes an unproblematised investment in an affirmationist (Noys 2010) promise to break away from what has already been learned. A more nuanced take on the term and process of unlearning could undoubtedly teach us a different lesson. For some interesting recent efforts to think and practise unlearning seriously, see Seery and Dunne (2016), Singh (2018) and Azoulay (2019).

tide of Gibson-Graham's trajectory, which can be seen as a development from feminist critique to affirmative and experimental praxis, I return to the problematic of capitalocentrism, first introduced in the 1990s and since then largely left as an untheorised (but much-used) given. Then I introduce in more detail Derrida's work on and as 'inheritance' – contrasting his writings with several interpretations of what 'inheriting' means in this context. This provides me the conceptual tools to approach capitalocentrism as an inheritance, or as a way of negotiating (with) the postcapitalist problem. In the following section, I restate my three guiding research questions and provide some additional commentary on the methodological commitments that orient their handling. I also present a table that summarises the perspectives taken in the different chapters to treat these questions. To end the introduction, I outline the rest of the thesis's choreography.

1.2 Capitalocentrism: Prismatic Economies of JK Gibson-Graham

> "What if we believed […] that the goal of theory were not only to extend and deepen knowledge by confirming what we already know – that the world is full of cruelty, misery, and loss, a place of domination and systemic oppression? What if we asked theory to do something else – to help us see openings, to help us find happiness, to provide a space of freedom and possibility?" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 7).

One of the strongest voices – or multiplicity of voices – for tackling the urgency of a non-capitalist political economy emanates from feminist economic geographer JK Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist work. Gibson-Graham, the pen name of Katherine Gibson and the late Julie Graham, were born[3] in the early 1990s to produce a remarkable array of critical and provocative work, rethinking Gibson's and Graham's Marxist heritage in the context of feminist and poststructuralist praxis as well as the grounded demands of participatory action research. This approach, often referred to as diverse and/or community economies,[4] pivots on the reclaiming of economic agency within a rethought economic landscape constituted of heterogeneous relations and ethical interdependency. Discussing Gibson-Graham's work also needs to attend to the wider community of researchers and practitioners known firstly as the Community Economies Collective and recently as the Community Economies Research Network. The political and scholarly approach of diverse economies has recently flourished. This can be seen in various translations of Gibson-Graham's work into languages other than English, in the recent founding of the more-than-academic Community Economies Institute, in the freshly published collective effort *The handbook of diverse economies* (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020), and in the first international Community Economies Conference, held online in November 2020. What seemed like an "enticing possibility" and a "nascent

3 Gibson-Graham have sometimes referred to themselves in the singular and sometimes in the plural. I will use the plural throughout, even with texts that I have reason to suspect were written after Julie Graham's death in 2010. This is to respect Gibson-Graham's decision to keep on writing as a plural singular author to this day.

4 I will use both names depending on the context, but I will mostly refer to work in this vein as 'the diverse economies framework'. While 'community economies' has increasingly emerged as an umbrella term for the approach and its various strategies of thinking, I think 'diverse economies' better emphasises the necessary rethinking of economy in terms of heterogeneity that grounds the collective work of 'community economy' that follows from it (see Miller 2013). I will add 'prismatic economy' to this list of alternative conceptual keynotes. See my discussion of these terms and their different strategies in the following pages.

community" some 10 years ago (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 613) now flourishes as an increasingly global effort to rethink economies in order to 'take them back', wherever and everywhere: "[T]he diverse economies research program is both consolidated as a powerful new economic paradigm and rethought as a major political intervention for our times" (St Martin *et al.* 2015: 19). While 'paradigm' might be a strong word for a research approach very much in the process of development and institutionalisation, its proliferation and increased influence are undeniable.

One way to understand Gibson-Graham's work is through its unrelenting accent on the urgency of acting academically and politically for liveable worlds. The approach flows from an insider critique of Marxist geography and the prevalence of a "politics of postponement" (Gibson-Graham 2006: ix). Asking, provocatively enough, "[w]hy can feminists have revolution now, while Marxists have to wait?" (251), Gibson-Graham enquire into the empirical, theoretical, affective and political impasse produced by totalising modalities of critical political-economic thought. The politics of postponement concerns ways that critics – while claiming and aiming to construct increasingly realistic and flawless analyses of 'global capitalism' and its varieties of exploitation – end up making it harder rather than easier to transform that very order. Instead of an intentional act to inhibit another politics, argue Gibson-Graham, at stake is often an inconspicuous process in which the very representations of reality – and representations of that representationality – produce effects other than those intended: "it is the way capitalism has been 'thought' that has made it so difficult for people to imagine its supersession" (4). 'Capitalism', in such thinking, names a unified, singular, and hegemonic 'global economic system', and its 'alternatives' are accordingly

> "understood primarily with reference to capitalism; as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism, or as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement to capitalism; as existing in capitalism's space or orbit" (6).

That is, insofar as 'non-capitalist' sites and relations are allowed and recognised to exist, they are confined to the orbit of the primary sites, affects and knowns of capital(ism).

What comes to matter in terms of 'economy' is a narrow set of practices, subjectivities and sites that populate the tip of the proverbial iceberg (see Figure 1). This works on multiple levels: for instance, household production and care labour are treated as 'reproductive' of waged work(ers), thus assigning a secondary role (whether in terms of compensation, respect, or theoretical, empirical and political interest) to those who work at home compared with those who work elsewhere. Thought as economic units within a wider landscape of 'macroeconomy', households gain attention as participants in reproducing wage relations, financialisation and commodity markets. Care work and affective labour, non-monetary service exchange, participation in commoning, and other forms of other-than-capitalist economic relations are deemed inconsequential, or at best important to the extent that they contribute to capitalist economies. Simultaneously, these sites are deemed largely irrelevant and disorganised from any 'macroeconomic' perspective (Safri & Graham 2010). While situated feminist revolutions have subverted power relations in and around countless households, in ways unimaginable only some decades ago (and ways *still* unimaginable in countless ways and places), 'economy' still remains thought and practised as a very different sort of field – much less favourable to situated revolutions. Households, like other economic sites 'below the waterline', are unhesitatingly contextualised *within* capitalism (or other similar 'systemic' structures), as

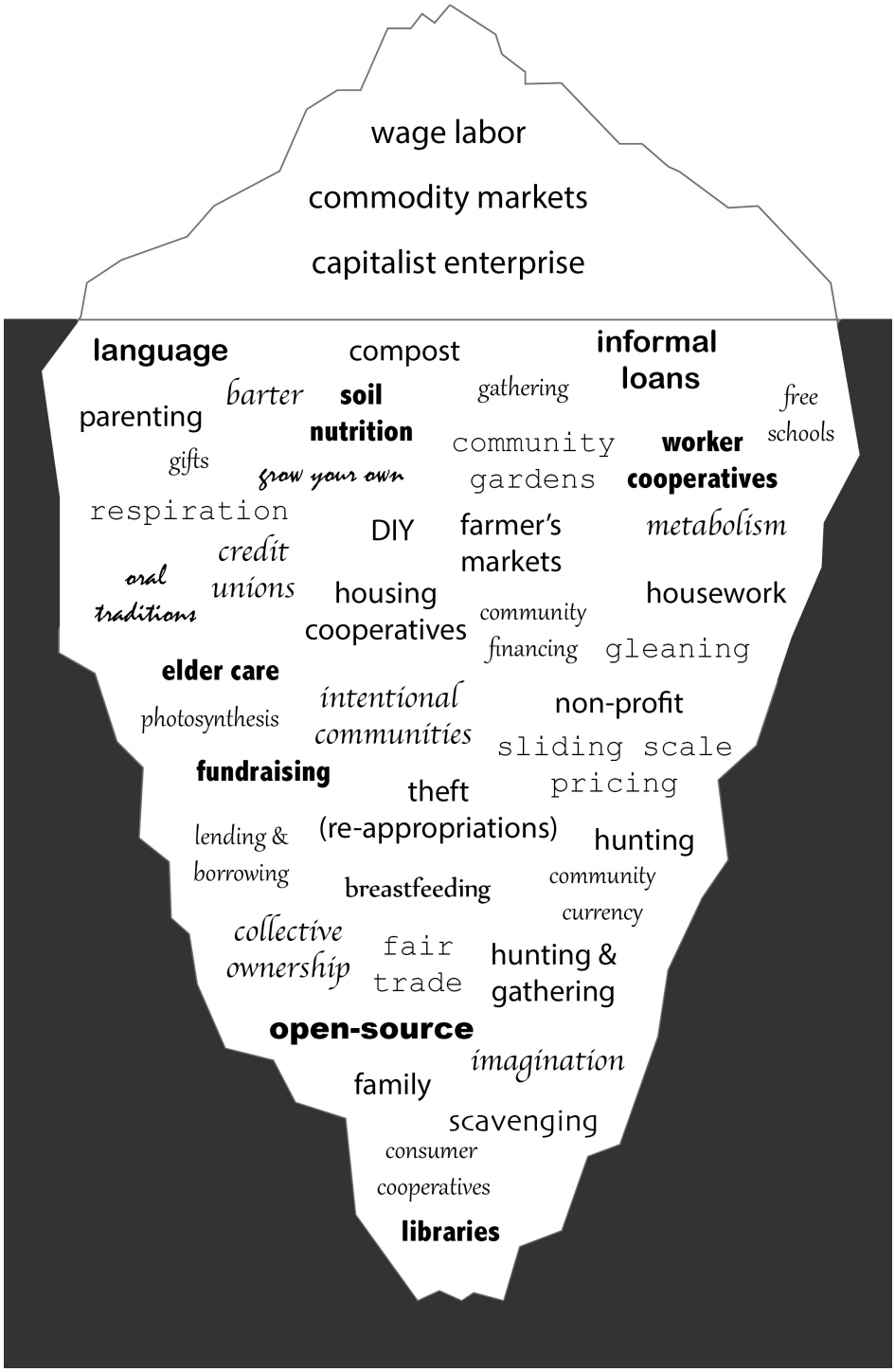

Figure 1. The diverse economies iceberg. Licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0. Colours modified to black and white. Source: Community Economies Collective (2020).

if this did not already imply all sorts of restrictions in terms of what is recognised and fostered in their economies.

Whatever lines up with or revolves around the narrow list of capitalist economic identities comes first, giving rise to hierarchies and power relations – not least gendered, racialised, speciesist and ableist ones. As Gibson-Graham comment on a panel discussion concerning industrial restructuring and households in which they participated:

> "The researchers had set out to produce a rich and differentiated set of stories about industrial and community change, but they ended up showing how households and communities accommodated to changes in the industrial sector. In their papers things not only *lined up with* but *revolved around* industry, producing a unified social representation centered on a capitalist economy (the sort of thing that's called a 'capitalist society' in both everyday and academic discussion)" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: xxxviii).

The result is a taken-for-granted sense of 'the economy' as composed of naturalised hierarchies, pre-known relations of determination and power, and all-too-easily accepted limitations of political and theoretical imagination and transformation – and a form of economic knowledge sure of its own referential legitimacy and impartial truthfulness. Gibson-Graham's argument is that what happens below the proverbial waterline is a heterogeneity no less central and no less constitutive of our coexistence, but one systematically disavowed in economic discourse, legal practice, academic research and political praxis. Its disavowal is not simply a blindness or an omission, although it can be that too, but a systematised and inherited way of accounting for more-than-capitalist practices as part of and with reference to a pre-known 'whole'.

Gibson-Graham (2006b: 35) coin the name 'capitalocentrism' for such a mode of relationality whereby "capitalism is positioned as the economic standard". Inspired by critical analyses of phallo(go)centric discourses that marginalise women, 'capitalocentrism' names an analogous (or more-than-analogous, since phallocentrically gendered) binary mode in which economic difference matters in relation to and insofar as it relates to capital(ism) and the narrow set of practices and sites deemed most central in/for it: "Noncapitalist forms of economy are positioned within 'capitalocentric' discourses as opposites, the subordinates and servants, the replications, or the deficient, non-existent or even unimaginable others of capitalism" (35 n22). This entails and reproduces violent hierarchies of value as a lived and practised social relation. Gibson-Graham argue that any material reality of economic difference is woven into a fabric of representational acts that have material-semiotic power and participate in forms of exploitation and exclusion as well as solidarity and ethical negotiation. Insisting on the performative and constitutive character of such representations, Gibson-Graham argue that economic discourses "are implicated in the world they ostensibly represent" (xxxix). This seemingly minute epistemic repositioning from (purely) representational to performative knowledge has profound consequences, since it allows Gibson-Graham to call out politically and empirically shrinking approaches, and to call for another mode of theorising and practising economies.

For Gibson-Graham, capitalocentrism is an economic discourse that traverses various genres and traditions, from Marxist and other critiques of political economy to neoclassical economics, from neoliberal governance to many of its counter-arguments, and from economic news to ordinary, everyday thinking about livelihoods. Marxist critiques in particular, structured as they are around the analysis of capitalist

economies as global social relations and the emancipatory promises that spring from such analyses, are in an interesting position: they require and produce a form of critical discourse on capitalism that may at the same time block and postpone the recognition and realisation of economies other than capitalist. In other words, Gibson-Graham identify in critical knowledge interested primarily in analysing exploitation (in view of potential emancipations) a performative complicity with the objects it merely seeks to represent – so that descriptions of exploitative structures participate in reproducing these very ills due to the restricted and biased mode of attention and their inherited conceptual economy.

What such political-economic critiques typically miss are not only prospects and practices of resistance, but also the chance to 'read for' openings and alterities within the very structures and relations they identify as problematic. Gibson-Graham's argument is not to lambast critics for *inaccurate* representations, but instead to point out that the interpretative tools needed for either representing the undeniable ills of exploitation or for promoting other realities worth promoting may be *different* in terms of their affective purchase and effective results. As Graham and St Martin (1990: 173) put it:

> "Different knowledges […] have different effects and this gives us some grounds to choose between them. […] One theory may be as good as another with respect to the unattainable goal of representing reality, but they are different and distinguishable in every other way".

Importantly, this is not to call out critique as such, but instead to mark some of its limits, and to demand more affirmative possibilities where political-economic critique typically only recognises impasses, institutional policy issues or monolithic obstacles.

This epistemological shift, being a combination of a post-Marxist reading of Louis Althusser (Resnick & Wolff 1987; Graham 1990, 1992), a feminist rethinking of performativity (Sedgwick 1990; Gibson 1992) and a discursive politics of hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe 2014), entails the change from a representational framework of increasing accuracy and the logocentric assumption of a knowledge's referential relation to the world 'as it is' to a position more interested in reflecting on differences of theory in terms of their effects: "[w]e will struggle for the effects we want just as we struggled for 'the' truth" (Graham & St Martin 1990: 173). This exhorts scholars "to recognize their constitutive role in the worlds that exist and their power to bring new worlds into being. Not single-handedly, of course, but alongside other world-makers, both inside and outside the academy" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 614). In this co-constitutive place of performative knowledge, then, the compulsively restrictive forms of capitalocentric economic discourse need to be analysed and replaced by modes of analysis better equipped to pay attention to and foster non-capitalist economies: "Our hope is to disarm and dislocate the naturalized dominance of the capitalist economy and make space for new economic becomings – ones that we will need to work to produce" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: xii).

The way Gibson-Graham proceed with this task is in two interlinked but distinct movements that can be summarised under the names 'diverse economies' and 'community economies'. Firstly, 'diverse economies' introduces what they call a "performative ontological project" oriented around *reframing* the present in ways more enabling than in capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham 2004, 2008a). Instead of settling for an account that places desirable and doable 'other worlds' in the future by homogenising '*the* present', their strategy of "reading for difference rather than dominance"

(Gibson-Graham 2006a, 2008a) reorganises the *starting point* of economic analysis and politics as a heterogeneous space – a "differentiated landscape of force, constraint, freedom, and opportunity" (2006a: 8) to work with. In other words, the politics of postponement resulting from totalising capitalocentric discourse and knowledge is replaced with a heterogeneous reality that merits our acts of reframing and resignification. Thus what follows capitalocentric discourse is not a straightforward normative backing of some specific non-capitalist economy, but rather a resignifying move in which *all* sites and relations of economy are reinscribed within a sort of shared 'economic landscape', a 'flat ontology' that (intentionally) presupposes no hierarchies or determinations between its instances (see also Marston *et al.* 2005).

Reading for difference proceeds by making inventories, always incomplete and partial accounts (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020: 10), of economic diversity using loose, relational categories and an attentiveness to the performative work of identifying and naming activities in specific ways:

> "The rules of syntax and grammar of our language are loose to the point of nonexistence, allowing for empirical encounters and creative expressions of the new, the unthought, the unexpected. We approach economic relationships as something to be contingently rather than deterministically configured, economic value as liberally distributed rather than sequestered in certain activities and denied to others, and economic dynamics as proliferating rather than reducible to a set of governing laws and mechanical logics" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 60).

The effects of thinking that Gibson-Graham wish to see can be understood minimally as ending a certain foreclosure of effects in general. This means that while non-capitalist economies are at the heart of their concern, the diverse economy is more (or less) than a set of specific features or forms of economy, but rather a space where the entities and becomings that populate economies are not tied to a restricted capitalocentric understanding from the start. Ethan Miller (2013: 531) calls this the diverse economies framework's "paradoxical ontological anarchy that cannot be made directly into a program or a politics but that nonetheless opens the possibility of politics itself".[5] Every site of economy is reinscribed within the diverse economy as relation, context-dependent, ambiguous, frictional – and full of existing (and potential) negotiations. Every site is rendered plural, made up of and contributing to heterogeneous relations.

Since economy – understood here as a general index of our coexistence, interdependence and collective metabolism – is as necessary and unavoidable as being as such, *any site whatsoever* is considered a site pertaining to diverse economies. Among other things, this means counting capitalist sites (whether defined in terms of a class process (e.g. class exploitation), an organisational (e.g. private corporations) or legal

5 To 'radicalise' Miller's 'ontological anarchy', I will mostly seek to avoid an ontological register of argumentation, although it is much used within and around Gibson-Graham's work (see e.g. Gibson-Graham 2008a). My reasons are methodological, as such argumentation is poorly equipped for the meeting with Derrida's (2006) 'hauntology', itself a name *not* for or type of ontology, but rather for its parasitic deconstruction. I feel that the popularity of an ontological register in diverse economies, with all kinds of possibilities and dangers of speaking for 'the real' (however 'performatively' or 'anarchically'), demands a closer analysis than I can provide here. In the absence of such an effort, I simply want to mark the more general problematics emerging from and carried along with an ontological register of discourse (see e.g. Barnett 2008; Joronen & Häkli 2017).

form (e.g. private property), a type of (monetary) exchange, etc.) as part of a much wider more-than-capitalist economy, and as always more-than-capitalist in their very being. It involves dissolving their agglomerations into a flat surface of sites that coexist with non-capitalist sites. Any identification of 'capitalism' thus not only *risks* omitting other economies, but rather *is* by definition – as a partial, interested representation of an always more-than-capitalist and other-than-capitalist economy – enabled by and performative of such an omission. Insofar as we cannot say and give attention to everything at the same the time, choices will have been made to reproduce certain realities and not others. Also, it means that the empirical and political propositions of diverse economies are not tied to 'the good stuff' – as in inventorying only 'alternative economies', or seeing what is below the proverbial waterline as a priori desirable. What 'reading for difference' thus helps us attend to is a *prismatic economy* that opens up prevailing values of economy and resists their necessary and automated association with specific identities.[6] What emerges from under the proverbial waterline (see Figure 1) is not only what is desirable and worth supporting, but also a frightening, violent and ambiguous array of coexistence that demands attention.

How to operate in such a diversified economic space becomes the question and a task proposed under the coordinates of 'community economy'. This notion captures an effort to *collectively* navigate (in) the heterogeneity of diverse economies as ethically as possible, without succumbing to a vision of absolutely singular and unconnected sites or a ready-made and blueprint-like vision of economy. Rather than capitalising on some predefined forms and definitions of 'communities' or 'economies', the task at stake is that of "resignifying economy as a site of decision, of ethical praxis, instead of as the ultimate reality/container/constraint; and all economic practices as inherently social and always connected in their concrete particularities" (2006a: 87–88). Crucially, community economy attempts to cultivate a *minimal* politics in the sense of acknowledging that, practically speaking, collective projects and coordinates for 'good' economies are needed (*beyond* the recognition/axiom of diverse economies), but trying to fill that need in ways that are as open as possible to any positive definition: "[W]e must keep in mind that any attempt to fix the fantasy of common being, to define the community economy, to specify what it contains (and thus what it does not) closes off the opportunity to cultivate ethical praxis" (Gibson-Graham 2006: 98).

Drawing on Jean-Luc Nancy's (2000) conceptualisation of being as always 'being singular plural', or 'being-with', Gibson-Graham underline a

6 My 'prismatic economy' gets its inspiration from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's (2013) notion of 'prismatic ecology', which is an effort to think ecological theory against its compulsory association with everything green and all the nice and tidy values associated with it, including an unambiguity of vision and colour. 'Prismatic economy' is my name for what can also be termed 'diverse economy' or 'community economy', another slightly changed perspective and proposition for key concerns. This prism puts forth at least three main propositions: first, that it remains crucial to underline that the diversity of diverse economy is not (to be) an idealised ensemble of 'good' economic sites and practices. It is not only about the sunshine (e.g. 'alternative economy', 'ethical economy'). Second, that the entities uncovered in reading for difference are not to be thought as solid identities, coloured in one single colour without ambiguity or trouble to vision. Economic entities *already* mix, yes, but also the vision that attends to them – with, for instance, a preformed concept of 'economy' – is not without its inherited literacy for colours. Third, the point is also to draw attention to the *conceptual* economy of Gibson-Graham, and the way its post/critical reading may unnecessarily reduce it to a single framework, a single colour scheme or palette, that includes the methodological movement from blinding or monochromatic capitalocentrism to the light of diverse and community economies (see my chapter two).

> "space of decision [that] constitutes the very negativity at the heart of the community economy. It is what makes the practice of building a community economy a process of continual resignification, of repeated traversals of any fantasy that there is a perfect community economy that lies outside of negotiation, struggle, uncertainty, ambivalence, disappointment, one that tells us what to do and how to 'be communal'" (2006a: 98–99).

This attitude of continuous negotiation and struggle – which *includes* impartible processes of (re)signification – is profoundly different compared with most other frameworks of 'alternative economy' (and indeed, as we will see, of 'postcapitalism') (see Cameron & Gibson 2005; Healy 2015b). The point, writes Miller (2013: 523–524), is not to "specify what kinds of values or norms are decided upon in the space of negotiation nor what processes and institutions might effectively enact them". Rather, this strategy of refraining from specifications "simply demands that such a space be constructed and defended at every possible juncture, and it performatively facilitates such work".

Gibson-Graham's 'negotiation' often comes with its characterisation as 'ethical'. But consonant with the openness cultivated by the approach, this 'ethical' is not a synonym for 'good', but rather a site for awareness, intentionality and the capacity to make choices – however compromised, partial and constrained these may be. This sort of 'ethics' means "the continual exercising, in the face of the need to decide, of a choice to be/act/think a certain way. Ethics involves the embodied practices that bring principles into action" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxviii). Instead of something 'good', it simply denotes the negotiation of the non-structural or non-predetermined: "By opening the economy to ethical negotiation, we do not presume to fill it up with positive notions of desirable futures" (2008b: 156). Consonant with the wider project, at stake is not the exercise of any (predefined) normative 'good', but rather an effort to "render a world with an ever-replenishing sense of room to move, air to breathe, and space and time to act" (2006a: xxxiii). This requires accentuating and cultivating a vocabulary of 'self-cultivation', 'decision', 'reframing', 'resignifying', 'reflection', 'resubjectivation' etc. – notions and practices designed to foster and widen the breathing space of any individual or collective, wherever they may be. In this sense, community economy denotes a moment of emancipatory economic pedagogy – an affirmation and amplification of individual and collective capacities to take on and reshape economic givens (Gibson-Graham 1999; Byrne 2003).

Thus, instead of offering a 'moral economy' to guide us in (and thus foreclose) this process of ethical negotiation, Gibson-Graham (2006a: 88; Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013) offer us general and intentionally loose 'key coordinates' for negotiation, such as 'necessity', 'surplus', 'consumption', 'commons' or 'investments'. These terms index 'ethical concerns' that help to identify relations and processes where economic agency is practised and can increasingly be reclaimed. These are names for processes already underway, and names that by definition warrant a continuous renegotiation. The naming itself is part of the process of resignification, in the thick of things. Yahya Madra and Ceren Özselçuk (2015) explain it thus:

> "What is at stake in this project is not a moral subjective preference that, as if looking at the world *from outside*, clothes a different perception over the existing economic reality. Rather than an external optimistic attitude toward a given configuration, the diverse economies approach offers a partial relation internal to the given configuration

> that at the same time reconstitutes it. It is the 'partial' and 'partisan stance' of looking *from within* an irreducible antagonism that divides the given configuration of economy *out* toward creating an ethical space of collective decision making and performing economic interdependencies" (147).

Practically speaking, this means trying to think and reframe economies in ways that help us to 'take back' the economy *wherever we are* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013). Each site, each relation, each practice, each organisation becomes – this at least is the aim – "a space of pregnant negativity" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxiii–xxxiv) to be filled, in negotiation, with various 'positivities', but without filling the lack that remains constitutive of an economy in a constant state of becoming.[7] As Arturo Escobar (2008: 100) recapitulates, "people become 'economy makers' in the sense that 'the economy' is something they do, not that is done to them". But of course 'people' are a very heterogeneous group, and we are differently positioned to become economy makers. Just as capitalocentrism is a differentiating tendency of (de)valuation and partial representation, confronting it means situated work with and against intersecting forms of economic violence (Borowiak *et al.* 2018; Hossein 2020; McLean 2020).

This pedagogical ethos thus strives to render economies in terms that both recognise ongoing agency and interdependency (in the light of diverse economies) and foster their spread and intensification through the minimal and easily graspable concerns of community economy. The ethos is grounded on the identification of capitalocentric obstacles to such emancipations in the restrictive foreclosures of economic discourse as it is usually practised. Together, these three key words and moments – a critique of capitalocentrism, the starting point of diverse economies, and the collective negotiation of community economies – make up the approach Gibson-Graham (2006a) call a postcapitalist politics. The injunction it proposes is clear: "[s]peak now and hasten the future" (Gibson-Graham 2002: 53). Instead of a politics of postponement that

7 As the normative 'positivities' of the diverse economies framework are somewhat minimal – at the vaguest, revolving around phrases such as "take back the economy for people and the planet" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013: 7) – the framework becomes prone to all sorts of uses, all sorts of 'positivities'. Even in the most ultracapitalist sites (however defined) or the most violent economies, ethical negotiation in the minimal sense of non-predetermined intentionality can take place (and indeed already does take place, in some form). This does not guarantee anything regarding the *effects* of such negotiation. If 'ethical negotiation' in relations of interdependence is the key, nothing blocks positivities such as private profit maximisation (rather than, say, non-capitalist and democratic redistribution) or intentional forms of utter exploitation and annihilation (rather than their minimisation) from prevailing. This is part of what makes the framework outrageous for many Marxist and other 'radical' perspectives. Although it is *structurally* open to such possibilities of complicity with capitalist exploitation – and necessarily so (see Miller 2013) – I would argue that the framework does propose a less explicit normative framework that proceeds e.g. through diverse-economic inventorying (diversity and difference being positively valued objectives, at least as products and conditions of another economic sensibility), the chosen exemplars of 'postcapitalist politics' (*usually* democratically oriented cooperatives rather than profit-oriented private firms), the empirical sites and materials used (*usually* various forms of commons rather than prison communities), the choice of alliances (*usually* with solidarity economy movements rather than multinational corporations), and a continuous use of Marxist and feminist terminology and of sensibility to exploitation. Thus, although the framework is structurally/intentionally minimally normative, there are all sorts of more inconspicuous normativities involved. Centrally, for our purposes here, these often have to do with inherited concepts, discourses and modes of attention – the givens of our emancipatory consciousness. Nonetheless, this is not to reproach the framework, but solely to point out the need to carefully attend to the heterogeneous normative aspects of not only what is said but *how* it is said, how the said is organised and infrastructured, and what precedes and guarantees its sensibility. The distance between structural/principled openness and empirical/practised normativity is a site for exploration.

systematically defers *actual* struggles to reclaim economies, it offers a situated, emancipatory project here and now. But not just any speech whatever hastens *postcapitalist* futures, or *liveable* futures, and so it becomes crucial to opt to speak in ways that allow more room to act, as opposed to closing down horizons of possibility (whether from a critical or a non-critical perspective).

While borrowing much of its future-speak from Gibson-Graham's path-breaking repertoire, this thesis concerns itself with the remaining limits and restrictions of such speech. More specifically, I am interested in exploring what can be called *a postcapitalist problem* that traverses any 'postcapitalist politics': the fact that our tools and capacities for making 'postcapitalist' presents and futures are *inherited*. In other words, we are, in our very capacities of imagining and practising desirable futures, bound to pasts that are other than those that we desire and wish to reproduce. Again, 'post-' is a prefix that repeats '-capitalist', but with a difference, and it is into this relation of repetition and difference that this thesis delves.

There are various ways of dealing with this problem of inheritance. As we have seen, Gibson-Graham's response is to a large extent to emphasise the potential for resignifying economies as landscapes of possibility (as opposed to inherited strictures and predeterminations), and to experiment with shaping, potentially, *any* situation in a less violent and more ethical – again, in the sense of intentional determination – direction. In other words, Gibson-Graham's strategy to confront the postcapitalist problem is to insist on our capacities for inheriting *otherwise* – with intention and care. As a pedagogy of hope, this approach is often defined and measured to the extent that it helps to carve possibility out of necessity and to turn the *pre*formed into the *per*formed. Accordingly, the diverse economies framework gives us the sort of inheritances that are on the brink of being transformed into something productive, treating "the *existing* situation as a (problematic) resource for projects of *becoming*, a place from which to build something more desirable in the future" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 98). This is not to argue for sovereign individuals (or collectives) transparently assessing the options and moving on to an untainted politics, but simply to underline that wherever an intentional agency is located – and however partial, fleeting and compromised its capacities of intentionality and agency are – there is potential to work for less violent coexistence, or community economies.

Gibson-Graham and others often describe problematic inheritances – e.g. by analysing restrictions of capitalocentric discourse – but they do so in order to methodologically set them aside, to find other opportunities, to create room for action. For example, Gibson-Graham (2005a: 39) ask "[w]hat historical baggage comes with our theoretical categories and what violence does theory do to history and geography?", but they also identify a certain unproductive attachment to such "limit-identifying" (43) when it comes to political-economic critique. Instead, they opt for a "potential-making" approach whose desire for openings is not satisfied by the mere identification of limits (see also Cameron 2000). Thus, Gibson-Graham's approach to a critical examination of inheritances is characterised by an equally strong attention to how such an examination can turn out to performatively reproduce the very objects it sought to critique, and may miss chances for a sustained theoretical, empirical and political attention to openings. I will argue that much depends on the status of the parenthesis in Gibson-Graham's (2006a: 98) identification of "the *existing* situation as a (problematic) resource for […] *becoming*". In other words, how we think about that which acts as a (problematic) resource (including its framing and readability as 'resource') for our efforts matters greatly for the kind of postcapitalist economic geographies we are bound to practise and imagine.

In Gibson-Graham treatment, as we will see, inheritances are most often defined intentionally in view of their differential becoming. This is what makes their work – so often characterised as 'enabling' and productive of 'openings' – an emancipatory pedagogic.[8]

Now, framing the problem of inheritance as a resource for becoming is *one* possible approach to its negotiation, but it is not the *only* one. While appreciating Gibson-Graham's strategy and practising it myself too (see Alhojärvi 2017, 2020b), the crux of this study lies in another approach to our problematic, postcapitalist heritage. Instead of assuming – even strategically, pedagogically or methodologically – the heritage to consist of a transparent and ownable (in the sense of 'property of' and 'control over') problematic, a post/capitalist problem, I wish to rather deepen, extend and complicate the stakes of this problemage. This is certainly not to return to any of the sort of seeming predeterminations that Gibson-Graham sought to dislocate in their critique of 'capitalocentrism', but in order to explore a different sort of theoretical, empirical and political landscape – and indeed a definition, practice and critique of postcapitalist politics – that could arise from acknowledging and framing *capitalocentrism itself as our shared inheritance*.

As I will describe in detail, my task is to retheorise 'capitalocentrism' slightly against the tide and against what I will call a 'post/critical' reading of Gibson-Graham. In such a reading, 'capitalocentrism' and other critical tools of Gibson-Graham are set aside in order to concentrate on the affirmative and experimental possibilities of the framework. While acknowledging the immense usefulness of such a move, I consider that, as a generalised reading of Gibson-Graham, it also bears unhelpful consequences, identifying and reproducing in the framework mainly its affirmative promises and not its critical-deconstructive ones. To rethink capitalocentrism as inheritance is therefore a theoretical reorientation that invites an empirical examination of how problematic inheritances are framed and negotiated in postcapitalist practices; it is also to cultivate a methodological suspicion of any postcapitalist account that thinks of its '-capitalist' remains solely/primarily in terms of their malleable potential – their 'rearticulability'.

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8 I am tempted to read in this emancipatory ethos a long commitment and strategic emphasis that also shaped Gibson's and Graham's work before their collaboration as JK Gibson-Graham. For example, we may note Graham's early interventions for a 'post-modern anti-essentialist' approach to Marxism that "invites us to *free ourselves of the burdens* which we long have carried – the burden of explaining a complex and multifaceted history with a limited set of categories, of revealing rather than constituting the centrality of class, of waiting for politics rather than entering politics, of scorning non-Marxism as an intellectual and political error rather than engaging it in its many forms and relating it to Marxism by relating Marxism to it" (Graham 1988: 65; my emphasis). 'Freeing ourselves' of such 'burdens' is, of course, a specific way of negotiating inheritances as malleable and non-determining relations, and it pivots on values of consciousness and intentionality. This spirit, I would argue, is also elementary in Gibson's and Graham's understanding of the 'interventions' they make and the way they portray 'discourse' as a field of power. What is more, I think it also affects their reading of others, and the specific interventionist spirit with which they translate specific theories and concepts. Gibson-Graham's 'deconstruction' is a very illustrative example of such a pedagogical-emancipatory-interventionist spirit and reading. For example, here is Gibson debating the position of antipodean geographers in Marxist debates mainly centred in 'core' regions of the United States and Britain: "[w]hile many of the current debates we read in international journals appear to have obtained their vitality (or is it pugnacity?) from the liquid refreshments which flow freely at international conferences, such as those held by the Association of American Geographers or the Institute of British Geographers, we must not accept our absence from these sites of active interchange as a form of exclusion. We must *deconstruct* the geographic cringe and enter these conversations actively" (Gibson 1991b: 80–81; my emphasis). In this 'deconstructing', understood as freeing ourselves from burdens and breaking through obsequious restrictions, we may find an important hint with regard to *one* kind of 'deconstruction' at stake in the present study. See chapter three.

What interest me here are the values informing and reproduced in (assumptions of) such malleability. Again, this is not to dismiss the power or necessity of emancipations along the lines of the diverse economies framework, but solely to widen the spectrum of attention that they deserve. Simultaneously, this (re)orientation to capitalocentrism will bring us close to social and political-economic critique and its relations to the critical tools of thought in Gibson-Graham.

Capitalocentrism is surely not a non-existent interest in the existing diverse economies literature, but its role has been largely restricted to that of a stepping stone within an affirmative framework. As I describe in chapter two, many of the intricacies of Gibson-Graham's analysis, as well as the performative frictions of identifying and performing capitalocentrism, have been bypassed. To my knowledge, there are no studies that take capitalocentrism per se as their object or use this notion to extend and explore its critical affordances in any detail. Although it is a much-used notion, and one that is used to diagnose a wide range of phenomena and motivate their alternatives, it has received little specific theoretical, empirical or political attention. Nevertheless, there is a critical current running through the diverse economies research framework, and this current forms the basis of my motivation here. The critique of alienating, exploitative and restricting frameworks of economic praxis is, after all, what motivates much of the work in this strain. Underneath, alongside and within the affirmations of diverse and community economies, there exists a simultaneous critical and deconstructive task of "undoing and reconfiguring […] the affective and sensual orders that hold inequalities in place" (Madra & Özselçuk 2015: 137). And this takes place, to be sure, in recognition that we are part of a species "threatened with extinction" (Gibson-Graham 2014a) – a critical awareness of our collective life's precarity.

To rethink capitalocentrism *now* and *here*, critically, will demand different moves and strategies from those of the mid-1990s, when this concept was first theorised and conceptualised. Thinking capitalocentrism in the postcapitalist fold of today is crucially different from previous iterations because we have at our disposal everything that has been theorised and practised under the names of diverse and community economies. With a solid and continuously growing scholarship that demonstrates the existence of heterogeneous, more-than-capitalist economies – thus reconfirming on the ground Gibson-Graham's 'performative ontology' of diverse economy – we can now legitimately *assume* economic diversity and heterogeneity as pertaining to *any* time and space. In other words, we can postulate (with both theoretical armature and empirical evidence at our disposal) that economies indeed *are* diverse, heterogeneous and relational. Similarly, we can learn from the vast array of community economies scholarship and practice, which demonstrates the possibilities of negotiating and reshaping economic realities. To the extent that community economies scholars across the world have demonstrated the framework's power to break through restrictions of agency and capacity and to forge creative organisations and scales for 'other worlds', we can safely *assume* that some similar transformations are possible *everywhere*, and that the transformational thinking tools of community economies work, potentially, *anywhere*.

To take these lessons of diverse and community economies as our starting assumption is a central methodological reversal that I propose. As Doreen Massey (2005: 50) puts it, "[t]he direction from which you come at an argument influences its form". Instead of treating capitalocentrism as a form of mono-economic normativity that demands reading economies for heterogeneity and agency, I assume the latter in order

to pose questions about the former.[9] Thinking back to the iceberg figure (Figure 1), my task will not consist of identifying and illustrating what is below the proverbial waterline – thereby simultaneously associating capitalocentrism with a repressive or concealing problematic. Instead, by *presuming* economies of more-than-capitalist heterogeneity and treating no site as immune to 'another world' in it, I will attend critically to various forms of all-too-disabling factors that keep on postponing the full realisation as well as the full cognisability – whatever these would mean – of diverse and community economies. As we will see, this brings my questioning of capitalocentrism – rethought as a shared and inevitable inheritance – close to ideology critique, albeit with important differences. These assumptions and the reversals I propose enable transformations in how capitalocentrism and the role of postcapitalist *critique* are understood. Thus, rather than accepting a trajectory that simply relishes the move from critical theory to affirmative practice, I will return to explore the former in light of the latter's demonstrated effectiveness (and, as we will see, its blind spots). This is part of the prismatic economy at stake here.

The way I move with these questions is by bringing the work of Gibson-Graham into collision with that of Derrida. This connection is not haphazard, but is based on acknowledged debts on the part of Gibson-Graham (2000, 2006a, 2010, 2020c) that I wish to revisit and amplify in order to rethink its potentials for postcapitalist praxis. In particular, I explore how Derrida's formulations and practice of *inheritance* can help us understand (with) the problematics Gibson-Graham proposes. These have to do specifically with the critical and productive potentials of thinking *capitalocentrism as inheritance*, and thinking *negotiation* in terms of *inheriting* as well as becoming. While such inheritances will allow me to retain the important sense of agency and capacity that Gibson-Graham accentuate, Derrida's company will help us frame the task in non-ownable ways – thus resisting any methodological reductionism of these inheritances. This is also to avoid a certain tendency to read Gibson-Graham in the post/critical mode: as a progressive development from critique to practice, from theory to empirics, and from (a critique of) capitalocentrism to diverse and community economies. My aim, then, will be to explore and accentuate the importance of *inheriting capitalocentrism and negotiating postcapitalist problems as a part of postcapitalist politics*.

1.3 Inheritance: Parasitic Legacies of Jacques Derrida

But what is it 'to inherit'? What does it matter if we call capitalocentrism an inheritance before saying that it is, for instance, also a discourse, an ideology, a metaphysics or an episteme? To answer, it is necessary to offer a brief account of Jacques Derrida's strategy of situated interventions and his practice of inheriting. But to start, let us specify the voice of Derrida at stake here by setting aside two others. For several reasons, Derrida might seem an unlikely ally for the sort of postcapitalist enquiry practised

9 This can be compared with Gibson's and Graham's (1992: 114) adoption of Althusserian anti-essentialist Marxism in the early 1990s: "we understand class processes as overdetermined, or constituted, by every other aspect of social life […]. By this we mean that we 'think' the existence of class and of particular class processes by *initially presuming* overdetermination rather than by positing a necessary or privileged association between exploitation and some subset of social processes (such as control over the labor process or consciousness or struggle or ownership, to rename the familiar few)" (my emphasis). Now, what I am proposing is to '*initially* presume' the lessons of heterogeneity and collective action (archived under diverse and community economies respectively) in order to 'step back' and see how capitalocentrism looks in this light.

here. Firstly, and before we get past the problematic that I call postcapitalist, there is Derrida's recurring critique and deconstruction of what he calls 'postisms' (Derrida 1990), including not only 'poststructuralism' but also 'postcapitalism': "I want at all costs to avoid the expression post- or late-capitalism" (Derrida 1992a: 28).[10] Mobilising Derrida as a postcapitalist thinker will need to take into consideration these important articulations, and to negotiate the risks of postprefixation that he thus outlines. Secondly, and relatedly, there is Derrida's continuous use of 'capitalism' as a solid ground and reference point in an uncharacteristically '*pre*deconstructive' fashion. In their most elaborate engagement with Derrida in *The end of capitalism*, Gibson-Graham (2006: 242) make clear that Derrida's version of 'capitalism' "draws entirely upon familiar images and descriptions" and is, we could say (although they do not use the word on this occasion), capitalocentric due to its failure to search for a deconstructive approach or even announce its necessity with regard to 'capitalism'.[11]

Thirdly, as Gibson-Graham also point out, Derrida's (seemingly) predeconstructive capitalism is paralleled by a lack of attention to anything resembling diverse economies. For example, his conceptualisation of the gift as a non-reciprocal relation to the other may be philosophically and ethically crucial, but it is simultaneously lacking in terms of the heterogeneity of actually existing gift relations (see Hénaff 2009), making it an unlikely ally for a practically and empirically oriented diverse-economic perspective on gift economies. Fourthly, and more generally, there is his notorious obsession with "internal fragmentation and the contemplation of internal decentring rather than [on] an engagement with external relatedness", as Massey (2005: 52) has it. Moreover, goes Massey's argument, this deconstructive fragmentation is only ever *textual*, bound to the page, and thus unhelpful for reflecting spatial (and temporal) coexistence. Deconstruction participates in a "longstanding tendency to tame the spatial into the textual", and thus: "What is at issue [for Massey] is almost like a shift of physical position, from an imagination of a textuality *at which one looks*, towards recognising one's place *within* continuous and multiple processes of emergence" (54).[12] These critiques

10 This is an important statement that we will encounter in some detail in chapter five. But for now, let us make note of Derrida's critique of 'postisms' or 'postprefixations' (Barnes 1995) as acts of "announcing as old fashioned and out of service precisely that which is preceded by a 'post' and which is seen from now on as a poor word with a 'post' tacked on to it […]. This recurrence of the strategem [*sic*] is sometimes widespread and reveals too much impatience, juvenile jubilation, or mechanical eagerness. It then becomes vulgar" (Derrida 1990: 73).

11 Gibson-Graham here read Derrida's (2006) *Specters of Marx*, and especially his chapter three, which lists the ills of global capitalism on a blackboard as a reminder concerning the unending histories of economic violence. Using an understanding of the performativity of economic language, Gibson-Graham (2006b) diagnose in Derrida's blackboard an "ontologizing" (249) force and an involuntary, unenthusiastic adoption of a constative and referential language. For Gibson-Graham, this means leaving the task halfway. Derrida's strategy of referring to capitalist ills "points to their deconstructibility but leaves them undeconstructed" (250). Importantly, we encounter in this lamentation the difference between Derrida's and Gibson-Graham's deconstructions, a theme I will explore in chapter three. The complexity of Derrida's blackboard scene (and his 'capitals' and 'capitalisms' more generally) and Gibson-Graham's reading of it would warrant the kind of detailed attention I can only mark here for future investigation.

12 Massey's reading of Derrida, in an otherwise impeccable book, is surprisingly hasty and fraught with misreadings. Suffice it to say here that her interpretation seems to understand Derrida's 'text' and 'writing' in terms of pages of texts, properly insulated within the frames of a book, a page, or at most an archive. In other words, Derrida's discovery in *Of grammatology* and elsewhere of the general sense of writing and text goes unnoticed, and consequently his strategy is understandably reduced to a herme(neu)tics of reading.

are, of course, among many (existing and potential) ones; they could be extended, and they will to some extent need to be dealt with. For now, let us stick with a Derrida that is suspected of textualism and, moreover, is himself not very adamant about anything resembling 'postcapitalism'.

But what about a Derrida that *would* seem a more likely ally for postcapitalist praxis, then? In geography, the best candidate would undoubtedly be 'Derrida the post-structuralist'. This is the Derrida that allows Brian Harley (1989) to "deconstruct maps" to uncover their ideological nature, Deborah Dixon and John Paul Jones (1998: 255; emphasis omitted) to "(de)lineate the social power that fixes meaning constructive of identities, spaces and disciplines", and Gibson-Graham (2000: 99) to underline "the unfixity and contestability of meaning". This Derrida is consistent with the basic values of 'poststructuralism', enabling us to see any apparently stable entity or configuration as heterogeneous and contingent. As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2014: 98) put it in their influential work, Derrida (in their reading) "starts from a radical break in the history of the concept of structure, occurring at the moment in which the centre […] is abandoned, and with it the possibility of fixing a meaning which underlies the flow of differences". With regard to work in diverse economies, this kind of Derrida is at stake, for example, in Rhyall Gordon's (2020) recent study of prefigurative politics in a Spanish food sovereignty collective. Again, we find Derrida "creating a set of tools to unmask the fundamentally unstable nature of structures that have solidified and taken on a stable and axiomatic character" (789). This version of Derrida, who (allegedly) demonstrates the free flow of relations and the 'underlying' contingency of social-economic relations, is aptly diagnosed by Clive Barnett (2004, 2017) as a 'generic poststructuralist' version.

Neither of these two Derridas – the capitalocentric textualist one and the post-structuralist one – interests me here, although both may have their merits as interpretations and uses of Derrida's work. I will need to return to them, if only to clarify a third kind of Derrida, the one engrossed in "[a]n abyssal thought of inheritance" (Derrida 2001: 163). Thinking inheritances and thinking *as* inheriting can be seen as an insistent motive and strategy across Derrida's oeuvre. From the geometrical traditions in the 1962 introduction to *Edmund Husserl's origin of geometry* (Derrida 1989) to the testaments and inheritances in *Learning to live finally* (Derrida 2007), the last interview given just before his death, thinking inheritances was arguably at the centre of his enterprise. So much so that Barnett (2005) characterises Derrida's legacy as "a whole new genre of theory, in which thinking is nothing more than working through of an inheritance". As he continues, arguing against a certain "poststructuralist canonisation of Derrida" that sees the latter's achievements primarily in terms of "exposing contingency, in stripping away, in taking apart, or in decoding", Barnett claims that "the value of Derrida's work lies in reckoning with the relationship between what is given and what is possible" (240). Negotiating this space will be central to what I will call 'inheriting futures'.

As Samir Haddad (2013) observes, Derrida's 'inheritance' is itself composed of a double bind, an aporetic negotiation between two equally necessary and imperative but incommensurable and irreducibly frictional tasks. One the one hand, there is a necessary and inescapable side to inheritance, a structural indebtedness. This is due to the finitude of beings coming into a world infinitely vaster and older than themselves: "[i]t would be necessary to think life on the basis of heritage, and not the other way around" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004: 4). Or "[w]e are structurally survivors, marked by this structure of the trace and of the testament" (Derrida 2007: 57). The question is, then, of being: "That we *are* heirs does not mean that we *have* or that we *receive* this or that,

some inheritance that enriches us one day with this or that, but that the *being* of what we are *is* first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not" (Derrida 2006: 67). This sort of 'being' cannot be about any self-present 'entity' or self-sufficient 'system', because *in inheriting we already are other – and thus elsewhere, non-present*. 'Inheritance' is thus not a code word for disclosing one's ancestors, intellectual inspirations or possessions in a way that would paint a picture of 'who one really is'. It is not about listing and counting things that make or have made any 'one', and even less about counting one's properties. Rather, in (simply) being any 'one', inheriting has taken and is already taking place – and thus, by definition, 'one' is more-than-one and other-than-one. In Derrida's thinking, 'being' always already has a spectral logic or structure that "confounds settled orders of past and present" (Wylie 2007: 172; cf. Morton 2012). Because the present and intentional being that I am could not exist without the being of something and someone else, presence and intentionality are fractured and immeasurably dispersed. But also, because these 'somethings' and 'someones' are not reducible to calculable lists of transparent and ownable 'roots' of my being, 'inheritance' is not just another invitation to genealogy or archaeology (see Derrida 1998).

On the other hand, there are decisions, reaffirmations, filterings and *selective* inheritances. While the structure of inheritance is unavoidable, something that has always already taken place for any 'thing' or 'one' to be, Derrida's 'inheritance' comes with another, apparently contradictory characteristic: "[i]nheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task. It remains before us" (Derrida 2006: 67). What we inherit – or what there is to inherit – is never One. Legacies and their injunctions are heterogeneous, forcing us to *read* carefully, to *reorder* what is given, and to *reaffirm* specific injunctions in order to let go of others. As he underlines, the 'quasi-transcendental'[13] structure in inheritance is the "*injunction* to reaffirm by *choosing*" (18).

> "[*O*]*ne must* filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibilities that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit it in a contradictory fashion around a secret. If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. We would be affected by it as by a cause – natural or genetic. One always inherits from a secret – which says 'read me, will you ever be able to do so?'" (Derrida 2006: 18).

Inheritance, then, is not only a structural necessity and condition of our finite being, but also "a critical and transformative filter" (128): "A paradoxical circle within which one must struggle and decide [*trancher*], by means of decisions that both inherit and invent – necessarily without any set norm or program – one's own norms" (Derrida 2002a: 111). There is thus a strong, even imperative demand for a responsible relation to that which

13 'Quasi-transcendental' is a term that will be used here to some extent, as it clarifies the strategy and form of Derrida's interventions. As Andrea Hurst (2004) describes it, this is a strategy intimately entangled with the legacy of transcendental philosophical thought: "Derrida's quasi-transcendental thinking […] does not happen without transcendental thinking; it remains parasitic upon it. But it appears as the relatively ruined form of transcendental thinking, from which relative ruin, there is no escape, no turning back, no restitution or remedy. One has to make one's way within the ruin of the transcendental tradition, which means that one is not fully in it, yet neither is there a clear-cut alternative" (256). This is deconstruction's parasitic positionality vis-à-vis transcendental traditions, especially philosophy, both inside (e.g. philosophy) and outside (e.g. literacy), but in a way that unsettles clear demarcations (and hierarchies) between them.

is inherited, a responsibility that consists of the aporetic task of being both faithful *and* unfaithful, of repeating what is inherited and doing something different with it. Crucially, "[o]ne inherits from a secret", which means that no *full disclosure* of a heritage, or any *unified* heritage – or even any ultimately calculable multiplicity or polysemy of inheritances – in the first place is possible within a Derridean understanding of inheritance. This has important repercussions for a heritage such as capitalocentrism, as we will see.

There is thus no way around this structure of inheritance, but there are different possibilities of relating to or negotiating it. The crux is in multiple, equally or unequally demanding injunctions from the past, and in the necessity of reaffirming and reorganising these legacies anew. Derrida considers this reaffirmation an experience that is elementary to responsibility:

> "Only a finite being inherits, and his [sic] finitude *obliges* him. It obliges him to receive what is larger and older and more powerful and more durable than he. But the same finitude obliges one to choose, to prefer, to sacrifice, to exclude, to let go and leave behind. Precisely in order to respond to the call that preceded him, to answer it and to answer for it – in one's name as in the name of the other. The concept of responsibility has no sense at all outside of an experience of inheritance" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004: 5).

Responsibility in the face of inheritance is responsive to what is given, without any presumption as to the givenness of that given (in the sense of it being One or being incontestable). But this relation of responding is also, crucially, a profoundly *asymmetrical* one in the sense that we must respond to conditions neither of our choosing nor fully available to our conscious, present evaluation. Not everything can be chosen; not all possibilities can be reaffirmed. And most importantly, perhaps, whatever we choose *today* according to our best knowledge and most responsible practices is structurally open to future reinterpretations that will necessarily remake it anew. It is thus also heterogeneous in the sense of being necessarily open to future reaffirmations, to heterogeneities not knowable in advance. "[T]he motif of homogeneity, the theological motif *par excellence*", says Derrida (1981b: 63–64) in uncharacteristically clear-cut terms, "is decidedly the one to be destroyed [*qu'il faut décidément détruire*]".

Thus, there is an *absence* at the heart of Derridean inheritance, meaning an openness to interpretations to come – reaffirmations whose difference is simply impossible to calculate or approximate. Because a legacy (e.g. the concept of capitalocentrism, or the oeuvre of Gibson-Graham or Derrida) is necessarily open to reaffirmations in new contexts beyond any calculability, it is structured by a repeatability or 'iterability' (Derrida 1988) that always already makes it non-coincident with itself, non-homogeneous, unownable in this sense. As Matthias Fritsch (2005) writes:

> "Every interpretation of history or lineage, and thus every identity of meaning, or of a constituted subject (e.g., of a macro-subject like Marx's proletariat), is projected onto the future, but may be criticized or revised by rival interpretations, thus keeping history open to the future. This future is thus not simply beyond 'history,' but names precisely the infinite movement in which history (better: histories) constitutes itself" (70).

Here we may begin to grasp an important sense of 'inheriting the future' (Rottenberg 2002, 2005) in the context of Derridean legacy, as an openness to an unknowable

repetition and necessary reinterpretation that ties us both to heterogeneous, asymmetrical legacies and to their inevitable remaking in the future, in an other space and time (see also Fritsch 2005). As Elizabeth Rottenberg (2005: 133) describes it:"[E]very legacy points to a structural predicament that forever prevents what we call 'epistemology' from closing itself off in spatiotemporal terms". The fact that we (are able to) inherit *already* tells us not only that what we inherit is not singular or containable in spatial-temporal terms, but also that its future is not decided, not without structurally necessary reaffirmations.

Because an inheritance is not an ownable good, Derrida underlines the possibility of "choosing to keep it alive" but not choosing it per se: "one does not choose it [a heritage]; it is what violently elects us" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004: 3). Why "violently", why "elects us"? Violent election is here a way of phrasing our indebtedness to something incalculably vaster. Election happens because we have no (direct, sovereign) choice as to the conditions of our choices. The postcapitalist fold, for instance, presents us with specific demands and possibilities that are not up to us – although we can *reaffirm* them in different ways. The violence of such an 'election' stems from multiple directions. There is a violence to finitude as interdependence, and as late-comingness vis-à-vis all that precedes and conditions our being. Moreover, Derrida seeks to think the legacies that demand our response as violent in themselves, as we will see in chapter three. This is an effort to counter the idealisation of any heritage by controlling and purifying it into a conviction of non-violence. The reaffirmation of a heritage, "which both continues and interrupts, *resembles* (at least) an election, a selection, a decision. One's own *as* that of the other: signature against signature" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004 : 3–4; emphases modified).

That our intentional choice "resembles (at least)" a selection means that there is no certainty regarding the extent to which that choice is an act of 'free will' and not an act *of* and *by* a heritage, a mark of its 'unconscious' as it reproduces itself through an 'intentional' being. Moreover, since choosing is *re*affirming, we are "marked by this structure of the trace and of the testament" (Derrida 2007: 57), having always already missed the chance to *choose* to inherit (or not), at least in the strict sense of a sovereign subject. No clear, governable line of demarcation thus guarantees the distinction between an intentional, sovereign subject and the tradition(s) it claims as its own. There is, furthermore, the 'empirical' violence of this moment, or any moment, the ruins that we inherit and the 'economy of violence' (Derrida 1978: 117) that we share – their constitutive and non-ownable relation to our being – and must respond to (Malabou 2002).

One such violence is described by Elizabeth Grosz (1995) in her discussion of feminism and patriarchy. Grosz argues that deconstruction pushes feminists to see themselves as part of patriarchy no less than as proponents of its overcoming:

> "[T]he inherited nature of feminist discourse […] and its location within 'patriarchal' institutions, knowledges, and languages […] illustrate our *necessary*, constitutive immersion in the very systems from which we seek to distance and against which we seek to position ourselves" (61).

The resulting "question of complicity" (62) does not make feminism futile or doomed, but it produces a different mode of reflection, critique, politics and negotiation compared with straightforward oppositional understandings that know differences in terms of pure oppositions, thin lines and solid categories. There is a violence to having to be part of patriarchy, a violent order, even to oppose it. "[T]hings are now murkier" (78),

writes Grosz. Similarly, Kathryn Yusoff (2016) describes the violent legacies of fossil fuels and their negotiation. On the one hand, there is a desire to refuse the gifts of fossil fuels and thus break with "the lineage of a fossil-fuelled corporeality". But on the other hand, such an absolute break is impossible, "as that would mean moving totally against ourselves" to the extent that we are "born through their gifts and into their (im)material configurations" (20). No clear and guaranteed line of demarcation separates a subject with post/fossil desires and its governable object of fossil economy, since they pertain to the *same* economy (see also Salminen & Vadén 2015).

One way Derrida (1981b) explains this is through an old cloth or fabric:

> "Breaks are always, and fatally, reinscribed in an old cloth [*un tissu ancien*] that must continually, interminably be undone. This interminability is not an accident or contingency; it is essential, systematic, and theoretical. And this in no way minimizes the necessity and relative importance of certain breaks, of the appearance and definition of new structures" (24).

Let us stay with this "old cloth" for a moment. As Derrida underlines, and as we have seen, there is both a repetitive and an inventive necessity at the heart of his thinking of inheritance. As Barnett (2005) has it:

> "[T]he relationship between what is given and what is possible […] is understood not as a relation of negation or transcendence, but rather a patient relation of inheritance and responsibility – working through questions of what one should affirm, what should be subjected to criticism, and what should be abandoned" (240).

This means, among other things, the recognition that

> "the critical energies released by deconstruction are neither wholly transformative of that upon which they act, nor wholly conservative. Rather, deconstruction raises the question of what boundaries it is necessary to assume and protect for certain practices to get underway" (Barnett 1999: 285).

The methodological patience that deconstruction requires – starting from the often painstakingly detailed attention to specific (con)texts – may be seen as running counter to the urgencies of 'our moment'. Yet in Derrida, this patience is not removed from such imminent urgencies but precisely a way of negotiating them, of making accounts of what underlines and frames any imminence, all the while insisting on and risking interventions – without recourse to a fully calculated and disclosed analysis that would precede and guarantee the interventions.

As with other Derridean *topoi*, inheritances are not about a (safeguarded, theorised) concept or a (repeatable, transcontextual) method; instead, each example of inheritance bears the traces of its specific, determinate context. This means that wherever one is, inheritances also (already) are, and their being – which is also ours – calls for reaffirmation, critical interpretation and continuous negotiation. The complication arises from Derrida's refusal to place inheritance as a unified and stable thing 'out there' that could be surveyed and governed from any sovereign position of oversight. A good example, and not simply one among others, is *language*: "Our being is an inheritance, the language we speak is an inheritance. […] What we are, we inherit. And we inherit the language that serves to testify to the fact that we are what we inherit" (Derrida 2002a: 111).

That language itself is inherited is a banal example, but it is also the precondition of any exemplarity (or banality, for that matter) in the first place. Language allows us to bear witness to what we inherit, and in language we are already inheriting. Moreover, language issues us with the task of reaffirming it and inventing our own norms – all the while recognising the impossibility of this necessary task (since norms are by definition no 'one's', but also because 'one's own' is nothing if it is not also shared, inherited). There is no way of catching the inheritedness of language in the act, so to speak, because it is a non-local and non-situated phenomenon by definition. And yet it is everywhere, in every inheritance whatsoever, and impartibly entangled with the most 'material' and 'corporeal' of what is at stake in inheriting. We only experience its effects in specific cases, through specific *effects* or sites of inheritance, and the most local, situated examples.

A practical, and methodological, repercussion of this line of thinking is what Barnett calls the "rigorously parasitic" approach of deconstruction to "other texts, idioms and traditions. It does not involve an abstract analysis of conceptual oppositions, but only ever works over conceptual systems in particular contexts" (Barnett 1999: 278). For Barnett, this means questioning the "translation of deconstruction into a set of epistemological and ontological propositions" (278), prevalent in many interpretations of the practice. The strategies as much as the conceptual tools of deconstruction are borrowed from singular contexts, each time differently yet following some quasi-transcendental procedures (such as 'inheritance' as a 'unifying' and re-cognisable thread).[14] There is thus a situated positionality and strategy to deconstruction, as we find ourselves *already* inheriting by reaffirming certain legacies, and moreover negotiating inheritance as responsibly as we possibly can, "relaunching it otherwise and keeping it alive" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004: 3). As Arkady Plotnitsky (1993: 286) describes it, "Derrida's strategy [is] of simultaneously engaging close proximity and radical difference" vis-à-vis the legacies he finds himself within and the texts that impose themselves for a reinterpretation.

What is the point of all of this? A proper answer to this question will no doubt have to wait (at least) until the end of this thesis, as we slowly begin to see how Derrida's inheritance may help us to think capitalocentrism differently and productively (or not). For now, let us stick to some general promises of this approach. Interestingly for our task of rethinking economies and spaces in the name of postcapitalist futures, 'inheritance' has strong physical, material and economic connotations and uses. But there is no straightforward clinging to the conventional understandings of any of these categories if we are to think them in terms of Derrida's legacy. We need to question the 'material' heritages as vigilantly as the 'cultural' ones, and moreover to question the cognitive structures, linguistic conventions and political infrastructures that allow such

14 We might follow Michael Naas's (1992) brilliant discussion of Derrida's logic of 'examples' in his introduction to Derrida's *The other heading*. The quasi-conceptual or exemplary logic of Derrida's 'inheritance' means that we should resist seeing Derrida's 'parasitic' readings as (mere) examples of an underlying, preceding logic or concept of thought ('inheritance'), but should instead consider how these parasitics themselves practise and *invent* 'inheritance'. For example, Derrida's notion of inheritance receives a very different treatment on different occasions (including here) by becoming exemplified in different cases and styles, within different conceptual economies and strategies of argumentation. Compare, for example, Naas (2003), Fritsch (2005) and Haddad (2013). There is a methodological danger, perhaps unavoidable, in my thematisation of 'inheritance' here to conceptualise Derrida's approach so as to miss its situated force – his parasitic *practice*, his acts of *reading* – within specific legacies of thought. Then again, this risk needs to be borne, reaffirmed; how else to discuss what comes before us?

distinctions in the first place. In this sense, the concern with inheritance overflows in all directions, to all sites and practices, becoming a keyword for an attitude of care-full reaffirmation rather than any specific methodology or codified procedure. Also, importantly for our case, Derrida underlines the spatial and economic constitution of inheritance 'itself', but these are not reducible to any localised, calculated or governed property conveniently situated in gridded space and linear time. As he says of the inheritance of Marx:

> "Obviously, this inheritance is a virtual inheritance; it is not an asset capitalized or located like a corpse buried somewhere. Inheritance is a phantasm, in all senses of the word, a virtual phantasm, also in the sense of a certain disaffiliation, of reaffiliation starting from disaffiliation" (Derrida 1997b: 26; my translation).

This is a crucial formulation. Arguing here against what he elsewhere calls a 'toponomological' (Derrida 1998) articulation of inheritance, Derrida underlines the difference – or *différance* – of 'his' inheritance from the metaphysics of presence implied by a locatable and calculable inherited proper(ty). His thinking about heritages as well as traditions complicates any picture that would propose to fully delineate, disclose and govern an inheritance – be it, say, a 'material' or an 'intellectual' one.

As we will see below, this has important methodological consequences, since any practice of 'historicising' and 'contextualising' inheritances in a conventional and straightforward way becomes impossible *if* we want to explore and question acts of inheritance as they are being practised right here and right now – wherever and whenever that is. This is, again, a site of inheritance in terms of heritages having been already affirmed in order for any 'choice' to be possible. In other words, inheritance is neither an empirical phenomenon nor a theoretical object that can be located in pre-existing (or conventionally understood) time and space, but on the contrary, its thinking challenges us towards other conceptions of the two. Moreover, any *situated* enquiry is complicated by the perspective that inheritance offers, because situatedness (at least understood as a present moment and site of the 'here and now') cannot be thought of as a self-present or transparently surveyed site or situation. This does not, however, mean letting go of situatedness in the sense of imminence, acute interventions, context-specific reflection and so on, but it does shatter conceptions of a homogeneous or fully present here and now: "[n]o differ*a*nce without alterity, no alterity without singularity, no singularity without here-now" (Derrida 2006: 37).

Derrida's framework (insofar as we can call it that) can thus help us in analysing that which got us 'here' and continues to survive in our being and deeds, and in examining and practising negotiations between givens and transformations. As Geoffrey Bennington puts it:

> "Derrida's thinking […] has the immeasurable advantage over more or less novel and fashionable 'alternatives' of providing the means of *thinking through* the very circumstance in which it finds itself, in which we find ourselves doing what we are doing. This is exactly the crux of Derrida's analysis of the structure of inheritance" (Bennington 2016: 239; my emphasis).

Importantly, this "thinking through" of circumstances does not so much mean 'thinking through' as in proceeding to the other side of the problem (i.e. solving the question of inheritance); instead, it should be read as thinking *through* (i.e. thanks to, with help

from, with unavoidable binds to…) the circumstances in which we find ourselves, thus inheriting (responsibly, we would hope) the circumstances that allow us to inherit in the first place (e.g. language, infrastructures, archives, this body etc.). Moreover, as Derrida underlines continuously, that we are 'violently elected' also means that an injunction is upon us: we are called to negotiate specific inheritances, and to negotiate them in specific ways. Having thought an inheritance means already having reaffirmed, re-cognised and received it, to the point where no 'unlearning' in a strict sense is possible. As Bennington (2000: 22) puts it: "Political responsibility, on this view, would begin in the *active*, *critical* memory or reception of an inheritance or a tradition which will remember us if we do not remember it". My task here will be to try to *think through* capitalocentrism how it might remember (through) us – and what kind of experience remembering it (instead) might be.

Crucially, at stake is not a historicising or contextualising movement as we usually practise it, if that means first drawing historical and geographical frames of reference and then situating ourselves (or any site or phenomenon) within and in relation to them. As Barnett (1999) shows, the task is to seek to take *context* more seriously than that. Rather, the reflection starts with situatedness, with materials already at hand, with what we already have, to consider and read for their inheritedness and for the space of negotiation that it opens. Genealogical strategies will help us to some limits, but they also come with the danger of consolidating, locating and ultimately governing a heritage like an "an asset capitalized or located like a corpse buried somewhere" (Derrida 1997b: 26). This means that for capitalocentrism, thought as inheritance, we will need to understand where it (the word, the concept, the phenomenon etc.) comes from, what its historical motivations and contextual uses have been, how it is approached today etc.; but this should come with warnings not to *reduce* it to such descriptions, or for us to be satisfied with such strategies. As we will see, there are multiple reasons for this; but for one, such reductions (which are also insulations and homogenisations) would let *language itself* off the hook, so to speak, thus delimiting what can be considered an appropriate type and territory of the problematic. As I will argue in detail (in chapters two and three), to read capitalocentrism as a property or a topo-nomological (locatable, governable) heritage is to have *already* inherited an unquestioned array of (potentially capitalocentric) conceptions of (linear) time, (gridded) space and (restricted) economy.

In other words, an inherited conceptuality might delimit our prospects for problematising capitalocentrism in the first place – and thus reproduce limitations to capitalocentric effect, ironically enough. This is how it remembers us. The answer to this problematic is not, however, to paint a 'fuller' picture of capitalocentrism, to calculate more of the concept and *then* get over it. We rather need to get deeper into its trouble. Again, there is no hope of full disclosures, only of Derrida's (2002a: 210) constant "call to vigilance, that is to say, to the necessity of keeping the debate wide open by multiplying the signs of critical tension, of contradictions, of dilemmas, even aporias". This is, as Stella Gaon (2019) shows, the *critical* commitment of deconstruction. The skills of inheriting that we look for are "perhaps", says Derrida (1978: 282), related to "the critical rigor with which this relation to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought". And this specific sense of critique as negotiation of inheritances will also bring us close to the legacy of thought known as critical social theory – and to trying to rethink both Derrida's and Gibson-Graham's place within it.

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Let us pause for a moment to make a tentative map of the territory covered so far. Starting from the tasks presented by the postcapitalist fold and the desires to survive capitalist ruination, we first need to acknowledge the ruins that will have remained around and within any postcapitalist praxis. This is part of what we inherit, and part of what allows us to dream of and practise postcapitalist alternatives. Dealing with "capitalist ruins" (Tsing 2015) and systematisations of violence will undoubtedly merit numerous studies. But what this study proposes is a parallel challenge, a step aside from the obstacles we already know: the capitalist ruins we confront inside and outside might need to be dealt with by exploring the very practices deemed 'postcapitalist', and the problem spaces worth assembling (or re-cognising) might have something to do with what Gibson-Graham call 'capitalocentrism' and Derrida calls 'inheritance'. The chapters that follow describe my effort to understand what it would mean to understand these two concepts together, and to see such an explorative understanding as an element of postcapitalist practice and theory.

To be sure, this proposal does not consist of once again postponing the political moment – a practice both Gibson-Graham and Derrida so fervently criticise – in order to entertain some quietist space of 'theory'. Derrida's 'inheritance' is not an excuse for endless self-reflection, any more than it is an effort to disclose an ultimately knowable and calculable historical-geographical context that can be acted upon in all security and sovereign consciousness. Instead, 'inheritance' is an expansion of the dimensionality or topology at play, a dimension of alterity and negotiation within our conventional categories. Rather than simply deferring or setting aside the revolutions that will need to come, in a time and space already set in linear and gridded terms, the point is to raise the stakes of a postcapitalist politics by introducing other dimensions – or a dimension of otherness – into it. Most crucially, this means confronting the *mediatedness* of space and economy – the fact that mediating matter, energy and relations are (and will always already have been) needed for something and anything to emerge or be. For what is at stake is not inheritance as an 'idea' or the inheritance of 'ideas', but rather the all-too-material, mediated fabrication of our sensorium as it engages with specific 'ideas', in determinate contexts. What inheritance allows us to consider is the mediatedness of our own conceptions and cognition, and the economies and spacings that allow us to think and practise economies, spaces or anything else.

This means that, for methodological reasons, my enquiry can be characterised as theoretical. *Theorein*, 'looking at', is at stake, as its reflections are seen in the objects that appear as 'empirical' or 'practical': that is, theory in practices, in the materials at hand, and in the methods practised when inheritances are negotiated. None of these terms, and least of all those that are *not* made suspicious by my scare quotes, should be treated as non-theoretical in the sense of being derived from outside an inherited conceptual economy or from a more direct, unmediated and untainted relation to material reality. I am not rehearsing theory to be put 'into practice', nor arguing on the theoretical 'metalevel' that Tariq Jazeel (2016) so aptly problematises, but instead trying to practise a methodological questioning of thought-in-practice. This also means a methodological resistance to ideological separations of materiality and conceptuality, or of the 'material', 'real' topoi of space and economy from the language and textuality at stake in their inheritance. As Claire Colebrook (2011: 19) has it, "sense *is* material". To work with this material is to seek an economic geography worthy of the promises of Gibson-Graham and Derrida – "protocols of reading"

(Derrida 1981b: 63) pertinent to the postcapitalist problem.[15]

Cross-reading JK Gibson-Graham and Jacques Derrida provides interesting opportunities, as we shall see. Although there are simple and more complex affinities between the authors, we should not presume these intersections to be without friction and conflict. Crucially, my task here is not to suggest that any straightforward correction is needed to mend these authors into some non-agonistic whole – a 'postcapitalist deconstruction' or a 'deconstructive postcapitalism'. Even less is the argument about using a concrete and geographical Gibson-Graham to materialise an abstract and philosophical Derrida – or to use the latter's 'theoretical' tour de force to 'level up' the former's 'empirics'. What I hope to convey in the following pages is an honest effort at reading these authors against first impressions – by e.g. taking up a theoretical-critical Gibson-Graham and a situatedly political Derrida – and to formulate 'capitalocentric inheritances' in ways that can summon more questioning in the future. Although the accent here is on rethinking Gibson-Graham with the help of Derrida – for disciplinary reasons, to start with – I also hope to mark some places where the challenge needs to flow in the other direction, as well as to challenge legacies of critical thought more broadly. What follows is a set of modest attempts to foster further work in this vein.

1.4 Research Questions

Combining these motivations and theoretical insights, this thesis proposes to undertake its postcapitalist study by dividing the task into three main research questions, to which we may now turn:

Q1 What kind of capitalocentric inheritances can be identified in postcapitalist praxis?

Q2 How are capitalocentric inheritances (to be) negotiated to differently performative effects?

Q3 How is postcapitalist futurity infrastructured in spatial-economic terms in such negotiations?

In this section, I will briefly comment on each question in order to clarify its stakes as well as to introduce how each main question is treated in the different chapters (see Table 1 below).

15 The reader may find it interesting to know that the present study was initiated with a much more practical and empirical intent compared with how it now reads. I was to go to 'the field' and study how capitalocentric inheritances were negotiated in practice, in various forms of activism self-identifying as postcapitalist. But, aside from practical issues regarding research design, the problem became not having 'at hand' the conceptual or methodological tools necessary, starting from the 'idea' of capitalocentrism as an inheritance. A certain suspicion regarding my own concepts and strategies first needed cultivation. Nonetheless, my motivations, and the urgencies of the postcapitalist fold, demand practical responses. If signs of this methodological trajectory from empirics to theory can be detected in my writing (e.g. in the formulation of research questions, in the choice of chapter themes and examples), they are hopefully signs of *both* a project abandoned and a project not yet commenced. Insofar as there is a friction between the two, something may have been achieved.

Q1: What kind of capitalocentric inheritances can be identified in postcapitalist praxis?

Research question 1 concerns itself with the *identification* of capitalocentric inheritances in different cases, sites and contexts of postcapitalist praxis. At first sight, this appears to be a straightforward question, letting us describe 'capitalocentric inheritances' as we discover them in different contexts. It requires me to specify what this specific theoretical research object is and does, and how I aim to recognise and describe it. However, the question is encoded with a riddle emanating from the very inheritedness of that 'research object', which means it cannot be described as if from the (non-complicit) outside. This also means that 'identification' cannot be understood as a simply descriptive or representational procedure that (re)states the fact of an identity/entity that precedes its identification and survives intact from its treatment on these pages. Instead, identification must be understood as a performative (and citational, repetitive) act in which an intervention is (already) made, as an identity is re-cognised. This yields a twin task of both descriptive repetition and inventive reinterpretation. This clearly concerns the problematic of capitalocentrism and how it is to be identified, but it also has to do with any sense of what constitutes 'postcapitalist praxis'. We cannot start off with a restricted, solidified sense of these terms if we are to study how their emergence and use is precisely marked by the problematic inheritances at stake.

As Gibson-Graham constantly underline, identification and naming is a force of resignification – it changes things, it is an intervention. But also, and no less crucially, it is an intervention *within* or *in-between* something (Latin: *inter-venire*), some 'old cloth', an act of inheritance that presupposes and works upon a pre-existing language. And this language, again, does not survive intact from any such intervention, nor is its transformation under the control of self-conscious sovereigns of language. Importantly, identification is made possible by a general or primordial inheritance that has already happened, just as any selective, conscious, calculative inheritance rests upon an originary inheritance that is 'general-economic' (see Derrida 1978: 251–277; Plotnitsky 1993) in the sense of allowing for and escaping the full disclosure of calculation. The inheritance that has already happened shapes our possibilities for making sense of it.

When I thus ask myself to describe capitalocentric inheritances in different cases, the question needs to ring back to whatever allows that ask in the first place, and how that something might be capitalocentrically structured. Research question 1 draws attention to the work that interpretations – identification, recognition, reading etc. – do. If we take the performative (inventive *and* inherited) character of knowledge seriously and are willing to assess the *complementarity* of different ways of knowing (see research question 2), we need to start with a reflection on what reading and other interpretative gestures do. That the object of 'capitalocentric inheritance' does not and cannot exist without certain interpretative-performative gestures is one of the implications that will need to be carefully considered. That objects or practices re-cognised as 'postcapitalist' (on whatever grounds) do not emanate from outside of capitalocentrism is another.

The different chapters that organise this study treat this research question in different terms and strategies (see Table 1 for a summary). Chapter two engages theoretically and genealogically with the concept of capitalocentrism itself, treating in more detail what it means to think it in the context of Derridean inheritance and Gibson-Graham's critical tendencies. Chapter three further discusses the 'identification' of such inheritances, and what it would mean to think of the capacities of identification or cognisability – our sensorium – as themselves structured by and through capitalocentric inheritances. Its crux is in archives and the (capitalocentric) violence constituting and constituted by them.

Table 1. Intersecting topoi: Research themes related to specific research questions, breakdown by chapter.

	2 Critical Gibson-Graham: Reading Capitalocentrism for Trouble	**3 Archives of Violence: Capitalocentrism and the Grain of History**	**4 Postscripting Capitalism: Capitalocentric Remains and the Trouble of Postisms**	**5 *Jälkiä…*: Economies of Language in Translation**
Q1: What kind of capitalocentric inheritances can be identified in postcapitalist praxis?	• Formulation of capitalocentrism as inheritance, as distinguished from a post/critical problem. Problematisation of 'identification' as it is coupled with control and overcoming.	• The question is how capitalocentrism as inheritance is inscribed into archives and historicisation as such – the task is impossible: to make an account of whatever enables us to make an account. • Attention turns from objects to the capacities for their identification – the inherited sensorium.	• Recent accounts of postcapitalism and postcapitalist politics are studied to identify capitalocentric tendencies along five axes: epistemics, spatial homogeneity, temporal dynamics, scalar hierarchy, and hierarchies of knowledge production.	• Language 'itself' is the suspected 'medium' of capitalocentrism, which means that mediacy as such is in question. • Capitalocentric inheritances are sought in linguistic difference and the ways translation is conceptualised as a spatial-economic process in critical thought.
Q2: How are capitalocentric inheritances (to be) negotiated to differently performative effects?	• Two different senses of the 'same' problem enable different practices of identifying it, with very different effects. • The question becomes how best to negotiate these differences, situatedly, without succumbing to already known common sense about what the problem is and how it is known.	• The negotiation of capitalocentrism is rendered in terms of negotiating the pre-empirical status of archives and historicisation along three axes: the irreducibility of (historical, archival) violence; the oscillation between nameable and unnameable victims (of history); the promise of postcapitalist memory.	• I identify a negotiation of capitalocentrism in postcapitalist accounts in the way Gibson-Graham differentiate their postcapitalist politics from postcapitalism. • Additionally, capitalocentrism as inheritance demands that we turn this attention back onto Gibson-Graham's apparent 'solutions'.	• First, I look at how critical thought on translation may or may not negotiate the capitalocentric problems it carries. • Then, three of my own translational problem spaces are described as they have given me the chance to reflect on capitalocentrism of/in linguistic differences.
Q3: How is postcapitalist futurity infrastructured in spatial-economic terms in such negotiations?	• Negotiation of critique itself – and the continuing trouble of capitalocentrism – becomes a crucial aspect of postcapitalist future-making.	• Postcapitalist futures are inherited, which means that the openings and foreclosures of 'future' might warrant attention to historical processes. • I propose a problematisation of archival economies in diverse- and general-economic terms.	• Capitalocentrism infrastructuring *itself* through postcapitalist accounts, reinstating itself through efforts to negotiate it. • Call for 'postcapitalist studies' as a continuing negotiation of capitalocentrism and a task for future work.	• Translation opens questions regarding the topological and economic nature of language. • The task becomes to infrastructure languages differently, which includes rethinking what we have been doing all along in inheriting language.

Chapter four turns to the question of postcapitalism, and how different ways of imagining and practising postcapitalist politics might be restricted (and enabled) by capitalocentric inheritances. Chapter five treats this problematic in terms of linguistic differences, and asks how language itself carries capitalocentric burdens – and how the site of translation might help us identify its problematics.

Q2: How are capitalocentric inheritances (to be) negotiated to differently performative effects?

Research question 2 tackles the *negotiation* of capitalocentric inheritances, with an emphasis on movements between various modes of knowing and handling them. The rationale of this question stems from the insight that any single way of identifying and reading inheritances is not only productive/performative (see research question 1) but also *inescapably* insufficient, partial and complementary. This follows from anti-essentialist and deconstructive understandings of knowledge, which challenge conventional logocentrism whereby a specific mode of knowing or representation (however its 'specificity' or 'singularity' is demarcated) corresponds referentially to a specific slice of reality. Whether we follow a vocabulary of 'overdetermination' (Resnick & Wolff 1987; Graham 1990, 1992; Gibson-Graham 2006a), 'partiality' and 'feminist objectivity' (Haraway 1988), 'standpoint epistemology' (Harding 1992), 'complementarity' (Plotnitsky 1993, 1994) or 'iterability' (Derrida 1988), there are many different ways of saying that multiple perspectives are both unavoidable (e.g. all sites of knowing are different; no perspective or theory is One; no non-complicit relation to (an outside) 'reality' exists) and empirically, theoretically and politically important (e.g. partiality as feminist objectivity; complementarity as a plural style of theory; overdetermination as an empirical political reorientation).

The notion of 'negotiation' underscores this, insisting on the necessity to keep awake (Latin: *neg-otium*, 'no rest' or 'no leisure') and keep on conversing and exchanging between various positions and perspectives. For Derrida (2002a), negotiation implies a shuttling between "equally imperative", or aporetic, imperatives: "[o]ne does not negotiate between exchangeable and negotiable things. Rather, one negotiates by engaging the nonnegotiable in negotiation" (13). Because such negotiation implies losing the comfort of any single position, "there is always something about negotiation that is a little dirty, that gets one's hands dirty" (13). Here, this means that we should not presuppose any single approach to capitalocentrism to be sufficient (nor single, for that matter), but instead should seek to converse and shuttle between various perspectives – and between variously capitalocentric inheritances. Not only does this mean that different situations will have warranted different analyses of what a capitalocentric inheritance is, here and now, but also each situation will have merited a non-unified response and a plurality of strategies of thinking. The demands of a 'postcapitalist' site or problem in terms of possible responses (theoretical, empirical, political, ethical, pedagogical etc.) are not set, nor does it have to be possible to line them up within any single, straightforward 'framework'. Thus, a diverse-economic reading and an anti-capitalocentric reading, or a critical-deconstructive strategy and an emancipatory-pedagogical one, may all be warranted, in a sort of 'plural style' (Plotnitsky 1993). Simultaneously, they may point in incommensurable directions and demand contradictory commitments – even undecidable negotiations (see Derrida 1993).

Moreover, we will need to somehow negotiate the unnegotiability that opens any act of inheritance to an unknowable future – to future reaffirmations. In Gibson-Graham's (2006a, 2008a) vocabulary, 'negotiation' is often coupled with 'ethical' to denote –

as we have seen – not something 'good', but simply a 'breathing space' where contingency and undecidability are negotiated as best as one can. Adding this 'ethical' insistence onto 'negotiation' here means exploring how different ways of knowing capitalocentrism enable different effects – openings as much as restrictions – and how that differential economy can best be navigated with/in. One of the implications of this is also that 'negotiation' cannot be restricted to what happens within the confines of this thesis, as it were, but always already implies that any *reading* of my accounts participates in the negotiation. Thus, whatever is said in this thesis will have been marked by the possibility of *reading* it (elsewhere, differently) in order to say anything in the first place. This complicates the political as well as theoretical stakes quite a bit, as we shall see. Rather than relieving me of responsibility concerning what and how I write, the openness of reinterpretations issues – as Derrida continuously emphasises – a hyperbolically increased demand to relate to what is essentially non-relatable: readings to come. At the very least, a heightened attention to contexts and the situatedness of my own work becomes a task, as it helps to accentuate the reader's work of reinterpretation to come – a 'then and there' as it becomes a 'here and now', however momentarily, in the act of reaffirmation. If we thus accept the complementarity of knowledges as a guiding hypothesis, and underline the negotiations that happen in-between incommensurable knowings, the effects of specific movements between various (ways of knowing) 'capitalocentric inheritances' become central. In addition, calling for an enquiry into the performative effects of such ways of knowing will have to somehow relate to the openness or promissory dimension that marks performativity as such (see Derrida 1988; Hamacher 1991; Fritsch 2005).

These concerns find different routes in the following chapters. In chapter two, after first identifying a 'post/critical' tendency to reduce capitalocentrism to an ownable and knowable problematic, I then juxtapose it with a deconstructive strategy nicknamed 'reading for trouble'. These provide two different negotiations of the problem of capitalocentrism, a problem that presents itself in two very different lights, which may demand a plural style of enquiry and is perhaps riven by aporetic demands in different directions. In an effort to negotiate the inherited sensorium that allows any purchase to name it and negotiate it, thus inscribing negotiation in a profoundly asymmetric relation, chapter three identifies crucial opportunities for thinking capitalocentric histories as responsibly as possible. The negotiations that chapter four then proposes take place, firstly, between capitalocentric inheritances within different versions of postcapitalism and Gibson-Graham's difference from these, but also, secondly, with the capitalocentric remains within the latter's postcapitalist politics. In chapter five, I examine three concrete problem spaces of translation as they have provided opportunities to think and negotiate capitalocentric inheritances in linguistic practice.

Q3: How is postcapitalist futurity infrastructured in spatial-economic terms in such negotiations?

Research question 3 explores most explicitly the *futural* dimensions of capitalocentric inheritances, and it returns the attention to 'space' and 'economy' as two pillars of my economic geography. This question, one would imagine, is the core material of any *post*capitalist study of space and economy. 'Inheriting futures' underscores, first of all, the inheritedness of any language and cognition that allow us to imagine and practise desirable futures. We 'take on' the traditions that precede us (Naas 2003), affirming *and* contesting what comes before in order to allow any thinking towards futures, and we do so in modes of inherited cognitive capacities and infrastructures. Thus, in each of my

cases, at stake is whatever allows us our futurological and -graphical capacities. Again, the task becomes "reckoning with the relationship between what is given and what is possible" (Barnett 2005: 240) by analysing, sorting out and rearranging inheritances as carefully as possible. The stakes of an inherited futurality are thus close to what Gibson-Graham (2006a: xxxiii–xxxiv) call for: "Our thinking strives to render a world with an ever-replenishing sense of room to move, air to breathe, and space and time to act – a space of pregnant negativity". Yet this emancipatory space is riven with the problematics of a rupturing and unownable futurity that Derrida (1997a: 143) insists on: "[w]ithout the possibility of difference [*différance*], the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing-space [*respiration*]".

But more than this, the inheritedness of futures implies not only that modes of *cognising* futures are inherited and negotiated, but also that future 'in itself' is seen as an effect of inherited conditions. Whatever 'inherited capitalocentrism' seeks to problematise *specifically*, it also needs to problematise cognisability *generally*, seeking the contours of our capacities to draw out 'capitalocentrism' – a task that is, to be sure, *impossible* in the Derridean sense, and certainly grandiose in terms of the limits of this thesis and my capacities. But seeking to *expand* a problematic is not pretending to *answer* it, not to mention 'solving' it in any other way than paving the way for further enquiries. (This is why this study's title starts with 'for'.) This means, in a more straightforward fashion and among other things, that the linearisation of time (Derrida 1997a) that so often grounds any future-speak – *and* the 'griddedness' (cf. Dixon & Jones 1998) or 'frozenness' (cf. Massey 2005) of space that undergirds and necessitates such linearity – must be problematised. If, by the end of this thesis, nothing has been challenged in how we think about the 'post-' of 'postcapitalism', this task will have failed. Linearity, indexed in an understanding of the 'post-' *as well as* '-capitalism', should be regarded with suspicion. In the chapters to follow, I will try to work my way to notions of space and economy worthy of what Derrida (2006) calls 'future to come' and Matthias Fritsch (2005) calls a 'postutopian future': a futurity radically open to the other, if also inescapably tied to and operating with specific ('utopian') images of 'the future'.

Crucially, with the concerns that 'capitalocentrism' unleashes, none of this can proceed without material accounts of the archives, infrastructures, scales, anamnestic devices, and other modes of mediation and relationality that allow us to project futures. That 'capitalocentrism' is, after all, about the continuous marginalisation of non-capitalist diverse economies keeps us guarded against elevating the whole problematic onto some 'intellectual' or 'theoretical' level separate from its physical, material and corporeal groundedness. Here, this will mean thinking the inheritedness of futures in terms of spaces/topologies and economies that precede and enable our cognition materially – with a focus on the mediatedness of that cognition – and the ways our being-towards-futures invents and creates further legacies. 'Infrastructuring' is a good word, since it orients us to the material-semiotic making of futures in a sense that does not enforce a rift between material reality and our sensorium/language but sees them as impartibly intertwined (see Berlant 2016; Boyer 2017). Thus, at stake are postcapitalist topologies and economies, in a way that seeks to 'take on' its inheritances in a post-capitalist or anti-capitalocentric way. Or, more modestly, to sketch some contours for such a way. Similarly as with futurity, we should practise a methodological suspicion of any 'space' and any 'economy', if we are to think in terms worthy of a postcapitalist study.

In the following chapters, these concerns for inheriting and infrastructuring spatial economies of the future will find different articulations. In chapter two, I propose that the future postcapitalist praxis (in Gibson-Graham's sense) might demand,

counterintuitively perhaps, a sort of capitalocentric problematic that is much wider and more uncontrollable than has previously been understood. This provides a key theoretical opportunity for thinking further the inheritance of spatial-economic futures as a continuous effort to negotiate capitalocentrism. Chapter three solidifies this approach through another slightly counterintuitive move – turning not towards the 'future' as we knew it, but more towards archives and history. Taking as its cue Gibson-Graham's proposition that a postcapitalist politics needs other histories, I argue that thinking archives of capitalocentrism might help us better grasp the infrastructuring of our sensorium, and in this sense of our future. In chapter four, the case of post-capitalism provides us with a host of future-oriented writings to engage with. My central aim is to understand how – left untheorised – capitalocentrism might infrastructure itself through our postcapitalist praxis, that is, leaving its impressions in the very 'alternatives' that postcapitalism stands for. Thus its negotiation becomes all the more central. Chapter five then finds in translation a site for making interventions in capitalocentrism in (between) language(s). This demands thinking linguistic production in terms often denied it: as material, spatial, economic; as strategic and interventional; as non-linear.

1.5 Choreography

The following chapters spread out different contextual arguments that tackle capitalocentric inheritances and postcapitalist problems. Each of them spells out a different case and a specific context in which to try to practise readings, negotiations and inheritances. Each of the following enquiries is supposed to work as a relatively independent essay, attempting an intervention in a specific context. This means that they introduce slightly different vocabularies, problematics and strategies of movement. These are brought together in the conclusion.

Chapter two, "Critical Gibson-Graham: Reading Capitalocentrism for Trouble", starts by revisiting in more detail the work of JK Gibson-Graham, with an emphasis on capitalocentrism and different ways of reading it. As I have described, one reason for Gibson-Graham's success can be found in the intricate and enabling links between a feminist and anti-essentialist critique of political economy and an experimental and affirmative practice of economy. While initially powered by explicitly critical and negating energies, diverse economies scholars have increasingly turned in an affirmative direction that I provocatively call 'post/critical'. A post/critical reading treats critique – and its proxy here: capitalocentrism – as a necessary but ultimately unsatisfying 'step' to be succeeded by more affirmative and experimental takes. The latter, in Gibson-Graham's case, go by the name 'diverse and community economies'. What interests me in this chapter is what has happened to 'capitalocentrism' during the development and wide circulation of 'the diverse economy framework' around the world. Initially an invitation to consider our performative complicity with the seeming inescapability of capitalism, capitalocentrism has lately been positioned as an already established theoretical object and a problem already settled. Returning to Gibson-Graham's affinities with deconstruction as well as their use of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's vocabulary to describe the kind of thinking strategies at stake, I seek to reproblematise capitalocentrism through a thinking strategy I call 'reading for trouble'. Insisting on the theoretical and political potentials that capitalocentrism opens for critical and deconstructive practice, the notion becomes a keyword for troublesome work ahead.

Chapter three, "Archives of Violence: Capitalocentrism and the Grain of History" delves deeper into the inheritedness of the sensorium that allows us to locate phenomena

'in' space, time and economy. Taking seriously this inheritedness means firstly attending to pre-empirical assumptions about archives and historicisation, and secondly contemplating the unavoidable and avoidable violences reproduced in historicising thought. Thematising first the question of violence in relation to capitalocentrism, I argue that Gibson-Graham's work should not simply be read as a correction of capitalocentric violence through diverse and community economies, but more centrally as a violent interruption of the peace and homogeneity guaranteed by capitalocentrism. Thus, this intervention needs to be understood in the context of ruptures of historical time – a lineage that can be drawn, for example, from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin to Derrida and to Gibson-Graham. To conceptualise the multiple violences at stake, I turn to Derrida's concept of violence as it relates to history and archives. This leads us to contemplate the inescapability of an economy of violence, to insist on the impossible but necessary task of distinguishing between nameable and unnameable victims of (capitalocentric) history, and to treat the question of what it means to inherit a tradition marked by its inability to take more-than-capitalist diverse economies seriously. This interplay of Derrida's historical violences and Gibson-Graham's capitalocentrism further troubles our stakes, but also points out specific tasks for historical studies in the key of diverse economies.

Chapter four, "Postscripting Capitalism: Capitalocentric Remains and the Trouble of Postisms", returns more directly to treat the question of postcapitalism. It starts off by distinguishing between two genres of postprefixation of capitalism: postcapitalism (in general) and postcapitalist politics (of Gibson-Graham). Taking up the task to differentiate between these different ways of writing futures of/beyond capitalism, I find capitalocentric inheritances reproduced in postcapitalisms of various sorts. These are studied along five axes: an epistemic grounding I call capitalocentric realism; a symmetry of isms that reproduces a homogeneous present 'system'; a temporal post/capitalist rupture that serves to reconfirm the totality of 'the' present; a vertical ordering that takes scalar hierarchies for granted; and a hierarchisation inscribed into unquestioned modes of knowledge production and address. Tracing how Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics differs along these axes, I highlight the specificity and the potential of the tasks they propose. But this does not exhaust the problematic of capitalocentrism (unless we treat it in a post/critical mode), which means that anti-capitalocentric attention needs to be turned back on postcapitalist politics. I do this by studying what kind of capitalocentric remains might be reproduced in the very conceptualisation of postcapitalist politics. What emerges is a complex critical account that keeps focusing itself on capitalocentrism in various forms. To continue this task, I call for postcapitalist studies.

Chapter five, "*Jälkiä*…: Economies of Language in Translation", turns to a little-problematised aspect in diverse-economic literature, namely the question of linguistic differences and translation between languages. I argue that leaving linguistic differences untroubled might reproduced blunt capitalocentric dynamics in the very modes of address, contributing to an anglophone hegemony instead of challenging it. I chart such connections between capitalocentrism, linguistic hegemony/difference and political economies. These considerations lead me to treat more specifically three theorists of translation in the context of capitalism: Anna Tsing, Jacques Lezra and Dipesh Chakrabarty. In each case, I outline some important contributions to thinking translation critically as an economic site, but I also read for capitalocentric tendencies that restrict the empirical, theoretical and political capacities of these approaches. Turning to three translation problems in my own postcapitalist practice, I then sketch negotiations along

three axes: a project to translate *Take back the economy* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013) into Finnish, and its lessons about translation as a site for linguistic-economic intervention; my translations of *ongelma* or 'problem', and what they teach us about untranslatability, linguistic opacity and the relationship of languages; and the question of *jälkikapitalismi*, or 'postcapitalism' *and* 'late capitalism', and what it can teach us about the linguistic assumptions contributing to capitalocentric languages. Through these three rather detailed cases towards the end of the thesis, I further highlight how my theoretical considerations in this study call for empirical testing and challenging.

The conclusion is entitled "Raising the Stakes", and it tackles two major tasks. The first of these is to summarise briefly the rather meandering arguments made in the previous chapters, and to restate how they respond to my three research questions. The second is to argue that together these readings or negotiations point towards the sort of work that is yet to come. Taking seriously Gibson-Graham's capitalocentrism and Derrida's inheritance leaves me to argue for the need to treat legacies seriously. In the context of our shared and inherited ruination, our capacities for inheriting might be decisively important. To end, I return to some openings for further enquiries – necessarily collective as well as multiple – that I call postcapitalist studies.

2 Critical Gibson-Graham: Reading Capitalocentrism for Trouble

2.1 From Critique to Affirmation (and Back Again?)

One of the things we know by now about Gibson-Graham's work is its enabling power.[16] As an approach originating from the critique of Marxist political economy, and occasionally restating this critique when needed, the diverse economies framework has come to signify a major move *beyond* or *beside* a primarily critical attitude towards social and economic coexistence. The proliferation of diverse economies research and practice can be attributed to the overcoming of a certain unfruitful critical stance, particularly prevalent among Marxist political economists, diagnosed by Gibson-Graham's (2006b) *The end of capitalism (as we knew it)*, originally published in 1996. While the book provided a decidedly *critical* feminist and anti-essentialist reading of Marxism, later work by Gibson-Graham and other diverse economists has been more explicitly oriented towards experimentality and affirmative engagements with/in heterogeneous more-than-human realities:

> "Since the publication of *The end of capitalism*, we have been less concerned with disrupting the performative effects of capitalist representation, and more concerned with putting forward a new economic ontology that could contribute to novel economic performances" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 615).

In the introduction to *A postcapitalist politics*, this change of strategy is described in the following terms:

> "Feeling suffocated and disempowered by prevailing conceptions of what was possible, and when and how it was to be achievable, we located our dissatisfaction [in *The end of capitalism*] within the dead-end time-space of capitalism as it was usually theorized. Today we see ourselves as part of a movement that is actively retheorizing capitalism and reclaiming the economy here and now in myriad projects of alternative economic activism" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxi).

This trajectory entails a profound shift in the *kind* of thinking indexed with the collective authorial figure. Gibson-Graham portray their own trajectory as a motion from a playful engagement with critical theory to an honest, grounded, hands-in-the-mud version of thinking-doing:

> "In *The End of Capitalism*, J. K. Gibson-Graham was the quintessential 'theory slut,' happily and carelessly thinking around, playing with 'serious' and consequential subjects like political economy, loving the theory she was with, offering ebullient arguments and heady claims about representations of capitalism and their politically constraining performativity. […] It might come as a shock, then, that *A Postcapitalist Politics* has a completely different feel; it reads like a wholesome, even earnest, treatise on how to do economy differently. The authorial stance is open, exposed, even vulnerable, entirely different from the shimmering armor of the earlier book (and much less fun, we fear)" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xi).

16 This chapter is a revised and extended version of my original manuscript published as Alhojärvi (2020a).

This movement from suffocation and disempowerment, associated with the (critique of a) critical theorisation of capitalism towards another, experimentally oriented attempt to "render a world with an ever-replenishing sense of room to move, air to breathe, and space and time to act" (2006a: xxxiii), is a tremendously relatable, clear and contagious narrative. It echoes widespread desires to move beyond a critique that has "run out of steam" (Latour 2004), especially a critique compulsively circling around "the affects of capitalism" (Latour 2014), and into a more experimental, situated, relational, care-full landscape of thinking *as* ethical-political practice.

This chapter's argument, in all of its simplicity, is that much depends on the status of this movement 'beyond' or 'beside' social critique, and on the trajectory *away from* or negotiation *with* critique that is thus staged. Gibson-Graham (2006a, 2008a, 2014a, 2020) themselves and other diverse economists (e.g. Roelvink 2016; Cameron 2020; see also Alhojärvi 2017) have repeatedly phrased their move in terms derived from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's vocabulary, calling for a 'reparative reading' and 'weak theory' of economy, in contrast to the 'paranoid reading' and 'strong theory' associated with capitalocentric economic thought – in both its mainstream and critical varieties. These four terms were coined by Sedgwick in her influential essay (republished in several iterations) on the role and strategies of critical thought amidst the devastating AIDS crisis in the United States. Her worry was that deeply painful forms of structural violence, threat, anxiety and fear were met by a critical theory whose principal function seemed to be *reproducing* this painfulness in its structuring of knowledge and its objects. Such ways of knowing, framed by Sedgwick as a sort of paranoia, felt to her increasingly capable only of *mimicking* fearful and painful representations of surrounding realities, and *amplifying* feelings of threat already so devastatingly at the forefront. Instead of making note of existing devastation in order to then move on and try to repair what is still possible to repair (see Hanson 2010), paranoid thinking is marked by a compulsive anticipatory drive to *prevent* negative affect rather than seek or sustain a positive one. Ameliorative and enjoyable projects/affects are undermined by a structure of thought and feeling that forcefully anticipates their co-optation and exposure as 'merely reformist' and 'merely aesthetic' (Sedgwick 2003: 144): "In a world where no one need be delusional to find evidence of systemic oppression, to theorize out of anything *but* a paranoid critical stance has come to seem naïve, pious, or complaisant" (125–126).

What makes it so hard to position critical-suspicious paranoia as one practice among others – and within the broader and varied interactions Sedgwick calls "the ecology of knowing" (145) – is its commitment to "so thorough a practice of disavowing its affective motive and force and masquerading as the very stuff of truth" (138). In other words, while reparative thinking is happy to admit that part of what makes it move is to seek pleasure amidst conditions that are far from optimal, paranoia cannot cope with such an open affective investment and the subsequent admittance of various thinking practices as legitimate. Because of this thrust to deny its affective motives and positionality among alternative, different(ly) legitimate practices, paranoia is also characterised as a 'strong theory', a term Sedgwick picks up from psychologist Silvan Tomkins. To call a theory "strong" is "at the same time to congratulate it as a big achievement but also to classify it" (134). Its theoretical 'strength' has to do with "the *size and topology of the domain that it organizes*" (134; my emphasis): its capacity to know from afar, to know in advance, to know on behalf of others, and to organise difference in a solid framework of legibility. Although any (affect) theory for Tomkins is "a mode of *selective* scanning and amplification"

and therefore "risks being somewhat tautological" – in the sense of recognising *and* reproducing certain affects, not others – "because of its wide reach and rigorous exclusiveness, a strong theory risks being strongly tautological" (135). That is, it is bound to jump over questions surrounding the performative or reproductive role of its own preconceptions and affective investments.[17]

These terms help Gibson-Graham to make sense of and make relatable their feelings of suffocation and disempowerment amidst the "dead-end time-space of capitalism as it was usually theorized" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxi). Strong theory, Gibson-Graham (2008a: 619) assert, "has produced our powerlessness by positing unfolding logics and structures that limit politics", and moreover, it can only "extend knowledge by confirming what we already know, that the world is a place of domination and oppression". The alternative is to loosen the grip of explanations that know too much, as the same and in the same way, and to practise a 'weak theory', "little better than a description of the phenomena which it purports to explain" (Tomkins cited in Sedgwick 2003: 134). Thus hedging a breathing space between and within the knowns associated with capitalism (as we knew it), Gibson-Graham orient their reparative practice towards amelioration and enjoyability through an experimental attitude that resists knowing too much: "Weak theory could be undertaken with a reparative motive that welcomes surprise, tolerates coexistence, and cares for the new, providing a welcoming environment for the objects of our thought" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 619). This is not in order to deny the merits of critical thought or the devastating truthfulness of the objects it describes, but to mark firstly their affective purchase and incongruous effects, and secondly their limitations and alternatives within the 'ecology of knowing'.

The practice of an economic weak theory has been picked up as a central strategy in diverse-economic research and practice. As Gibson-Graham and Dombroski (2020a: 9) posit, "[t]he diverse economies intervention mobilizes weak theory to achieve a mighty effect – the destabilization of capitalist hegemony". It "does not elaborate and confirm what we already know; it observers, interprets, and yields to emerging knowledge" (Gibson-Graham 2014b: S149). The diverse-economic vocabulary and imaginary is introduced as "a weak theory of economy":

> "This language expands our economic vocabulary, widening the identity of the economy to include all of those practices excluded or marginalized by a strong theory of capitalism. The landscape we describe does not ignore relations of power between economic practices, but neither does it presume that they are structured in any necessary or inherently reproducible manner" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 60).

Now, there is no denying that this step away from economic strong theory has produced a proliferation of postcapitalist politics around the globe. My own engagements with the diverse economy framework and its weak theoretical experimentality have been, quite frankly, life-changing. Nevertheless, this chapter seeks to look elsewhere – *beside*

17 Sedgwick's account parallels in important ways Donna Haraway's (1988: 581) discussion of "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere" and its alternatives, 'situated knowledge' and 'partial perspective'. What Sedgwick's account adds is a sharp attention to the affective purchase of knowing and how it is entangled with the objects known. This is not a dimension missing from Haraway, of course, as for instance Heather Love (2017) shows in her account of Haraway's discussion of the 'temptations' of different modes of knowing. Importantly, much depends on the specific ways affective and emotional investment is discussed and theorised, and the types of theories mobilised in thinking about knowledge's affective purchase (for critical discussions, see Leys 2017; Barnett 2020).

this experimental and affirmative surge associated with weak theory – and to ask what has happened to the *critical* spirit that sparked the forceful feminist questioning of political economy in *The end of capitalism*. I am especially concerned with what I call a 'post/critical' reading of Gibson-Graham, a reading that positions critique and critical gestures as past and/or unfruitful tendencies in order to motivate and enable a move 'beyond' them, into affirming 'alternatives' instead. This sort of reading does not know what to do with critical projects, negative energies and antagonistic politics, except to treat them as unfruitful, judgemental stances *others* (still) practise, or as stepping stones within a methodological pipeline already leading to 'solutions'. To suggest a one-way movement or rupture away from the critical – marked here by the slash between 'post' and 'critical' – is to posit critique as something that does not need to be considered seriously in *this* work. Simultaneously, a distance is affirmed between critique and affirmation. While this separation might be productive for distancing ourselves from *certain* forms of (e.g. judgemental, paranoid, melancholic) critique, in *specific* situations, in order to *do* something, or to do something *differently*, I fear that the extrapolation of this separation risks missing the crucial stakes of rethinking critique itself with the inventive and provocative thinking tools of Gibson-Graham. As this critical moment in their work is associated with a 'deconstructive' strategy and the problem known as 'capitalocentrism', both of these acquire a determinate place and use within the overall framework.

Inspired by nuanced and complex rearticulations of Sedgwick's foundational essay (see Love 2010; Anker & Felski 2017a; Wright 2017), I try not to propose a move away from critique, but rather to attend to 'the ecology of knowing' as a complex and situated articulation of affective and epistemic relations. Although Sedgwick's essay is often read as a manifesto for weak theory and reparative reading – and it has surely yielded important insights via such readings – her argument stems from a concern with "a shallow gene pool of literary-critical perspectives and skills" (2003: 144). Again, she laments "a great loss when paranoid inquiry comes to seem entirely coextensive with critical theoretical inquiry rather than being viewed as one kind of cognitive/affective theoretical practice among others, alternative kinds" (126). Therefore, she goes on to analyse the "flexible to-and-fro movement" of "paranoid and reparative critical *practices,* not as theoretical ideologies (and certainly not as stable personality types of critics), but as changing and heterogeneous relational stances" (128).This 'ecology' of shifting stances and tendencies of knowing interests me here in order to ask how our critical postcapitalist skills might evolve through more nuanced vocabularies and strategies of engagement with the concerns introduced by Gibson-Graham.

Drawing on this diversity of coexisting critical practices, I am keen to follow a certain critical motive *within* diverse economies research as indexed through the use of 'capitalocentrism'. First introduced by Gibson-Graham (1995) to denote the kind of economic discourse in which non-capitalist economies are marginalised and always treated as insufficient or lacking with regard to a systemic and all-determining capitalism, 'capitalocentrism' has since become a general placeholder for the critical and theoretical grounding of diverse economies (see e.g. McKinnon *et al.* 2018). Whenever the stultifying performative effects of totalising and essentialising economic discourse are called into question in order to offer alternatives, 'capitalocentrism' is summoned to name the problem and to motivate its solutions. The association of capitalocentrism with paranoia and strong theory – and subsequently, diverse economies with reparativeness and weak theory – is widespread. For example, exploring the diversity of enterprise, Jenny Cameron describes how

> "[s]cholars working from the strong theory perspective of capitalocentrism […] tend to judge cooperatives in relation to capitalism as either lacking capitalism's cunning capacity to adapt or as being captured and sucked into capitalism's orbit. […] By contrast a weak theory approach refuses to assume such supposedly self-evident truths and instead seeks to read 'against the grain' and be open to other interpretations" (Cameron 2020: 29).

Although it is surely not the only critical notion in Gibson-Graham's repertoire, I use capitalocentrism here as a proxy to ask broader questions about the continuing value of critique. What a post/critical reading does to and with capitalocentrism, I argue, is to treat it as a name for a transparent and undesirable 'economic discourse' with pre-established characteristics and recognised forms. Capitalocentrism becomes a theoretical-political object, both introduced *and* adequately theorised in *The end of capitalism*, around which conceptual debate has already settled. While this reading enables diverse economists to decouple themselves from certain traditions, strategies and affects of critical thought, I want to question the easiness of assigning 'capitalocentric' as a name for whatever 'economic discourse' we want to avoid. To explore the potential of capitalocentrism to provoke and challenge postcapitalist studies and politics, I ask whether the notion might still, and increasingly, have something to teach us about the limits of post/critical separations as well as the prospects for non-capitalist construction – and whether the notion's history can further our understanding of critical tendencies and potentials *within* diverse economies research. In short: what kind of trouble could capitalocentrism invite and incite? Moreover, why would we want to be troubled in the first place?

My argument proceeds in four steps. First, I introduce capitalocentrism as a theoretical object and political project and describe some of its critical promises. Second, the delimitation of these promises is foregrounded through an illustration of how a post/critical reading tames the prospects of this critical notion. Third, in search for frameworks that would expand rather than delimit the problematic, I reintroduce Gibson-Graham's affinity with deconstruction in order to reproblematise capitalocentrism through a thinking strategy I call 'reading for trouble'. To conclude, I draw together thoughts on the critical repositionings and haunting prospects that this discussion invites for troublesome work ahead.

2.2 The Problem of Capitalocentrism

'Capitalocentrism' was first introduced by Gibson-Graham in 1995 as an effort to unfix the identity of capitalism as a totality.[18] This paper can be read as a continuation

18 This beginning is, as they so often are, relatively arbitrary. There is a prehistory of 'capitalocentrism' worthy of note. The earliest mention I have found is in the work of French historian René Gallissot. Interestingly, for Gallissot the notion has several different uses, pivoting on the multiple sense of 'capital' as an economic (*le capital*) and geographical (*la capitale*) category (cf. Derrida 1992c). Thus, for Gallissot, *capitalo-centrisme* denotes a developmentalist ignorance of agrarian life and a myopia of industrialisation (1978, 1980a), tending towards *la capitale*, but also a more general teleological conceptualisation of space and time, a preoccupation with *le capital*, in which "the key to the understanding of all anterior societies is that all of history and space are put in gravitation around a kernel that is less Europocentric and more capitalo-centric" (1983: 206–207; my translation; cf. 1980b). Gallissot's notion is picked up in Nimni's (1985: 63) review of Marxist theories of nationalism to denote how "[n]ationalist movements and national communities are always defined in terms of their position in the capitalist system". Slater (1987: 274) then associates Nimni's notion with 'econocentrism' to denote "an analytical orientation within which the study of the economy constitutes the sole and determining focus of investigation". Without

of Gibson-Graham's anti-essentialist (Graham 1988, 1990, 1992; Gibson & Graham 1992) and feminist (Gibson 1991a, 1992; Gibson-Graham 1994) trajectory, with some important departures from their work in structuralist Marxist explanations of industrial restructuring (Gibson & Horvath 1983; Graham *et al.* 1988). In the paper entitled "Identity and economic plurality: Rethinking capitalism and 'capitalist hegemony'", Gibson-Graham (1995) adopt Chantal Mouffe's critique of social and political essentialism in order to extend it to the (un)thinking of capitalism. They note the organisation of capitalist and non-capitalist economies into a "binary structure", "in which one term has positive being and the other (whose exclusion participates in defining the former) is represented as negativity or lack" (277). Within the binary, non-capitalist economies – insofar as their existence is recognised – are subordinated to capitalist ones. For instance, household economies, socialisms, or local and regional economies are depicted as lacking characteristics of capitalism (namely, its efficiency and rationality, its productivity, and its global extensiveness respectively). "Thus, despite their ostensible variety, noncapitalist forms of economy often present themselves as a homogeneous insufficiency rather than as positive and differentiated others" (278). In a footnote, Gibson-Graham go on to draw an analogy with Grosz's feminist theorisation of 'phallocentrism', suggesting that "much economic discourse is 'capitalocentric', to the extent that other forms of economy are seen as the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism; as the opposite to capitalism; as the complement to capitalism; or as existing in capitalism's sphere or orbit" (278 n6).

Gibson-Graham thus introduce 'capitalocentrism' as a binary structure that organises economic life by privileging capitalist sites and practices while subordinating others. The notion, first introduced in an inconspicuous footnote (no one cites this as the origin of 'capitalocentrism'), is picked up again in *The end of capitalism (as we knew it)* (Gibson-Graham 2006b) and subsequent publications. At stake is a specific, recurring and often implicit relation to economic difference: "[C]apitalocentric discourse condenses economic difference, fusing the variety of noncapitalist economic activities into a unity in which meaning is anchored to capitalist identity" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 56). This entails a system of valuation that "distributes positive value to those activities associated with capitalist economic activity however defined, and assigns lesser value to all other processes of producing and distributing goods and services" (56). Thus, capitalocentrism appears as a mode, structure or tendency of organising economic difference in a specific way, so that capitalist categories, practices, actors and sites (e.g. wage labour, private property, capitalist enterprise, market exchange, for-profit investment) are deemed more real, central, coherent and determining than others (e.g. household labour, family subsistence farming, slave labour, producer cooperatives, caring, regenerative finance, illegal markets, the commons, forced labour). Approaching these actually existing differences without presuming them to line up according to predetermined logics or overruling identities is at the heart of

citing any of these, Derluguian (1990: 441) uses 'capitalocentrism' to denote how a "mere extrapolation of categories and schemes of the [European] socialist movement upon non-European realities leads to a 'kingdom of mirrors'". As far as I can tell, these occurrences form the prehistory of 'capitalocentrism' prior to Gibson-Graham (1995). Interestingly, after Gibson-Graham, these conceptual links are largely interrupted. However, there continue to emerge occasional 'capitalocentrisms' independent of Gibson-Graham's conceptualisation, whether as a sign of independent thought, of wilful omission of reference, or simply of the notion's energising force unconstrained by referentiality. Although my focus here is on Gibson-Graham and the 'capitalocentrisms' that their work have unleashed, this tropic economy and the iterability of 'capitalocentrism' will provide much to think about.

Gibson-Graham's (xxxi–xxxii) "anticapitalocentric" strategy of "reading for difference rather than dominance".

Capitalocentrism is whatever makes such a differentiating reading of economy often difficult and counterintuitive: a process of placing capital(ism)[19] and its metonymic variations "at the gravitational centre of meaning making" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2016: 194). While this centring might mean a homogenisation of economic thought and praxis, so that the economy (or reality, for that matter) becomes primarily associated with a narrow set of sites, relations and practices, it is also a way of organising (fostering and creating, as well as restraining or smothering) and calculating economic difference in ways that benefit certain interests and possibilities, not others. Furthermore, at stake is an organisation of the spatial-temporal architecture of economy in specific ways. What coexists with capital(ism) is rendered inferior to and dependent on it – and what is differentiated from 'currently hegemonic global capitalism' is positioned through a linear-teleological logic as the precondition/origin of capitalism, or as the always fleeting and abstract promise of its supersession (see Gibson-Graham 2006b). The ultimate achievements of capitalocentrism include the strong theoretical self-assurance that often accompany accounts of 'economic reality' (in the singular) without there being any need to question the epistemic assumptions or performative effects of such taken-for-granteds.

For Gibson-Graham (2006b), capitalocentrism is a performative discourse that produces ontological and epistemic, which is also to say material and political, effects. The coining of 'capitalocentrism' and other anti-essentialist thinking strategies is motivated because "socialist or other noncapitalist construction" appears a "ludicrous or utopian future goal" (263) rather than a realistic activity cotemporaneous with whatever is considered as capitalism. The task is to think and practise *against* the continuing sidelining of non-capitalist activities and possibilities. In this sense, the notion emerges in Gibson-Graham's repertoire as an anti-capitalist tool. It names a way of producing and organising hierarchies between sites, agencies, abilities and knowledges of change-making so that capital(ism) (understood as the prevalence of a narrow set of economic practices/processes) comes to be understood as the most central – if not the only – existing political-economic entity or mode of relation. Capitalocentrism is thus the process of (re)producing the systemic coherence and inescapability that Fisher (2009: 2) calls 'capitalist realism', "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative to it".

Instead of treating these 'reality effects' as a direct or unavoidable consequence of actually existing and prediscursive capital(ism), the point for Gibson-Graham is to enquire into how our always already heterogeneous and ambiguous coexistence (diverse economy) is organised in such restrictive, alienating and destructive ways that recognising more-than-capitalist alterity becomes a celebrated achievement, rather than the starting point of our collective negotiation (community economy). Thus, at

19 I use this formulation to keep open the question of capital's dominance, recorded in the name 'capital*ism*', but also to keep in mind the problem of hastily equating the problems of capitalocentric interpretation with anything that has 'ismic' (systemic, structural, generalised etc.) qualities to it. Thus, I seek to avoid reducing the problematic of capitalocentrism to capitalism understood as a systemic totalisation that blocks the visibility of a wider economic landscape in which the actually existing processes of 'capital' can fit (a reading that Gibson-Graham sometimes incentivises). As I will argue below, at the minimum, we should suspect that anything interpretable as capital is *already* marked by capitalocentric logics insofar as other interpretations have been omitted.

stake is not another compulsive proclamation that 'there are alternatives!' – this we should know by now – but rather the questioning of the capitalocentrically organised framework (of foreground/background, mainstream/alternative) from which *both* our 'alternatives' and their lack emerge (cf. Healy 2009; White & Williams 2016). The lack, marginalisation, homogeneity, peripherality, dependency, ephemerality and inconsequentiality of non-capitalist economies – including their summary as 'alternatives', as opposed to a supposed 'mainstream' – are all capitalocentric values that block, restrict and transmogrify the type of attention that they are bound to receive. Making this argument relies on a commitment to economic heterogeneity as the *starting point* – "[o]ther economies are already here!" (Gibson-Graham 2008b). Importantly, this is how 'capitalocentrism' differs from most frameworks of critical enquiry (e.g. the critique of ideology), and how an attention to it transforms what we see critique as doing.[20]

Gibson-Graham first frame capitalocentrism as a form of discourse, but this discursivity is not to be understood as somehow separate from supposedly more material concerns with 'reality'. As Miller (2019) highlights, it is capital that needs capitalocentric acts – or capitalo*centring*, as he calls it – around itself in order to organise an environment supportive of its interests: "Capital, in material practice and not just in performative discourse, *does actually seek to become the center*, even as this aspiration never fully succeeds" (2019: 79). Capital(ism) needs places where its facts can survive (cf. Mitchell 2008), and capitalocentring is the continuous organisation of its political-economic ground truths. That "capitalism is haunted by its discursivity" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 247) means that its facticity and inevitability – indeed, its being – require a continuous production and circulation of discourse that is threatened not only by actually existing more-than-capitalist economies but also by other discourses of economy that challenge *capitalocentric realism*. This problemage is not only restricted to speech and text as opposed to corporeal issues: "Capitalism is not just an economic signifier that can be displaced through deconstruction and the proliferation of signs. Rather, it is where the libidinal investment is" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: xv). Capitalocentrism, then, is also what undermines the desire for economies other than those centred on capitalist practices. Its phenomenological effects, in this sense, entail everything that 'pushes back' against those of us – and that part within us – desiring otherwise (Gibson-Graham 2006a; Healy 2010).

Capitalocentrism is thus a process of continuing subordination of non-capitalist economies, both as actually existing materialities and as politically realistic opportunities that warrant amplifying attention and energy. Insofar as capitalist realism makes sense, this sense-making is a product of performative construction, of capitalocentric realism. 'Capitalocentrism' is a keyword for taking this construction as an object of analysis. The challenge that Gibson-Graham (2008a) make becomes a jarring provocation for

20 I will not follow this argument explicitly in this thesis, but it seems to me that revisiting critiques of ideology, reading them anti-capitalocentrically, may be one necessary coordinate for future work on capitalocentrism. This is why I resist conceptualising capitalocentrism as a form of ideology, although this conceptual affinity is clear, and the critique of ideology would provide well-tested conceptual grounds and political strategies to mobilise. Precisely because such a connection would be so evident, it needs resisting. This is because frameworks of 'ideology' might provide crucial examples of how an attention to actually and already existing non-capitalist economies is omitted, and how a 'politics of postponement' (Gibson-Graham 2006a) works. Insofar as 'ideology' has rarely helped us engage with or recognise *already existing* non-capitalist economies, we may be well served by a suspicion of it. But also, we should not presuppose any theorisations of 'ideology' to be devoid of capitalocentrism on a *conceptual* level. In this sense, rushing to think capitalocentrism as another form of ideology would be a post/critical move par excellence, relying on ready-made critical frameworks that on the contrary ought to be rethought critically in view of capitalocentrism.

those engaged in critical praxis: we find ourselves *within* the problematic of reproducing capital(ism), because interpretations are inescapably entangled in a performative play of reinscribing and reconstituting reality. Instead of letting the critics within and around off the hook by describing capitalocentrism as another political-economic concept, phenomenon or object 'out there', Gibson-Graham show us a place *inside* it or in a space of competing hegemonic projects, some of which are characterised by a prevalence of capitalocentring.

This repositioning follows from a theorisation of performativity that introduces "a minimal distance between an object, such as an economy, and the ideas, theories, and words that constitute the object through description (law, social norms, and beliefs)" (Healy 2015a: 122). With capitalocentrism, we find ourselves *complicit* insofar as "it is the way capitalism has been 'thought' that has made it so difficult for people to imagine its supersession" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 4). That the critical identification and analysis of a "[c]apitalism [that] seamlessly occupies the horizons of the thinkable" (Fisher 2009: 8) is performatively entangled with this object – meaning that knowledge about capitalism is haunted by the undecidability between reflecting a pre-existing reality and performing it – becomes the contentious proposition. However, this entanglement alone does not make Gibson-Graham's contribution original or unique. The originality arises with a simultaneous assumption of economic heterogeneity on the ground and of non-predetermined (or overdetermined) relations of power. As Gibson-Graham (2006b) analyse through a number of cases, the critical examination of political-economic realities has often contributed to a conceptual and discursive economy that may produce strong theoretical explanations but is poorly equipped to reconsider its performative burdens vis-à-vis more-than-capitalist economies.

A glance at diverse economies research testifies to the crucial role that 'capitalocentrism' plays in identifying a problem and paving the way for solutions. For example, Gibson-Graham (2004) call attention to how capitalocentrism works within the poststructuralist rethinking of development as an unexamined centring of attention on capitalism as *the* economic system. An anti-capitalocentric strategy of reading for economic difference is proposed to unearth non-capitalist economies and possibilities in Papua New Guinea (see also Gibson-Graham & Ruccio 2001). In Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2013), 'capitalocentrism' is not mentioned, but the trope of an expert-controlled and self-contained 'machine economy' plays a similar role, as it names the alienating discursive-imaginative order that dumbs our agencies and capacities, thus calling for us to "take back the economy – any time, any place" (188). Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2016) examine how critical accounts regarding the commons often work within a capitalocentric framework, as exemplified by debates on "the new enclosures" (e.g. Hardt & Negri 2009) or the reduction of the commons into a property form, thus privileging "formal and abstract legalities at the expense of actual practices of maintaining or creating commons" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2016: 198). In contrast, an anti-capitalocentric strategy emerges to retrace historical processes of negotiation and struggle around different atmospheric commons in order to explore the power of renarrativisation and reframing for a more expansive sense of agency in the present.

The chapters comprising *The handbook of diverse economies* (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020b) give us a wide array of definitions and uses of capitalocentrism. At least four major uses, often intertwined, can be identified. First, there is the classical type of capitalocentrism, closest to Gibson-Graham's (1995) initial conceptualisation. This has to do with the binary structure of valuation in which non-capitalist economies are subordinated and treated primarily in reference to capitalist ones. Cameron's (2020: 29) example concerns

cooperatives, which in "the strong theory perspective of capitalocentrism" tend to be judged "as either lacking capitalism's cunning capacity to adapt or as being captured and sucked into capitalism's orbit". Second, there is a capitalocentrism that has to do with the centring of attention on the 'tip of the iceberg' and the deeply restricted understanding of 'economy' that this yields. In other words, capitalocentrism is a form of empirically, theoretically and politically poor economisation, and as such it also concerns exclusions (conceptual, political etc.) from 'the economic'. Simultaneously, it posits certain restricted values and drivers as central to economic actors. Thus, for instance, non-human labour is often excluded from economic thought (Barron & Hess 2020), land is thought mainly in terms of markets (Marx 2020), and the successes and failures of enterprises are valued according to the ridiculously flat indicator of profitability (White 2020).

Third, there is the spatially and temporally monolithic Capitalism, which does not need to take the form of explicit announcements. It can operate very well through implicit assumptions about the existing structurality, relationality and systemicity of economic life – all of which work to assume and reproduce specific capitalist relations instead of others. This also assigns specific teleological values to economic transformation on a 'system level', as in the case of "the assumed inevitability of the disappearance of reciprocal labour exchange" (Gibson 2020: 174), or in an understanding of 'globalisation' in which "there is little that can be done to challenge or disrupt the power held by global elites" (McKinnon 2020: 124). Fourth, capitalocentrism is also seen as a mode of subjection and production (and inhibition) of desire, in which certain subject positions, forms of agency and ways of feeling are more legitimate – and proper to economic life – than others. Thus, people tend to find it difficult to "see themselves outside of capitalism" (Roelvink 2020: 428) in the sense of the subject positions it offers and demands. If "[i]n capitalocentric discourse the *capitalist* entrepreneur is at the heart of the economic process" (North 2020: 99), this means the continuous fostering of specific values within individuals and collectives. Importantly, awakening to *this* form of capitalocentrism leads us to reconsider the specific values and tasks assigned to the work of research and its role in economic life (Liu *et al.* 2020).

Capitalocentrism thus allows diverse economists the chance to make visible its "overwhelmingly neocolonial approach to thinking about the world, one which erases the diverse epistemological, ontological and even cosmological standpoints of peoples everywhere" (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020a: 17). Each case, each 'capitalocentrism', is slightly different. This variety, and the various roles the notion gets to play in different analyses, has rarely if ever been analysed in itself. Most of the time, the notion passes as a link between a present analysis and its diverse-economic precedents. On the one hand, a somewhat cynical reading might suspect that 'capitalocentrism' comes to denote *anything* deemed undesirable or unproductive from a diverse-economic perspective. This would make it into an all-purpose concept with a polemical rather than conceptually rigorous role. The name 'capitalocentrism' would then appear as a quick tag allowing the delineation of a largely pre-theorised problematic and its equally hasty solution in whatever appears as its 'alternative'. On the other hand, we could approach this diversity as honest, situated and therefore differentiated attempts at working with a heterogeneous problematic. This would suggest that we have in our hands something amorphous, something haunting, and something that is decidedly *not* 'in our hands' – something not reducible to any of its present manifestations.

Both of these readings have their uses, as we will see. But in any case, it needs underlining how central the trope of capitalocentrism is. It allows Gibson-Graham to differentiate their thinking strategies from those of others:

> "Working against the condensations and displacements that structure the discourse of capitalocentrism, we have produced an unruly economic landscape of particular, nonequivalent meanings. Our objective has been to dis-order the capitalist economic landscape, to queer it and thereby dislocate capitalocentrism's hegemony" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 77).

This differentiation, this judgement, is thus in a sense a key *critical* notion in Gibson-Graham, even as it motivates an outspoken denouncement of (paranoid) critique understood as lamentation and mastery (Gibson-Graham 2008a). The coining of 'capitalocentrism' is motivated by the construction of non-capitalist economies, and it seeks to displace the hegemonic and politically counterproductive view of a monolithic economic system. This is no picnic: "To achieve this I must smash Capitalism and see it in a thousand pieces. I must make its unity a fantasy, visible as a denial of diversity and change" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 263–264). The imperative tone gives away just how invested the coining of 'capitalocentrism', and Gibson-Graham's feminist critique of political economy more generally, is in *negation* (see Miller 2013; Madra & Özselçuk 2015). Also, it might be a good indication of how congested and disabling the affective space of theorising capitalism (as we knew it) was at the time of *The end of capitalism* – and of the energetic surge needed from Gibson-Graham (2006b: 13) to "get out of this capitalist place", *then and there*. Yet this thrust to "dis-order" and "queer" a discursive hegemony should not cajole us into ignoring how their work thrives on the insights and blindnesses of critical political economy each time a specific capitalocentric situation is recognised.

2.3 Post/Critical Trajectories: Taming Capitalocentrism

Wherever capitalocentrism is found, then, we also find a Gibson-Graham or diverse economies scholar invested in critique and negation, and in the view of possibilities emanating from diverse and community economies. Gibson-Graham's propositions for affirmations and experimentality find purchase in the critical decomposition of capitalocentric hierarchies of valuation and imagination. Thus, when Gibson-Graham (2008a: 618) ask "how do we disinvest in our paranoid practices of critique and mastery and undertake thinking that can energize and support 'other economies'?" perhaps we should not take this disinvestment too lightly – nor take their prescription as a substitute for watching how they move. As Heather Love (2010: 239) puts it in her guide to reading Sedgwick without dismissing the aggression and negativity that is so central to her thinking: "[W]e do Sedgwick a disservice when we read her solely through a reparative mode. A reading of her work as all about love suggests that we are not listening to her, nor watching how she moves". Similarly, I wish to highlight the criticality and negation alongside the affirmative elements of Gibson-Graham, reading the former firstly as signs of the inescapable heterogeneity of their work, and secondly as testimony to the richness of their thinking strategies. As Miller (2013) makes clear, there are different voices within Gibson-Graham. We might add, paraphrasing Derrida's (2006: 41–42) remark on Marx, that we do not have to suppose Gibson-Graham to be in agreement with themselves (cf. Sharpe 2014). To appreciate critical impulses is to come to terms with an important part of what motivates and animates the diverse economies approach.

By way of doing so, I want to suggest that a 'post/critical reading'[21] risks sidelining and disavowing such impulses and thus foreclosing their potential. The post/critical denotes here a partial tendency of reading, rather than any systematic categorisation or full disclosure of 'how capitalocentrism is read today'. It is, in other words, an invitation to think, a theoretical object to work with, perhaps even a 'straw man' to provoke (cf. Gibson-Graham 2006b: 10). I am interesting in tracing how 'capitalocentrism' is used, and how its work depends upon a recurring structure or strategy of argumentation, a one-way movement from critique (of capitalocentrism) to affirmation (of diverse and community economies). Again, the point is not to diminish the power and effectiveness of such a movement. I keep on practising its force myself, proceeding time after time from capitalocentrism to its alternatives. Rather, the point is to ask what drawbacks can issue from a generalisation of this trajectory into a culture of thinking coextensive with the critical vocabulary introduced by Gibson-Graham. Calling these tendencies post/critical is meant as an invitation to collective work around the status of critique in diverse economies research. Let us briefly examine three intertwined characteristics of such a reading.

First, when capitalocentrism is identified as a problem in contemporary work, it most often appears as one form of transparent 'economic discourse' among other options. Definitions almost invariably cite *The end of capitalism* (Gibson-Graham 2006b), almost as if, in that book, critique and theorisation of capitalocentric economic discourse were both established *and* accomplished. This is even though the notion has a much more solid presence in *A postcapitalist politics* (Gibson-Graham 2006a).[22] The possibility that, rather than being a general theory or transcontextual concept, 'capitalocentrism' might have been introduced as a situated and strategic move – in a context unavoidably different

21 Again, Sedgwick's readership provides inspiration and exemplary debates on the fate of critique and its others. In a recent edited volume on 'postcritique' that also very much echoes Sedgwick's work, Anker and Felski (2017b: 1) define the 'post-' of their 'postcritique' as "a complex temporality: an attempt to explore fresh ways of interpreting literary and cultural texts that acknowledges, nonetheless, its inevitable dependency on the very practices it is questioning". My 'post/critical', as the slash tells it, is reserved for a practice that seeks to overcome critique in a one-way movement to get beyond it. Its temporality – at least if we are to believe the trajectory explicitly provided by post/critical readings – has nothing of the complexity of postcritique. The slash is a somewhat violent effort to enforce a distinction between the postprefixation and its stem. Outside this chapter, I will refrain from using it much and prefer the brilliantly ambiguous possibilities of the English postprefix (see Kocourek 1996).

22 While *The end of capitalism* undoubtedly took 'capitalocentrism' to the fore and is referenced as *the* authoritative take on capitalocentrism, references to the notion itself are fewer in *The end of capitalism* (17) than in *A postcapitalist politics* (46). In *The end of capitalism*, the last mention of the notion is on page 88, meaning that most of the book operates without 'capitalocentrism' in sight (at least in name), and the notion does not offer a privileged conceptual anchor for the argument as a whole. In *A postcapitalist politics*, by contrast, references are scattered all over, and the debate on capitalocentrism continues vividly in the endnotes. Looking at the academic references (according to Google Scholar), between 1995 and 2005 there were 123 references to either 'capitalocentric' or 'capitalocentrism', including contributions from Gibson-Graham themselves. Since 2006, there are 1,090 new hits from this search. Arguably, it was *A postcapitalist politics* that consolidated the centrality of capitalocentrism in Gibson-Graham's vocabulary and, through repetition with difference, made it fly. It is thus all the more central to study the differences between the two works, keeping in mind that many of us encountered the books only in or after 2006, the year the second editions of both *The end of capitalism* and *A postcapitalist politics* were published. For my argument here, it may not be inconsequential that the first mention of 'capitalocentric' in *A postcapitalist politics* is one that rehearses the accomplishments of *The end of capitalism* by reminding the reader of the 'deconstruction' of capitalocentrism *accomplished* in the previous book, "[l]iberating the 'non-capitalist' occupied zone […] while at the same time dislocating the (discursive) dominance of capitalism" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxiv). In this sense, 'capitalocentrism' is born (again) as a post/deconstructive notion.

from this one, now, wherever and whenever that is – is rarely posed. The authority of *The end of capitalism* has the performative effect of locating critique-cum-capitalocentrism as a past project, done then and there, and one that works as an adequate theoretical background for affirmative work done in the present and future. A disposition towards affirmative ends seems to translate into an underlying binary structure of negation–affirmation, with its one-way pathway always oriented towards the latter. Critical energies are cited from a position that has already moved beyond them by "disinvest[ing] in our paranoid practices or critique and mastery" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 618).

Gibson-Graham (2006a: 98) carefully point out that "any attempt to fix the fantasy of common being […] closes off the opportunity to cultivate ethical praxis", thus insisting on a continuous need to open up categories and practices, or what Miller (2013: 522) calls "the unworking of common-being". This is a central tenet in the concepts of both diverse economies and community economies. Yet on the one hand, capitalocentrism seems to escape such conceptual reopening, while on the other, its 'unworking' capacities as a challenge to other concepts and practices are largely left underexamined. When the problematic that capitalocentrism indexes is not situated within a certain theoretical-political project and historical-geographical moment – e.g. within specific debates on Marxist and feminist political economy in 1990s American-Australian academia – and when its complex interplay with other notions and projects is left unreflected – e.g. by isolating 'capitalocentrism' as a synecdoche for Gibson-Graham's critical energies (I plead guilty) – the possibility ensues to avoid problematising it *in situ*. The partial and carefully articulated 'theoretical object' or 'straw man' (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 10) of capitalocentrism becomes a common noun that circulates well and to various effects. That capitalocentrism is not One is evident in practice, and yet it is used (and not reflected, problematised) as if it were.

My point is not to categorise these effects as 'good' or 'bad', or to lament the inflation of an original act of genius (from a theoretical invention to 'mere' empirical appliance). However, it is worth noting that the proliferation of diverse and community economies scholarship *relies* on the trope of capitalocentrism, as it acts as a shorthand for unhelpful kinds of economic discourse. Despite this reliance and the variety of its manifestations, I have still to see the question posed of how exactly to recognise capitalocentrism when we see it. Nor is there much reflection available on what it means to both (representationally) identify and (performatively) enact capitalocentrism in the process of its naming. It seems that we already know what capitalocentrism looks like, so recognising it 'out there' is a no-brainer. The lack of epistemic questioning makes it all too easy to believe that we recognise capitalocentrism whenever we see it – suggesting, furthermore, that wherever it *exists*, we will (be able to) recognise it. Accordingly, the resulting task is quite simply to speak differently, *without* capitalocentrism. What if we instead identified in capitalocentrism an open question and a task, "a space of pregnant negativity" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxiii–xxxiv), an invitation "to enter rather than end the conversation" (Gibson-Graham 2008b: 157)?

Second, when the problem of capitalocentrism is discussed, its potential to problematise is delimited and restricted, and its critical affordances are tamed. Instead of a continuous, ambiguous and polymorphic problematic that haunts us, we are left with a seemingly well-behaving singular problem. While Gibson-Graham's approach works carefully to dislocate any 'global coverage' or 'total penetration' of *capitalism*, capitalocentrism is a different sort of beast: "In its current hegemonic articulation as neoliberal global capitalism, capitalocentric discourse *has now colonized the entire economic landscape* and its universalizing claims *seem* to have been realized" (2006a: 55; my emphasis). That is,

while the *objects* of capitalocentric discourse have only *seemingly* been realised (meaning that capitalism is not everything there is), *the discourse itself* has successfully "colonised the entire economic landscape". To think economies and economic difference otherwise, in order to foster non-capitalist possibility, we need to "revitalize the economic imaginary by freeing it from *the leaden grip of capitalocentrism*" (Gibson-Graham 2003: 125; my emphasis). Most often known to be 'hegemonic', 'prevalent' or 'dominant', capitalocentrism has a deft sense of normativity coded into it. Indeed, Gibson-Graham's (2020c) newest reiteration of the term is 'capitalonormativity', echoing Sedgwick's (1994: 6) famous lists of characteristics of family and sexuality that are supposed to 'line up' in heterosexist formations. The normativity of 'capitalonormativity' seems to *restrict* and *exclude* (the recognition of) economic heterogeneity in a repressive way (cf. Wiegman & Wilson 2015). Although Gibson-Graham (2006a: 8) work hard to (help us) "imagin[e] a terrain on which the success of one project need not come at the expense of another", 'capitalocentrism' is not one of *such* projects. It does not coexist; it dominates, excludes and colonises the territory.

While capitalism gets shattered and dislocated in Gibson-Graham's provocative readings, capitalocentrism often names a more solid ground to push against. Interestingly, insofar as capitalocentrism thus replaces capitalism as *the* problem to be tackled, introducing a new organisation of performative problematics, this new theoretical object behaves much like capitalism (as we knew it): as a unity, singularity and totality (see Gibson-Graham 2006b). This is all the more curious because, however 'discursive', these operations of capitalocentrism seem to run counter to Gibson-Graham's own understanding of language:

> "A language is fluid and mobile, not easily confined to a particular location or scale. Unlike a blueprint, it provides the contours and emphases of other worlds but cannot tell you what to say. It can share the space of power with other languages without having to 'overthrow' them" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxiv).

Perhaps so, but then again, this makes the sort of language that capitalocentrism designates *and* the notion itself, characterised as these are by their exclusivity and normativity, something other than language – blueprints perhaps?

However, this 'hegemonised' problematic proves to be surprisingly easy to overcome due to its 'discursive' nature. Capitalocentrism almost invariably gets discussed in close textual, theoretical and strategic proximity to its (apparent) solutions, most notably the language of diverse economies, as if we had neither need nor time to question the nature the problem. It is illustrative that the diverse-economic iceberg (see Figure 1 in my introduction) has become such a trademark visualisation of the whole diverse economies perspective. It offers a naivistically simple juxtaposition of privilege and exclusion, or attention and hiddenness, and a comforting metaphor of (in)visibility and emancipation that takes place wherever the iceberg is presented and experienced as a moment of revelation. It is a powerful pedagogical tool (see Byrne 2003; Centre for Plausible Economics 2020), but it also carries its own simplistic assumptions about the problems and solutions at stake. In general, unlike 'ideology' for instance, capitalocentrism does not risk paranoia; it promises no trickery, and definitely no nonsense. It is the clean and disposable conceptual lens used to demystify monolithic capitalism. Or so we think. Despite its being overcome and dislocated time and again, making room for a language of diversity instead, there is something haunting in the continuous returns of/to capitalocentrism. Not only does it seem to be frantically repeated in order to be dislocated everywhere, but its size and topology also seem to grow in time.

As a framework of repression and acquittal, a post/critical capitalocentrism does not allow a particularly heterogeneous field of power to work with. That capitalocentric practices might not be all and always unproductive for non-capitalist construction is one foreclosed implication. For example, consider the case of financial hacking or hacktivism that learns from the newest financial technologies to use them against or despite capitalist profiteering (Alhojärvi 2020b). Such activism is riddled with capitalocentric motivations, hierarchies and blind spots, which reproduce images of financial 'heartlands' and emancipatory (and capital-intensive) 'high tech' as well as visions of a singular, more or less capitalist 'global economy' – if only to suggest it all *can*, or indeed *will*, be changed, by just this app or that crypto project. Corporeal forms of capitalocentrisms, akin to the operation of the 'machine economy' (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013) that restricts agencies and capabilities, are reproduced in the gender dynamics and social-technical bottlenecks that keep on restricting the economic grammar and social accessibility of activism around financial technologies, all the while imagining a transparent reprogrammability of their objects. These 'machine economies' order the ways economies are represented and reprogrammed, and they reproduce unfortunate hierarchies of expertise and capacity. But this is not the end of the story, since troublesome hierarchies and power dynamics are *also* openings that can allow us to work with capitalocentrism as a continuous problematic. This would necessitate serious exploration of the meanings and effects of capitalocentrism in different contexts, thus building up a sense of what the notion can achieve and how it is to be distinguished from what it is not. What if we treated capitalocentrism not as an object already known, an issue that is either fully prevalent (capitalocentric hegemony) or happily overcome (problem no more), and more as an invitation to situated retheorisations – to diversifying, dislocating and reclaiming? How would we read for difference *in capitalocentrism* in order to "deexoticize power, accepting it as our mundane, pervasive, uneven milieu" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 8)?

Third, while capitalocentrism was first introduced to name a problematic, complicitous space in which we find ourselves as analysts of capital(ism), and as a challenge to reinvent critical praxis so as not to reproduce a restricted sense of possibility, it is now often framed through distantiation – as a problem of others, and a problem 'out there'. This links to the 'intuitive' recognition of the primary forms and sites of its existence. Instead of being a destabilising notion, a field in the process of deconstruction, capitalocentrism is something *we* are invited to 'destabilise' (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 623), 'refute' (White & Williams 2016: 326), 'deconstruct' (Barron 2015: 173; Werner 2015: 77) and 'reveal' (McKinnon *et al.* 2018: 337), as well as 'debunk' and 'displace' (Escobar 1999: 60). Instead of its being a challenge to ourselves or a thorny issue within our projects, we get a solid grasp of the problem in order to proceed to solutions. The transparent object is coupled with and available to capable, self-conscious subjects. Again, it is noteworthy that a temporal dynamic is at play, so that the representational distance to capitalocentrism is established through Gibson-Graham's past work: "[w]hat Gibson-Graham's vision of economic difference did was to *liberate* these [non-capitalist] practices from 'capitalocentrism'" (St Martin *et al.* 2015: 3; my emphasis). This liberated zone of *non*-capitalocentrism provides a stable ground for 'performing alternatives' *outside* the gravitational (discursive, attentional, libidinal etc.) pull of capital(ism).

A good illustration of these three characteristics of a post/critical capitalocentrism is offered by one of Gibson-Graham's (2020a) latest contributions, "Capitalocentrism and its discontents", a short text published as part of the book *Museum of capitalism*, itself published alongside an exhibition with the same name initiated in Oakland,

California.[23] In their contribution, Gibson-Graham once again rehearse the characteristics of capitalocentric discourse, but this time written from the future, as it were, in a past tense, testifying to a position of knowing that comes after capitalocentrism to record it as a "mode of thinking that came to dominate all academic and policy discourse in the late 20th century" (1). In a short space, Gibson-Graham concentrate on the argument that capitalocentrism was a discursive normalisation of capitalist relations out of synch with the diversity of actually existing economies as well as the ethical and political injunctions of the Anthropocene. None of these were recorded in 'mainstream economic thought' or the paranoid versions of critique. The dramatisation culminates in ecological devastations that forced home the realisation that economies had to be about more than the 'tip of the iceberg'.

What makes this short text particularly interesting for our purposes is the fact that its description of capitalocentrism ("a certain kind of paranoia [that] took over"; "the near impossibility of thinking outside capitalism") has remarkably few characteristics that are *unlike* capitalism (as we knew it) as analysed in *The end of capitalism*. The argument underlines explicitly the way that capitalocentrism almost invariably dominates the space of economic thought, and its domination seems to be of an exclusive and repressive kind. The only change comes towards the end of the text, as a vague promise of another, presumably postcapitalocentric discourse of economy 'filtering' through: "And yet… […] a certain light filtered through. The self-organizing aspects of markets began to pick up and amplify emerging possibilities. The faint stutterings of a new language of post-capitalist livelihood assemblages started to be heard" (3). The dramatic allure here is clear, characterising capitalocentrism as a more or less all-dominating hegemony, and its alternatives as 'the faint stutterings' of a future from without. Interestingly, the text mobilises a hefty quantity of passive verbs, and the only active verbs are almost reserved for capitalocentrism. Capitalocentrism is presented as an underlying structure or an overlaying ideology that makes everyone do and think in a specific way, or as an economy of attachment/affect devoid of situated, ambiguous, contradictory, intentional, unconscious agents – say, people.

Also, whatever capitalocentrism is in this text, it does not seem particularly differentiated. The overriding temporalities of "the late 20th century" and "the first quarter of the 21st century" communicate a shared temporality exacerbated by the undeniably common temporalities of "anthropogenic climate change" and "the long Holocene summer", now abruptly ending. This sharedness of an undifferentiated capitalocentric space is confirmed by the past tense employed in the text. Arriving to us from a future 'after' capitalism *and* capitalocentrism, perhaps, the stage is set for a dramatisation of (almost) full capitalocentric dominance and, at last, "the faint stutterings of a new language" emanating from a future increasingly responsive to the diverse realities of economy. A future, perhaps, as free from capitalocentrism as 'the' present is dominated by it. Finally, the text speaks from a peculiarly unpositioned position, untypically for JK Gibson-Graham. Just what allows the author to channel this message to us from the future, "a certain light filter[ing] through", is left unclear. This is unfortunate, since "the near impossibility of thinking outside capitalism" provides us with a heroic task of seeking the (near) impossible, and the way the authors have accomplished the task and escaped the reach of 'paranoia' could provide useful lessons for the rest of us, mired as we are in capitalocentric times.

23 As I have not been able to access this book, I am referring to the three-page manuscript Katherine Gibson kindly sent me, acknowledging that the published version of the text may vary slightly.

Left unexplained, the status of the authors' knowledge makes a curious effect, and the conviction of the text starts to wobble. As a reader in the postcapitalist fold, I am tempted by two unorthodox, perhaps irresolvably different interpretations: first, that the authors might not be as free from capitalocentrism as they profess, that there might be remains of capitalocentrism in this postscript, and perhaps even in the future thus imagined. My inner paranoia puts out the haunting question: what if this future voice that is received is not post/capitalocentric, but on the contrary, yet another manifestation of it? How and why are we to trust this profession? Second, *if* we assume that the authors indeed know *without* capitalocentrism, from a place *beyond* it, what would account for their argument that the rest of us do not? Why would we keep up such an epistemic hierarchy, if we were serious about the end of capitalocentrism? Might we instead need to think that the light filtering through, the light of non-capitalocentrism, might be closer than in '*the* future'…?

This post/critical setting[24] summons questions: to the extent that we find ourselves in a place that is 'beyond' capitalocentrism, what does this tell us of the problem of capitalocentrism that we have thus 'overcome'? How will the question have been identified, justified and governed for us to find ourselves having answered it? Take, for example, a simple commodity – such as the peer-reviewed essay that introduced an earlier version of my argument in this chapter (Alhojärvi 2020a). Is it controversial to call it a commodity? No, insofar as it is undoubtedly entangled in relations of 'academic capitalism' (Barnett & Low 1996; Paasi 2005; Gidwani 2008: 233–245). Is calling it a commodity capitalocentric? It depends on how we inscribe this commodityness alongside and within other, *always* more-than-capitalist economies, and how we trace the heterogeneous relations also taking place within and beside whatever is capitalistic about it: the paywalls transgressed, the unpaid work performed, the uncalculated waste produced, the mutual aid reciprocated etc. To the extent that we make the 'small facts' speak to the 'large concerns' of academic capitalism (cf. Gibson-Graham 2014a), we might need to question the capitalocentric *effects* of our interpretations, and to ask our framings to produce more room for action.

But perhaps the more jarring question is: would it be capitalocentric *not* to also call the published essay (also) a capitalist commodity? If capitalocentrism concerns the reproduction of capitalist common sense – the unquestionability, incontestability and irreplaceability of capitalist value(s) – then would not a silence about what is capitalist in the production and distribution of those words there (or these right here) be a primary example of capitalocentrism? Would this not mean that calling out capitalocentrism proceeds *via* a recognition of capitalist economies *followed by* their reinscription within a more-than-capitalist economy – as if the latter step were a supplementary, even parasitic procedure to a critique of political economy? And if *this* is the case, then does it not mean that capitalocentrism is, more or less, *everywhere*,

24 The prevalence of this setting is an interesting question, which I consider necessary to keep open. Again, the point is not to make a definite argument about how capitalocentrism is supposedly understood everywhere 'today'; nor do I wish to equate 'readings' with whatever values I am bound to read in these texts now. Readings are complex, and they are to come. Thus, my intentions are more modest – and I am conscious of the contradictorily performative work done in naming the 'post/critical'. Nevertheless, if I hold back from 'naming names' in discussing post/critical tendencies, it is because I consider them prevalent, if not exclusive, treatments of the problematic. For empirical illustration, though, it is worth revisiting *The handbook of diverse economies* (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020b). In the more than 70 varieties of 'capitalocentric' and 'capitalocentrism' in the book (including some in my own two contributions), I find practically no sign of *other than* post/critical takes on the term.

in all economic silences, unless they are broken through a critical analysis of their inscription within capitalist economies *and* their further reinscription in prismatic economies?

There is no way of getting beyond a problem unless it has been predefined or assumed as overcomeable – and perhaps, no formulation of a problem *whatsoever* without a minimal sheltering behind it, the problem thus serving as a protective shield (see Derrida 1993: 11–12). This is not to argue against decisions between more or less capitalocentric economic discourses or performatives – deciding and acting upon those decisions is indispensable – but rather, it is the smoothness and automatisation of these operations that raises my suspicion. What if, instead of a promise of liberation, we were to posit capitalocentrism as that which already *haunts* our perception of economy? As something that precedes, enables and restricts *my* intuition and sensibility (as in making sense, and as availability to the senses) – my being? Furthermore, what possible use could such an undoubtedly paranoid thinking strategy, to echo Sedgwick's vocabulary, yield? What would happen if we were to admit the imposing force with which capitalocentrism makes us repeat its name time and again, in context after context?

To conclude, these post/critical tendencies – which are always partial, unexhaustive and themselves multiple – seem to produce a setting that is too stable, and a kind of problem that does not fail to comfort us. Such a capitalocentrism is an already accomplished theoretical and empirical task, a tamed problem that imposes no need for situated reopenings and unworkings. Again, this is not to argue that such a problem is without benefits. Proceeding "beyond capitalocentricism" (White & Williams 2016), "outside of a capitalocentric frame" (Gibson-Graham 2014b: S149) and "outside the confines and strictures of capitalocentrism" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2016: 195) undoubtedly grants force to postcapitalist praxis, "relocat[ing] the *place* of the economy away from its capitalocentric moorings" (Chakrabarti *et al.* 2018: 300). Each of these 'beyonds' enables an economic landscape and a politics worth exploring. Appearing always on the verge of its overcoming, capitalocentrism names something we can and will need to resist, and something recognised as constraining and in need of replacement. As the Free Association (2010: 1028) has it, "[i]t's difficult to start swimming in open water: it's much easier to push off against something". This is an important role for a problem, and we might well end the discussion (and this thesis) here and proceed to other things. Yet if the development of a more adaptive and perceptive postcapitalist politics is our aim, associating capitalocentrism with an already accomplished theoretical task and a past critical phase might leave us with a problem that is *too* easy, in the sense of restricting our hold on its (potential) problemage and on the critical skills necessary to negotiate it. How might we think of capitalocentrism productively as something that needs to be confronted and negotiated repeatedly, as a problem whose absence might testify not only to its overcoming but also to an underexplored political and theoretical ground?

2.4 Reading Capitalocentrism for Trouble

To recap, capitalocentrism has critical status within Gibson-Graham's framework, but its criticality is simultaneously tamed by its placement within a post/critical trajectory. This is strengthened by a certain reading of Sedgwick's vocabulary that picks up 'weak theory' and 'reparative reading' as if these objects could be safely and methodologically

distinguished from their counterparts.[25] This is made all the easier by Gibson-Graham's narration of their own post/critical trajectory:

> "When we look back on our previous lives as radical geographers, we recognize our role as critical academics in inventing and consolidating a certain sort of capitalism by endowing it with encompassing power, generalizing its dynamics and organizations, and enlarging the spaces of its agency" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 625–626).

This kind of critique is associated with paranoid mastery, a judgemental attitude, and an economic strong theory that cannot but explain it all according to its familiar terms, producing a hostile rather than enabling environment for other-than-capitalist economies. Instead, argue Gibson-Graham, an experimental approach is needed – one that is "*very different from* the critical task of assessing the ways in which it is good or bad, strong or weak, mainstream or alternative" (628; my emphasis). Moreover, they propose tools such as the diverse economies identifier table, which "contains *minimal* critical content" (619; my emphasis) and is thus better equipped to help "perform a different economy".

Without delving into the details of this affirmative framework and the way Sedgwick conforms to it – or does not – I wish to restate here her argument's motivation by a "great loss when paranoid inquiry comes to seem entirely coextensive with critical theoretical inquiry rather than being viewed as one kind of cognitive/affective theoretical practice among other, alternative kinds" (Sedgwick 2003: 126). Note the phrasing 'comes to seem'. In a typically elegant twist, Sedgwick laments not the extensiveness of paranoid enquiry per se, but rather the way it is equated with criticism as such – how we become increasingly blind to *other* critical practices. This is how the size and topology of the theory grows, by becoming seemingly coextensive with the territory as such. Again, the problem is not with critique, but rather with its equation with a specific set of practices and vocabularies. The danger is

> "that the broad consensual sweep of such methodological assumptions […] unintentionally impoverish[es] the gene pool of literary-critical perspectives and skills. The trouble with a shallow gene pool, of course, is its diminished ability to respond to environmental (e.g., political) change" (144).

Let us now return to capitalocentrism and attempt to read it in a way that does not allow a 'shallow gene pool' that marginalises its critical impulses.[26] As Miller (2019:

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25 Importantly, the easy equation of diverse economies with weak theory is problematised in a few endnotes in *A postcapitalist politics* (see Gibson-Graham 2006a: 204 n8, 205 n15, 205–206 n18), but these observations are easily lost under the more tempting reading that finds in Gibson-Graham a solid and prescriptive (weak, reparative) framework.

26 Although Sedgwick (2003) constructs temptingly binary vocabulary (paranoia–reparation; strong theory–weak theory), she also repeatedly issues warnings against treating her work as yet another opportunity for routinised thought or mimicked movements. At stake are not stable categories but layered, shifting and relational positions or tendencies. Moreover, throughout her essay, she practises what she preaches (that is, not only one thing). She repeatedly characterises her own work as an interweaving of strong and weak theory, paranoid and reparative stances (144, 145). For her, "strong theoretical constructs interact with weak ones in the ecology of knowing – an exploration that obviously can't proceed without a respectful interest in weak as well as strong theoretical acts" (145). As Ben Anderson (2011: 129) puts it, Sedgwick's "problem is with any theoretical manoeuvre that becomes *automatic*, translated from a problematic into a deadened habit, moving from a question that forces us to think to a routine to be mastered and repeated". Accordingly, "Sedgwick reminds us to

27–28) proposes, we must hedge the risks of paranoia and negotiate, "*know*[*ing*] that the articulation generated is performative, is implicated in and complicit with that which is represented, yet pursu[ing] the work nonetheless", from "no noncomplicit place". As he continues: "[c]ritique *is* dangerous, and *so is our refusal of it*" (27). Perhaps Donna Haraway's (2016) practice of 'staying with the trouble' (as opposed to avoiding, solving or overcoming it) is what we need to experiment with, embracing the haunting space of performative complicity and entanglement that 'capitalocentrism' announces. But how are we *to stay* with a trouble that we do not *have* in the first place – or any longer? And why would we want to get (back) into such trouble? "Our task is to make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events", writes Haraway, "as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places" (1). With this in mind, I propose an additional "anticapitalocentric reading" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 72) of capitalocentrism itself – one entertaining the "delightful" (Wright 2017) energies of suspicion, complicity and the continuous reinvention of critique. Or a strategy of *reading for trouble* to accompany (and challenge) its by now well-established sibling of "reading for difference rather than dominance" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxi–xxxii).

Let us return to Gibson-Graham's anti-essentialist affinities with Derrida's deconstruction in order to explore some critical possibilities (see Gibson-Graham 2000, 2006b, 2020c). Now, to equate deconstruction with critique is not an unproblematic gesture (see e.g. Gasché 1987). The sort of critical deconstruction I am interested in pivots on Derrida's (2006: 115) characterisation of "this attempted radicalization of Marxism called deconstruction". A radicalisation that is an explicit act of inheritance – "a radicalization is always indebted to the very thing it radicalizes" (116) – and "where inheritance is more than ever a critical and transformative filter" (128). As Stella Gaon (2018: 209) has it, deconstruction can be seen "as a form of 'critique' insofar as it allows us not only to see but to intervene in what *in particular* is harmed by or closed off from a *specific* prescription or norm or ethical good, in a *specific* case, and in a *particular* social, political and historical context". Among other things, this means that the critical force of deconstruction, insofar as there is one, must attend to the specificities of heterogeneous capitalocentrisms in whatever situation, "to bear against the dogmatisms, chauvinisms, racisms (and so on) that constitute the social order" (209).

To rehearse the so-called origins of 'capitalocentrism', Gibson-Graham (1995: 278 n6) introduce the term by way of an analogy with Grosz's feminist theorisation of 'phallocentrism'. In her theorisation of phallocentrism, deconstruction and feminism, Grosz (1995) argues that deconstruction proposes to feminism the fundamental and jarring challenge of complicity, which "refuses the idea of a space beyond or outside, the fantasy of a position insulated from what it criticizes and disdains" (62). This means that feminism is already implicated in patriarchy and phallocentrism, constitutively bound to the objects of its critique. As we have seen, a similar complicity or constitutive binding is precisely what Gibson-Graham propose as taking place in capitalocentrism – a performative entanglement with capital(ism), and an investment in marginalising its others. But what happens if we imagine an unrelenting complicity not only with different economic practices and relations, but also *with capitalocentrism* – the capitalocentring tendencies of thought and praxis?

This would mean finding ourselves in a space of mediacy (or a discursive space) always already partly constituted by capitalocentrism, profoundly troubling any (self-)

worry away about the strength of *any* theory, the becoming habitual of its questions, procedures and sensibilities" (129; my emphasis).

positioning outside its purview. Were we to understand capitalocentrism as an economic metaphysics, it would, like metaphysics more generally, invite a task not of (immediate, absolute, unproblematic etc.) transgression, but rather of skilled attentiveness, selective inheritance and critical interpretation:

> "The quality and fecundity of a discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which this relation to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought" (Derrida 1978: 282: 356).

In this view, capitalocentrism becomes something that precedes and preconditions any effort to overcome, solve or even identify it. This means not presupposing its problematic to consist of a transparent 'economic discourse' (understood in the sense of speaking and writing as 'present' in situations and objects) fully available to our analyses and negotiation (see Rose 1997a), but instead a more troubled, compromised and suspicious terrain of recurring, situated work. This would mean 'discourse' becoming a constantly changing but structurally inherited social fabric instead of an ownable, delineable object governed by sovereign subjects of language.

Any claims to post/capitalocentric transgression would need to be treated with suspicion, with an eye on the "old cloth" (Derrida 1981b: 24) that such claims of transgression both intervene in and reproduce. Our concern would be raised by the possibility that capitalocentrism does not leave us in peace: that 'it' precedes, enables, restricts, stays and haunts in ways that are irreducible to definite localisations, calculable manifestations or recognisable subjects – "*es spukt*", as Derrida (2006: 216) writes of the amorphous and atopical *revenant*.[27] We would need to suspect that what emerges as intelligible or sensible might already be (to an extent) constituted by a capitalocentric logic, responding to its call. As we have seen in the introduction, Derridean inheritance has a double structure: on the one hand, an inevitable, binding and preconstitutive legacy, and on the other hand, a multiplicity of legacies to filter, rearrange and reaffirm:

> "What does it mean to reaffirm? It means not simply accepting this heritage but relaunching it otherwise and keeping it alive. Not choosing it (since what characterizes a heritage is first of all that one does not choose it; it is what violently elects us), but choosing to keep it alive" (Derrida 2004: 3).

As an inheritance, in its "radical and necessary *heterogeneity*" (Derrida 2006: 16), capitalocentrism would need negotiation in our deeply limited yet absolutely indispensable capacities for reflection and intervention. As Gibson-Graham explain their trajectory vis-à-vis deconstruction, their

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27 As Derrida explains *es spukt* (in Peggy Kamuf's translation): "[i]ts translation always fails, unfortunately, to render the link between the impersonality or the quasi-anonymity of an operation [*spuken*] without act, without real subject or object, and the production of a figure, that of the *revenant* [*der Spuk*]: not simply 'it spooks,' as we just ventured to translate, but 'it returns,' 'it ghosts,' 'it specters'" (2006: 166). "*It is a matter* [Il s'agit], in the neutrality of this altogether impersonal verbal form, of something or someone, neither someone nor something, of a 'one' that does not act. *It is a matter* rather of the passive movement of an apprehension, of an apprehensive movement ready to welcome, but where?"(216). *Es spukt*, or *kummittelee* (cf. Kauppinen 1994: 163). For more ghosts, see chapter five.

> "decision *not* to privilege the dominance and spread of capitalist class relations cleared the way to privileging the non-capitalist (and capitalist) diversity of economic landscapes. […] This is a choice that must be made and remade. As Derrida taught us, deconstruction is never finally successful and the radical heterogeneity it produces has to be performed and reperformed. The end of capitalism (or of knowledge about Capitalism) never arrives with any finality" (Gibson-Graham 2010: 125).

Although this is not the only kind of deconstruction in Gibson-Graham (see the next chapter), let us contend here that with capitalocentrism as inheritance we find ourselves within a problem(atic) space – and a problem space is found 'within'. Our 'innermost' cognitive capacities, as well as our 'extensive' skills for mutual interdependence, cannot be assumed to be free of capitalocentrism. Instead of proceeding to the liberated land of *non*-capitalocentrism, then, I suggest we become more modest and more haunted by the prospects of capitalocentrism. This does not prevent us from engaging in anti-capitalocentric readings (Gibson-Graham 2006a) – nor any *relative* non-capitalocentricity as a situated and strategic task – but it warns against putting our trust in any apparent outside to or absolute break from capitalocentrism. For, as Rodolphe Gasché (2016: 19) argues: "The belief that one can cut all ties with the system of metaphysics, especially from a position outside the system, is an illusion fostered by metaphysics itself (to reabsorb the critic better, as it were)".

What would it mean to consider capitalocentrism as something that fosters illusions of its overcoming? Note the easiness of sliding here – along with paranoia – into classic debates on ideology, systems and (Western) metaphysics. I would like to propose that we should resist lining up the problematisation or retroubling of capitalocentrism in such terms, thus risking taming its problematics anew by overlaying an all-too-established conceptual armature and methodology on it. Rather, if we are serious about the heterogeneity of economies as an axiomatic starting point – just as serious as Sedgwick was about the differences conventionally assembled under 'sexuality' – we must assume *all* critical frameworks to be complicit with capitalocentrism, insofar as they have no in-built sense of more-than-capitalist heterogeneity.

In the spirit of what Miller (2019: 27) calls "strategic paranoia",[28] let us consider capitalocentrism as a process of *capital sensing and thinking through* different agents. Insofar as capital(ism) needs places where its facts can survive, and to the extent that it "seamlessly occupies the horizons of the thinkable" (Fisher 2009: 8), capitalocentrism makes sense as and through a reproduction of these horizons by disavowing the existence of other economies, of economic heterogeneity in general, and of the performative entanglements of any effort to chart such horizons. Moreover, these disavowals need themselves to be disavowed – erased from everything archived under 'economy' – so that a restricted number of non-contradictory, self-conscious, power-full capitalist nodes populate the economic landscape quite naturally. From this perspective, capitalocentrism becomes a continuous process that capital(ism) needs, a relational geography of what Sedgwick

28 As in Miller's (2019: 27) case, such a paranoid strategy should be coupled with "an explicit acknowledgment of the dangers of such a move". This acknowledgement is, I suppose, what makes the move 'strategic' by laying open its own dangers. The irony is that no paranoia would think of itself as other than strategic. It is, after all, *just* about to reveal how everyone (else) is being tricked into believing X while in reality Y. Or: 'I, for one, *know* that I am being ideological'. To read for capitalocentric troubles here no doubts risks performative tautologies – 'unearthing' capitalocentrism as a 'real cause' behind X, all the while (re)producing it – in ways that need to be carefully judged. This is a way of negotiating, not doing away with, the risk of paranoid tautology as described by Sedgwick.

(2003) calls "periperformatives" gathering spatially-temporally around (and within) capitalist sites and practices (see also Roelvink 2016).

Take, for example, one medium of capital: a hedge. Enclosures work best when people (are forced to) perform the authority, legitimacy and unbreakability of hedges. What goes on beside, under, over or through them is better left exceptional – written out of books. Capitalocentrism is thus not only about what is explicitly said ('this hedge will keep us out'), but also about silences – supple submissions, breaches in the dark, sounds of the self-evident – that either conform to or reject the hedge in a way that is calculable, governable, forgettable and/or profitable (see Blomley 2007). Capitalocentrism here would consist of periperformative practices around a capitalist kernel. But what is to recognise a hedge as a thing in the first place, for it 'to ping' (Morton 2010) *anyhow*, even if to evoke a rejection or attempts at unlearning its power geometry, if not a belated re-cognition and re-affirmation of some sort of capitalocentric violence that has already taken place? There is *already* a concept, an abstraction at play insofar as the hedge is inscribed in an inherited economy of legibility. An *un*learning of enclosures would necessitate an absolute indifference to the hedge to render it *illegible* as something that separates, orders and enforces hierarchies. Insofar as such illegibility is impossible – we are *already* literate and schooled (in compulsory education) – we are stuck with the repercussions of capitalocentrism.

To think capitalocentring as a medium of capital – its way of carving space through an omission of heterogeneity and alternatives – might enable the study of (peri) performative practices that allow a consolidated, centred sense of economy in a capitalist key. Capitalocentrism, from such a perspective, becomes an ideological façade, underneath which a diverse and contingent economic reality is demystified into view. An economic landscape ensues, one that has room for capitalist forms too, but reinscribed in a more-than-capitalist whole and ruptured by others of capital. But this order of things is too easy, since it leaves unquestioned the predicated legibility of economies – the inheritance of sensorium. It *owns* capitalocentrism, and leaves untouched all the inherited economic categories that come to populate the economic landscape. As if the intuitive simplicity of 'the hedge' were not to be suspected if we are in the business of unlearning capital. What needs explaining, I suggest, is not only the practices that capital employs to make a world in its image, but the inherited conditions which make capital's categories recognisable and actable in the first place. Capital covers its tracks, meaning 'it' gains a necessary sense of solidity and subjecthood from the closure of what is more-than-capitalist and other-than-capitalist. Something operates *before* capital.

If 'capitalocentrism' introduces this dimension to us, forcing us to reflect on the non-necessary centredness of cognition, power and desire on a restricted array of capitalist economies, it takes us to a 'textual materialism' (Colebrook 2011) that stops in order to read each solid-appearing capitalist iceberg anew. To restate that "capitalism is haunted by its discursivity" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 247) means here what Andrew Parker (1985: 151) also calls the greatest fear of Marxism: "[T]hat a rhetorical gap might intervene between base and superstructure – that political, ideological, and cultural practices might not be grounded firmly in the mode of production". This 'rhetorical gap' calls on us to consider that there is no capital(ism) without mediation, without an inherited language that is already capitalocentric. Diverse economy is a name for what comes after 'the mode of production'. But here we need to be clear: diverse economy is another *language* of economy, and another economy of language, *not* a non-linguistic solution that rids us of the inherited problem of language. As we get close to the phenomenological intuitiveness of 'economic practice', with weak theory

and thick description in mind, we should sharpen our skills for a rhetorical reading of the 'economic discourse' that remains a predicate of the iterability, teachability and readability of 'practice'.

It is crucial not to imagine an outside to this process, and instead to treat capitalocentrism as a problem forcing us to reflect critically on the material implications and preconditions of our capacities for sense-making. As Derrida (1993) writes, problems are shield-like: there is a sheltering and covering quality to the identification of a 'problem' that is *already* bringing an inherited conceptuality and disposition to the situation. Situatedness becomes other-than-present. In this sense, a problem space is never totally open, never a blank page, but closures have already imposed themselves on the very thinking that 'problematises' something and 'opens' towards solutions. In this way, we should suspect that capitalocentrism might need to be thought in terms of something other than a problem – but also simultaneously that any problematisation of it is bound to leave something untouched and unproblematised. We are in the thick of things, inhabiting the problem space that it indexes. As soon as one imagines/assumes an outside to its problemage, a refuge from negotiation takes place. Now, if Derrida teaches us that our capacities are radically finite, always bound by circumstances and unavoidably reproductive of blind spots, he also insists on the vigilance and what Rottenberg (2002: 2) calls "infinitely close reading" needed to confront legacies: "no sleep – anything less and one acts irresponsibly" (2; see also Keenan 1997).

To help us make sense of this responsibility, it may be useful to conceptualise capitalocentrism in terms of a *capitalocentric matrix*, an inherited economy of sensibility (or cognition, language, mediacy) that (re)produces capital(ism)s and not (only) vice versa. A 'matrix', as *The Oxford English Dictionary* has it, is a "supporting structure", "a womb", "a place or medium in which something is originated", and the "substrate" of lichens and fungi, as well as the elements which make up a particular system, regarded as an interconnected network, and finally, the cyberspatial 'matrix' of the movie (OED Online 2020). I am alluding to the long history of gendered metaphors in thinking capital(ism), *le capital(isme)*, "as hard and contained, penetrating, and inevitably overpowering" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 135). In queering this imaginary, Gibson-Graham abandon the usual imaginary of capital/money as lifeblood, to think it instead as seminal fluid that "periodically breaks its bounds, unleashing uncontrollable gushes of capital that flow every which way, including into self-destruction" (135–136). Dislocating the familiar *telos* of capital/money as driven by (re)production, Gibson-Graham rather highlight the *loss* of reproductive meaning and the arbitrariness of capital's processes, in order to then go on and imagine the "financial sector […] as an opening in the body of capitalism, one that not only allows capital to seep out but that enables noncapitalism to invade" (138).

Capitalocentrism, as we have seen, modelled as it originally is on phallocentrism, is portrayed as a binary structure in which the phallus, capital(ism), is centred on and gravitated around. We do not necessarily know where capitalocentrism/phallocentrism arrives from, but it surely seems to arrive *after* capital/phallus, and to play a secondary (discursive, libidinal), albeit necessary role vis-à-vis its hard materiality/corporeality. Capitalocentrism as matrix comes to this stage for some family drama. What I am trying to think with this matrix is a process that is not secondary to capital but is at least as elementary to it as any hard, seminal or lifebloody things such as money, a hedge or a cooperative – and possibly more original. The 'discursive' dimension is thus not imagined as something that emerges after the 'economic landscape' is already populated by all sorts of (more material, real) practices, sites and relations; rather, the latter can

only exist because of a discursivity or mediacy that is already 'there'. The point, then, is not to rush to a minimalistic reading of capitalocentrism 'for difference' (although this differentiation will be necessary too) in order to dislocate its might from an all-pervasive discursive structure to a heterogeneous landscape, but instead to stay with the global, paranoid extensiveness of capitalocentrism that Gibson-Graham so effectively portray, a force coextensive with the global topology and powers of determination that capitalism (as we knew it) had. This is to assume a problem even in its apparent absence, and to think with that assumption.

It matters how and when we imagine capitalocentrism to play its trick. Arguably, insofar as it is portrayed as an 'economic discourse', the image plays into existing imaginaries of 'economic' and 'discursive', which remain outside the scope of problematisation. In other words, to start with, we have a solid sense of how capitalocentrism operates and what it looks like. This solidity is precisely what needs to be questioned. Rather than prelocating capitalocentrism as an 'economic discourse' – or *any* ready-made figure (ideology, metaphysics, hegemony etc.), to the extent that avoiding them is possible – we would better approach capitalocentrism as a condition of their possibility: the matrix that is *already* '*there*' for any 'economic discourse' to be recognised or to work. Capitalocentrism thus comes to name an inheritance prior to intentional subjects consciously reflecting on and deciding upon their fate and choosing their preferred type of economic discourse. Following this path, we would need to trace histories and archival economies with an eye to the material-semiotic (for lack of better words) *pre*formation needed for economic common sense to work. For example, for 'capitalism' to make sense as *the* globally prevalent system of our times, a long history and geography of archival work (remembering *and* forgetting) will need to have taken place, and to have organised reference points (implicit or explicit) that constitute the 'origins of capitalism' and enable us to 'intuitively' locate ourselves within this 'system', or as 'economic subjects' in the first place. It helps if archives of more-than-capitalist diverse economies are lacking, if economies of the archival are themselves not read as heterogeneous, and if much of what is non-capitalist has never been archived or cannot be archived.

This historical-spatial organisation of capitalocentrism means that archival economies (what gets (not) stored, disseminated and remembered; who does memory work; where and how memories are stored; what kind of infrastructures and hypomnesic tools will have been available etc.) are also implicated. Capitalocentrism – or a capitalisation on memory and amnesia – from which the performative effect of 'hegemonic capitalism' emerges to rule the economic landscape. In other words, capitalocentrism should not be presumed to be found sitting and waiting in the archives, but instead to also be a problematic of the organisation and constitution of collective memory: a tendency of erasing the traces of more-than-capitalist heterogeneity (Gabriel 2011), time and again, and erasing signs of this erasure. Even before this, perhaps before capital(ism) (whether logically or historically), the very possibility of accounting comes along with its economic restrictions of space and time: an incapacity to account for it all, to centre on or put in reserve anything much more than a few heads or capitals at a time, with the difficulties of accounting for the unaccountable that fails to fit within any restricted *oikos* and *nomos*.[29] Perhaps we should explore such an 'originary' capitalocentrism

29 How are we to archive or relate to "the diversity we are given" (Rose 2018) if not in ways tragically/ironically insufficient for the task? Consider again, for example, the genre of acknowledgements at the beginning of theses such as this. What is this other than a calculated, restricted economy of a debt that is incalculable? This is not to argue there are not better and worse calculations, of course. There

(cf. Derrida 1997a) to refine our faculties for distinguishing it from secondary or capitalist capitalocentrism. If we allow that capital(ism) is an *effect* of capitalocentrism (rather than the other way around, or in addition to it), then perhaps it is *not the only one*. Which is to say, again, that the kind of cognition that surveys its surroundings for capitalocentric omissions and hierarchies, enabling their (post/critical) overcoming, may be burdened with and enabled by capitalocentric heritages of other kinds.

The difference between capitalocentrisms (originary and capitalist, inevitable and evitable) makes all the difference for analysing capitalocentric heritages without subordinating them under any logic of capitalism – itself, remember, a capitalocentric trope from the start. But we cannot do away with or unlearn the language that enables us to inherit capitalocentrism – the language of capital(ism). To do so would be to dismiss the way Gibson-Graham's insight and invention of 'capitalocentrism' inherits critical political economy, and how the former continues to rely on the latter's blindnesses, as if parasitically. Here is the irony, and the tragedy, of our inheritance. In the following chapters, we will thus explore De Man's (1996: 184) observation that "[i]rony and history seem to be curiously linked to each other". Yet Gibson-Graham's as well as Sedgwick's impatience with totalising narratives and any politics of postponement warns us against simply raising the stakes of capitalocentric problems or allowing them to yield any refuge from committing to actually existing experimentation and struggle, including anti-capitalocentric struggles to archive otherwise. We also need to reflect how capitalocentric silences replicate themselves in any singular descriptions of *the* capitalocentric logic of archives or accounts. How to refuse the (singular) capitalocentric past – and speak to and for other archives, as well as archival otherness? How to read for heterogeneity and alterity *in* capitalocentrism?

The grounds of intelligibility in capitalocentrism may also be studied as an *economy of violence* (Derrida 1978; Malabou 2002) deeply enmeshed with other forms of violence, normalisation, hierarchy and oppression. While Gibson-Graham (1995, 2006b, 2006a) emphasise the *discursive* violence perpetuated by capitalocentrism, we might have to remind ourselves that this 'discursivity' has, alas, little to do with non-materiality or non-corporeality. Quite the contrary, the continuation of capitalocentric violence is better seen in the continuing marginalisation, silencing, exploitation and oppression of bodies devalued in capitalocentring hierarchies – bodies contributing to, getting sustenance from and reproducing interdependencies through and as more-than-capitalist relations of the diverse economy. This also means that the epistemic privileging of capitalist economies should be theorised alongside and intersecting with the all-too-real violence of gendered, racialised, ethnicised, speciesist, ableist and classist hierarchies, among others. Again, we stand not outside but deep within these ruinous inheritances, inescapably wrapped in the "old cloth" (Derrida 1981a: 24). Capitalocentric violences will have already happened, and for crucial ethical and political reasons we should work within and starting from "no noncomplicit place" (Miller 2019: 28). Only *within* can we start negotiating what this inheritance means for a postcapitalist politics.

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are better and worse acknowledgements, and they need responsible accounting. To begin with, I wish I could acknowledge every meal I have eaten while writing this thesis, and every cook who prepared those meals, every plant and earthworm and drop of oil involved… a (very) diverse economy, if there ever was one. While such calculations would no doubt make much more sense than the genre usually known as acknowledgements, they can, by default, be just the tip of the iceberg. Our being is too finite, the debt is incalculable. We are overdetermined. As always, I will be able only to centre attention on a few heads (capitas) that have helped my writing in some calculable way. This act of gratitude, however honest and indispensable, is also hilariously and/or tragically deficient – capitalocentric from the start.

Everything depends on how we stay with/in the trouble. With Grosz (1995: 62), we might hope to succeed only by becoming "implicated in and part – admittedly a recalcitrant part – of" the problem she calls patriarchy, and we might add of capitalocentrism. For if any restricted economy is undoubtedly implicated in these violent relations, any political-theoretical heritage building upon layers upon layers of privileging certain political agents, sites and processes can only be understood as a systematic capitalisation on these privileges and omissions, if only to challenge them. As an inheritance, a matrix, capitalocentrism does away with post/critical solutionism. Its problemage is not (only) present, ownable or locatable. To have a class struggle, an avant-garde, a theory of social transformation or a community economy, a different – or *différantial* – politics will have been foreclosed. Capitalocentrism will have been inherited, and not without violence. As Derrida (1999: 221) asks of what he calls the "*theoretical-and-political* disasters" of totalitarian Marxism: "they should trouble us, should they not?"

2.5 Troubles We Therefore Inherit

While I have sketched in this chapter some critical openings within and expanding upon Gibson-Graham's essential work, none of this is to disparage research and politics for reflexively sidelining such impulses. There will be work to do on many fronts, and post/critical impulses have had and will continue to have important effects. Also, we need to recognise that the explicit return to critique within the diverse economies framework risks the re-entry of unhelpful kinds of paranoid and judgemental practices. But avoiding such stances is not aided by a post/critical reading that situates critical energies as a past achievement and theorises problems only insofar as they can provide quick solutions. With these ruinous economies, and as part of a species "threatened with extinction" (Gibson-Graham 2014b), we simply cannot afford to disavow existing critical energies or foreclose their potential for thinking ahead – nor to leave critique (or negation, for that matter; see North *et al.* 2020) to those who only use it to cement capitalist realism.

To return to Miller's (2015: 366) question "why must we choose?": "Can we not construct forms of action and subjectivity in which critique and experiment, rage and hope, and opposition and possibility coexist and even coconstitute one another?" I contend that we can and need to, acutely so. Yet, all the arguments against post/critical separations of critique and affirmation notwithstanding, these elements do not need to be reducible to and modularly combinable under any singular 'framework'. It can be equally tempting either to situate critique as just a tamed theoretical-methodological step within a framework oriented towards 'alternatives' or to extend the strong theoretical reach of critical reflections so as to shoot down any situated attempts to perform 'alternatives'. None of this is to compromise the acute need to work with constructing non-capitalist realities, and simultaneously, none of it is to claim the possibility of a time and place where critique will be passé. Different situations will have called for different practices.

Yet here lies again a danger of reducing these possibilities to transparent tools of the sovereign agent, consciously deciding upon which of Gibson-Graham's concepts to use in which situation. If the aim is to explore the enlarging of our postcapitalist movement space, as suggested at the beginning of the chapter, this space is not solely to be understood as the site of pragmatic decision-making, involving critical as well as affirmative tools. Rather, the space that opens, if it does, opens otherwise or elsewhere than as a multiplication of methodological options. For the sake of this other space, the task in the following chapters is to explore potentials lurking in treating the capitalocentric problematic as a relatively autonomous one, one calling for different tasks from those that

post/critical treatments have accorded to it. As Gibson-Graham (2003c: 37) note of their difference from Michael Watts's critical project: "[o]ur projects are indeed incomparable". The point here is to try to assume and test out such an incomparability between the critical-deconstructive and affirmative voices of Gibson-Graham. This is not in order to argue for the desirability or necessity of their separation, nor for a clean line of demarcation, but to defer or sideline, for now, the affirmative injunction in view of capitalocentric inheritances.

The complicity that capitalocentrism introduces remuddles our organisation of friends and foes. What comes to matter is the potential for becoming differently and attentively capitalocentric. Insofar as *reading for trouble* can be a productive strategy for re-envisioning how capitalocentrism still needs to challenge us, any situated understanding of this task will necessitate its accompaniment by *reading for difference*. Without difference, without situatedness, without new names, we have a totalised problem that cannot be negotiated – or inherited – and that we need to either dwell on endlessly or attempt to overcome with all-too-hasty moves. It might well be worth noting, paraphrasing Sedgwick (2003: 150), that sometimes the most capitalocentric-tending people are able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest non-capitalist practices. This underlines the need to delink capitalocentrism from an a priori sense of undesirability, providing more space for empirical questions around what capitalocentrism is and does in each different situation. Derrida may help us think a textual materiality of capitalocentrism that is inherited but each time already different, situatedly non-present: "[w]e must begin *wherever we are* […] in a text where we already believe ourselves to be" (Derrida 1997a: 162). And one of the things Sedgwick most consistently underlines is that our emotional investments in particular objects are not settled or univocally causal, any more than they are fully contingent or arbitrary. Another complication stems from seeing the beneficial effects, for some, of political-economic and governmental capitalocentrism concentrating on the 'tip of the iceberg' (Gibson-Graham 2006a). Many forms of economic diversity will have had good reasons to stay under the radar. "The job of peasants", James Scott (2009: 34) reminds us, "is to stay out of the archives". We will need a much more nuanced vocabulary and attentiveness, one that rejects the binary division between capitalocentric and non-capitalocentric practices and instead opts to study the diverse and situated differences within the shared inheritance of capitalocentrism. Different(ly) capitalocentric acts produce different effects.

To conceptualise a shared and endlessly differentiated capitalocentric heritage as the starting point allows us to work with materials and perspectives otherwise all too readily categorised as undesirable or unproductive. Thus, when David Harvey (2015) declares that "capitalo-centrism matters", perhaps he is right (though, we might add, for the wrong reasons[30]). Perhaps it matters by saying something about the performative practices and prerequisites of capital(ism) that help us understand where any seeming

30 Harvey's point follows from his earlier critique of Gibson-Graham (without citing them): "[i]n certain circles it is fashionable to derogatorily dismiss studies such as this [i.e. Harvey's] as 'capitalocentric'" (Harvey 2014: 10). Against such dismissals, he accentuates the "imperative" need for "much more sophisticated and profound capitalo-centric studies to hand to facilitate a better understanding of the recent problems that capital accumulation has encountered" (10). I have a hard time seeing how understanding "capitalo-centrism" as a "derogatory dismiss[al]" might result from anything other than an active and perennial evasion of Gibson-Graham's arguments. Also, it misses the whole critical-Marxist heritage that Gibson-Graham negotiates and reinvents in order to relaunch it in the form of the diverse-economic framework. That said, Harvey does have a point, in that the risk of capitalocentrism must be borne, and such studies may produce effects other than the postponement of non-capitalisms. This 'must', and the necessity of such studies, does not make them any less problematic.

lack of 'alternatives' stems from – and how capital(ism) organises itself through us and our continuous marginalisation of non-capitalist realities. Perhaps it matters by enabling us to reorganise anti- and postcapitalist critique in more creative and thoroughgoing ways – pushing us to challenge critics within and around to work towards other frameworks of sensibility/intelligibility *and* to account for the complicities of such 'others'. Perhaps it matters by inscribing our sense of radicality and emancipation with/in the structures that we dearly wish to leave behind, or the objects of our critique that we therefore inherit.

If we turn the tables to think capitalism (e.g. as *the* present, as the marginality of other economies, as *anything* re-cognisable) as a performative *effect* of capitalocentrism, rather than as its cause, avoiding and/or overcoming the latter topos becomes quite symptomatic of our condition. Instead of a material reality (capital(ism)) and a discursive rendering of it (capitalocentrism), arguably another version of a Marxist base–superstructure model, a strange metalepsis of substituted cause and effect ensues: "The base, in other words, might now be regarded less as an original, self-identical entity than as the rhetorical effect of a *prior* effect – of the superstructure" (Parker 1985: 155). Gibson-Graham have thus named a problem that will need to haunt us for a long time – a problem that names the continuing performative omission, silencing and marginalisation of diverse economies and more-than-capitalist realities but must also be understood as irrevocably part of those realities. As an organisation of intelligibility and of collective memory that erases the traces of its work, capitalocentrism names a trouble we will need to read *for*. It does not present itself in full transparency and availability to our intentional acts (or insofar it does, we might need to question its problematisation). Just as we read *for* it, we may be reading *from* it – thanks to it as much as against it. The seemingly restricted nature of the problem might very well be an *effect* of capitalocentrism. And such a capitalocentric matrix might be older than capital(ism) and much more haunting a tendency than a post/critical reading enables us to understand. Constructing situatedly anti-capitalocentric counter-histories and counter-geographies of silenced and marginalised diverse economies, as well as their economies of the archival and remembrance, is not the smallest of the tasks that ensue. Reading for trouble means admitting how constitutive the problem is, and how fundamental our complicity. The good news is that we can find sites for critically important work *everywhere*. The most promising of our emancipatory projects and postcapitalist imaginaries inescapably implicated in a fabric of sedimented layers of capitalocentric hierarchies and violence. Our vision burdened by centuries of capitalocentring ignorance. Our 'otherwise' always already compromised by capitalocentric inheritances. They should trouble us, should they not?

3 Archives of Violence: Capitalocentrism and the Grain of History

3.1 The Trouble with/in Postcapitalist Archives

The postcapitalist fold forces upon us the need to negotiate inheritances in view of other futures. This raises the question of history, and how best to read it in order to enable the sort of transformations indexed by postcapitalist desires. Increasingly, such work turns to questioning the archives that constitute our collective sensorium, and to the kind of memory work that postcapitalist politics might require. For instance, Zanoni *et al.* (2017) argue for a double strategy in light of postcapitalist archives: firstly, *rereading archives*, meaning "critical work […] to bear witness to oppressive and exploitative power relations and their historical articulation and pain", which also includes multiplying traces of "desires for joy, for solidarity, recognition, equality, and self-determination", thus "deliver[ing] and reproduc[ing] alternatives in the present" (580). Secondly, the task is to *archive otherwise*, and to multiply heterogeneous archives, "to inscribe the complexity, multiplicity of activism, and diverse economic practices and forms of organizing of the present" (580). Both of these strategies, the revisiting of existing archives and constitution of new ones, participate in "[d]emocratization […] pursued through the diversification of the archive to document the heterogeneity of the economy" (581). Their perspective reminds us that whatever the kind of memory work needed from a postcapitalist politics, it will need to be constituted of multiple strategies, and of a constant reflection and folding of pasts, presents and futures.

In the diverse economies framework, there is a recurrent commitment to such memory work to reread pasts and retrace histories in view of their differential becoming. As Gibson-Graham (2006a: 230 n1) describe their work with communities, aiming to intervene in narratives of passivising capitalocentric subjecthood, there is historical renarration to be done:

> "Such a narrative does not originate in the past as it was (for that past is no more), but in the past as it shall have been for what the community is in the process of becoming […]. Like the Lacanian analyst, then, we recognized that a new future requires a new past".

For example, Gibson's (2001; see also Gibson-Graham 2006a: ch. 2) work in the spatial-economic archives of Latrobe Valley, Australia traces the historical constitution of 'governmentality' in the region. Genealogies of discourses of 'economy' and 'region' in the valley are folded together with interviews with its inhabitants in an effort to understand how 'subjection' and 'becoming' intermingle – and where the latter may provide an "interruption in the ritualized practices of regional economic subjection" (Gibson 2001: 643).

The prevalent narrative of Latrobean regional economy has a complex history, in which systems of judgement, rationales of economic calculation, vocabularies of subjection, regional political projects, grids of visualisation and cartographies of 'the region' come together to perform a givenness of an 'Economy' 'driven by' large-scale enterprise, governed with developmentalist principles, and made of dependent subjects self-identifying with industrial growth. But this capitalocentric narrative has alternatives, and Gibson's point is that by "listening and looking for expressions and performances of 'fugitive energies' that exceed the fund of identities institutionally 'given' and 'assumed' in the Valley", other possibilities for 'becoming' can be both unearthed and performed.

In this way, "[e]xpressions of care for the other, concerns for justice and equity in and for the region, and calls for new practices of community" can help in "denaturalizing the Economy" and in "providing a breathing space for these fugitive energies to be directed towards new performances of economy, region, and subjecthood" (665). The strategy is thus to historicise anti-capitalocentrically the valley's official history and its modes of subjection, in order to then double it with an attention to 'fugitive energies' which escape from this history.

More recently, Gibson-Graham (2020b) have argued for the rereading of archives of modern tropical geographers in the light of diverse economies. This article, originally a lecture given in remembrance of Neil Smith, is explicitly modelled to double Smith's (2003) critical reading of American geographer Isaiah Bowman's imperial activities, which were foundational for the university discipline of geography in the United States. Acknowledging the importance of Smith's critical and careful rereading, and using a similar method of archival work, Gibson-Graham have a different motive and aim:

> "[T]o search for rich descriptions and moments of appreciation of non-capitalist economic practices and to knit these fragments and gleanings into an(other) 'map' of community economies and ecologies in Monsoon Asia" (Gibson-Graham 2020b: 16; cf. Gibson *et al.* 2018a, 2018b).

The point is to treat the past as 'potential' by "reading against the grain of capitalocentric economic discourse", say Gibson-Graham (2020b: 16). They go on to rehearse the strategy whose "task is to attend to the great variety of non-capitalist or 'more-than-capitalist' economic activities", in order to "identify the specificity of these practices rather than their sameness or subordination to capitalist commodity exchange, waged labour, capitalist enterprise, private property or capitalist finance" (16). 'Against the grain', then, means a commitment to reinterpret archival materials against a dominant reading or historical narrative. It is "a corrective practice that involves keeping eyes and ears attuned for evidence of community-economic practices – what I will call commoning knowhow" (17). In *The handbook of diverse economy*, Gibson-Graham (2020c) return to this methodological approach of reading 'against the grain', explicating the theoretical motivations of the approach and exemplifying it with three types of research methods and materials (interview transcripts, field studies and policy analysis). Interestingly for out purposes here, they also allude to an affinity between 'reading for difference' and Walter Benjamin's (2007) famous passage on "brushing history against the grain".

What all of this work thus makes clear is that diverse economies is a matter of archives, and of *re*descriptive and *re*interpretative work with historical materials. It provides a task of rereading history in order to uncover other possibilities, and of making history by tracing and instituting archives of other pasts, presents and futures. The path of the method is clear. It pivots on an *emancipatory* reading of history, one that rereads dominant narratives "to wean ourselves from relying on any fixed or 'real' grounding for our actions and to treat the illusion of fixity as at best a productive error" (Sarmiento & Gabriel 2020: 386–387). This happens by showing how history is a heterogeneous place, and how its trajectories are contingent. What interests me in this chapter, however, is the kind of assumptions that such 'reading against the grain' employs with regard to the interplay of the dominant and its others. I am interested in what kind of *concept* of capitalocentrism (or domination) gets historicised in a reading that intends to 'brush' it, or to enable 'openings' from it. In other words, it is a questioning of such a history's

readability that is at stake here. I will do this by simultaneously specifying what it means to treat capitalocentrism as a form of historical violence and as violent history. This is to elaborate on its economy of violence (discussed in the previous chapter) as imagined in its current problematisations and undoings, and to see how these negotiations – in their very act of 'seeing' or 'reading' this historical economy – may be inheriting other things than they intend to.

Violence is at stake in order to adopt and examine Gibson-Graham's formulations of capitalocentrism as a 'discursive violence', but also to keep close to the material, corporeal implications of what might all too easily be dismissed as conceptual issues. As with any form of violence, capitalocentrism should make us pose questions: whom does it hurt? When did it begin? Who benefits? How does it work? How do we get rid of it? These questions are made more complex due to capitalocentrism's ambiguity as a historical form of 'discursive violence', as we shall see, but also because of how it has been treated as a framework of domination, exclusion and emancipation. A history needs to be remembered *for* capitalocentrism, for a reading to reach towards its others. In this performative remembrance, we find an effort to negotiate its problematics through an "*active*, *critical* memory or reception of an inheritance or a tradition which will remember us if we do not remember it" (Bennington 2000: 22). But with capitalocentrism understood as our heritage, it is all too easy to consider these two remembrances as mutually exclusive – *either* we remember it, *or* it remembers us. As I will argue, the complex violences that capitalocentrism indexes instead demand a historical reading that resists the temptation to *fully* remember it and emancipate oneself from it.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, trying to understand the recent historical constitution (and overcoming) of 'capitalocentrism', I consider the themes of deconstruction (or better, dislocation or destabilisation) and violence as they appear in Gibson-Graham's work. This is to better understand what happens in their version of 'reading against the grain', and what kind of 'grain' and 'reading' is thus evoked, in a practice that posits itself 'against' specific histories. I argue that there are, again, multiple voices in Gibson-Graham, and that some of these might be more helpful than others for staying with capitalocentrism as a problem of history. By remarking a tendency (via Laclau and Mouffe) to theorise capitalocentrism as a 'hegemony' and to practise 'deconstruction' as its destabilisation and dislocation, as well as to reduce the violence of capitalocentrism to an avoidable 'discursive violence', I argue that the problemage can be effectively restrained before its stakes and challenge have been fully explored. This has consequences for how it is imagined to constitute a historical problematic. Second, seeking to make capitalocentrism more troubling to historical thinking, I revisit Derrida's discussion of three intersecting issues: violence, archives, and responsibility in face of history. Derrida's contribution here is to help us think histories in ways that are both non-ownable (fully, transparently readable by the sovereign subjects of history) and non-determined. We find ourselves *within* the 'grain of history', as it were, which does not entail the futility of reading *against* it, but rather makes this task more demanding. To conclude, with Derrida's insights, I return to capitalocentrism to think it as another kind of problem of history and a task for memory work.

3.2 The Hegemony of Capitalocentric Violence

Let us begin with the kind of historical object that diverse-economic readings take as their proverbial grain to brush against. One recurring characterisation of capitalocentric economic discourse by Gibson-Graham is to call it a form of hegemonic discursive

violence that is to be dislocated for other, diverse possibilities to emerge. In a critical examination of their work, Kalyan Sanyal (2007; see also Gidwani & Wainwright 2014) remarks that Gibson-Graham's "project is to 'deconstruct' this representation of the economy to clear a space where non-capitalist economic sites can be foregrounded and an economy can be seen as necessarily constituted by heterogeneity and difference" (5). This description paves the way for the interesting critical remark that in Gibson-Graham's "unsettling [of] 'the hegemony of capitalism' […] the concept of hegemony itself escapes problematisation" (6). Sanyal thus identifies a "simpleness" (6) in the notions of 'hegemony' and 'dominance' that Gibson-Graham mobilise. These are associated with a sort of repression, he argues, whose "dominance necessarily takes the form of a monolith that annihilates, suppresses, and silences the 'others'. And by shattering the monolith, the 'others' can be reinvigorated, rehabilitated and posited in radical opposition to the 'hegemon'" (6).

For Sanyal, the critique of the 'simpleness' of hegemony/dominance and its others does not lead to its reconceptualisation so as to provide more room for non-hegemonic action; instead, he prefers to conceptualise more-than-capitalist difference as an "integral", rather than excluded, "part of a complex hegemonic order" (6). The task becomes to think global capitalism in more expansive terms, and to think differences as integral to it. In other words, what follows from the critique of Gibson-Graham's 'reading for difference rather than dominance' is, for Sanyal, akin to 'reading difference (yet again) *for* dominance'. As in Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, a text that Sanyal cites approvingly, we might identify here "yet another attempt to say that our projects were always within and never alternative to the dominant" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 203 n5).

What *is* interesting here, however, is Sanyal's identification of a theoretical hastiness in Gibson-Graham's concept of 'hegemony'. While the latter's strategy does not consist in treating difference as anti-capitalist per se – contrary to how critics like to read it[31] – capitalocentrism is indeed conceptualised as somewhat "antithetical to difference" (Sanyal 2007: 225), and 'reading for difference rather than dominance' is decidedly and explicitly built on a polemical opposition between difference and dominance – remember the iceberg (Figure 1). I want to trace this simplicity back to the exclusive *territorial* logic of capitalocentrism-cum-hegemony briefly discussed in the previous chapter, and the way Gibson-Graham propose their intervention to

31 Sanyal's critique would be worth revisiting in more detail, since it provides some particularly well-articulated critical remarks and (mis)readings of Gibson-Graham. There are two in particular. First, there is the all-too-common misreading that equates 'difference' in Gibson-Graham with positivity/desirability, and therefore paves the way for Sanyal's discovery that, *in reality*, difference is not inimical to capital(ism). As a form of critique, this would be more convincing if it could be grounded by a reference to any passage where Gibson-Graham actually idealise difference as an 'alternative' to capitalism. On the contrary, Gibson-Graham continually insist that the diverse economy is not an alternative to capitalism, but a dislocation and regrouping of elements associated with capitalism as much as any other economy. It is an effort to undo the very mainstream/alternative binary that Sanyal accuses Gibson-Graham of adopting. Second, what makes Sanyal's argument all the more intriguing is his *explicit* desire for the dominance of capital(ism): "[o]ur projects are different in a fundamental sense: Gibson-Graham wants to shrink and emaciate capitalism to rehabilitate economic difference; I, on the other hand, seek to produce a vision of capitalism that is malleable and protean, see economic difference as an integral part of that capitalism and explore how capital successfully lives in that world of difference" (7). Instead of a return to capitalism (as we knew it all along), this marks – for Sanyal, as well as for Gidwani and Wainwright (2014) – a desirable pursuit in view of a future emancipation. I do not mean to dismiss these accounts, but instead what interests me is the complexity of their capitalocentric assumptions and drives, and their heterogeneous effects – the openings as well as the closures that capitalocentrism affords.

dislocate and indeed deconstruct this territorial dominance. My hypothesis is that this theoretical interplay forms a pre-empirical concept that directly influences how and what kind of capitalocentrism is expected to be found 'in the archives', and how 'reading for difference' seeks to intervene in it.

Gibson-Graham adopt a central part of their vocabulary around capitalocentrism from Laclau and Mouffe. 'Capitalocentrism', after all, is introduced in an article rehearsing Mouffe's contribution to thinking economic plurality (Gibson-Graham 1995). This conceptual affinity is particularly clear in the way capitalocentrism is described as a 'hegemonic' order. Consider the terms that set up the object of capitalocentrism and the process of its 'dislocation':

> "[T]o the extent that the economy has been taken from us – represented as removed from the forces of social and discursive construction – it becomes important and urgent to *take it back*, not as a homogeneous and unified level, sphere, or system, but *as a discursive terrain*, a set of concepts, issues, contradictions, identities, and struggles that falls outside the purview of most contemporary social theory. If we fail to inhabit this *territory*, treating it as already *ceded*, we risk setting too much aside – too many memories, violences, and miseries, too many political and emotional possibilities" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2000: 1–2; emphasis modified).

In this formulation, economic discourse is presented in distinctly geographical terms as a 'discursive terrain', which emphasises its material aspects and a requirement of context-specificity, but also portrays a territorial struggle taking place in economic discourse. The choice is stark and clear, and the territorial struggle is one that 'we' cannot afford to treat as 'ceded'.

Such an object begs for other possibilities, which is how Gibson-Graham motivate their method of reading. Insofar as 'hegemony' is inscribed with the power to dominate, suppress, omit and normatise, it calls for a 'reading for difference rather than dominance'. This, for them, is what deconstruction offers. For example, recounting their intentions in writing *The end of capitalism*, Gibson-Graham (2006a) restate their intention to "deconstruct" capitalocentrism to contribute to

> "the development of a discourse of economic difference that was *not* capitalocentric. […] *Liberating the 'noncapitalist' occupied zone* involved 'widening the field of intelligibility to enlarge the scope of possibility,' […] while at the same time *dislocating* the (discursive) dominance of capitalism" (xxxiv; my emphasis).

The use of deconstruction here is as "a means to destabilize the fixed identity of capitalism (as necessarily and naturally hegemonic) and to open the economic field to difference outside the binary frame" of capitalism/non-capitalism (Gibson-Graham 2004a: 410). Or as another recent methodological explication recounts it:

> "The recognition of capitalocentrism came from a deconstructive reading of economic thought and practice. Deconstruction *identifies dominance and the tenuous hold by which stable presence is maintained*. Identifying dominance is thus *the grounds upon which* a reading for difference takes place. Reading for economic difference starts by *making the subordinated identities and activities more visible and allowing* the possibility that they have independent agency" (Gibson-Graham 2020c: 481; emphases modified).

Rehearsing these occurrences of 'hegemony' and 'deconstruction' in Gibson-Graham, we begin to see how the territorial-discursive presence of capitalocentrism is imagined to 'colonise' the landscape, and how deconstruction is thought to intervene by making visible subordinated identities, normative structures, and the underlying contingency that grounds a different economic politics. This politics, indexed by community economies, is then thought as a "post-deconstructive" (Lee 2010: 117) movement that presupposes an 'undecidable' terrain 'performed' by deconstruction as a method. The concreteness of community-economic practice outlined in *A postcapitalist politics* (Gibson-Graham 2006a) gives a recursive confirmation of this methodological trajectory, as it builds upon the 'deconstructive' work accomplished before it. Here, finally, "Gibson-Graham introduces ways to *operationalise* her deconstructive politics" (Rose 2018: 4; my emphasis).

What we see here is a specific sense in which a territorially exclusive and 'hegemonic' discourse of capitalocentrism is 'deconstructed' in order to unleash other possibilities, and how this trajectory is explicated as a teachable, repeatable method by Gibson-Graham as well as other interpreters of their practice. What is interesting for our purposes is that this terminology is closely linked to Laclau and Mouffe's version of deconstruction, itself crucially different from Derrida's practice. As Gibson-Graham (2006a) explicate the import of Laclau and Mouffe, their "theory of politics helps us to see the way in which *a certain discourse* of the economy (as real, as capitalist) has become hegemonic, and how alternative and different understandings of economy have been *enrolled into* the hegemonic project or *outlawed* as a threat to the hegemonic discourse" (55; my emphases). This hegemony again prevails, but with deconstruction, an identification of subordinated identities and contingency ensues. This provides a crucial opening or breathing space that orients us towards a postcapitalist politics:

> "If politics is a process of transformation instituted by taking decisions on an ultimately undecideable [sic] terrain, a politics of possibility rests on an enlarged space of decision and a vision that the world is not governed by some abstract, commanding force or global form of sovereignty" (xxxiii).

What is thus proposed here is a move from a space governed by an "abstract, commanding force" to a space of possibility, "an ultimately undecidable terrain". Capitalocentric commandments are substituted with a space of contingency and possibility: more space to breathe and decide.

This directly echoes many of Laclau and Mouffe's formulations regarding the seeming fixity of any hegemonic identity. For instance, here Laclau describes his understanding of (and difference from) Derrida's deconstruction:

> "[I]f the structures are *essentially* undecidable, in that case whatever order exists is *essentially* contingent, and dependent on a *decision* which cannot be referred back to any *eidos* or aprioristic principle. Showing the undecidable character of the structure enlarges in that way the terrain of the decision. It is in that sense that – using a terminology that is not Derrida's but my own – we could say that the counterpart of a theory of *deconstruction* is a theory of *hegemony* as a theory of the decision taken in an undecidable terrain, i.e. a theory which enlarges the field of theory and politics" (Laclau 1990: 95).

Note here an underlying ontological layer of flux ("essentially" undecidable and contingent) that any hegemonic identity supposedly relies on and masks; deconstruction is

called to debunk such occlusions. What is imagined again as foreclosed is an underlying space of contingency and decision, whose 'enlargement' becomes the task. This is centrally what reading for difference is imagined to do in Gibson-Graham. Or consider Mouffe's (1993: 114) 'constitutive outside' as an operation of relational identity, "a permanent […] exterior to the community that makes its existence possible". Often attributed to Derrida, this concept is rather Mouffe's reading of his work:

> "One of Derrida's central ideas is that the constitution of an identity is always based on excluding something and *establishing a violent hierarchy* between the resultant two poles – form/matter, essence/accident, blade/white, man/woman, and so on. This reveals that there is no identity that is self-present to itself and not constructed as difference, and that any social objectivity is constituted through acts of power. It means that any social objectivity is ultimately political and has to show traces of the exclusion which governs its constitution, what we can call its 'constitutive outside'" (1993: 141; my emphasis).

Now, this account (as well as Laclau's) is a very specific reading of Derrida, as we will soon see. But for now, let us pause for a moment to consider the way *violence* is entangled here with identity, in the process of its constitution through the exclusion.

This violence of an excluded but constitutive outside becomes central in Gibson-Graham's (1995: 277) identification of capitalocentrism as the "contemporary discourses of capitalist hegemony as enacting a discursive violence upon other forms of economy, requiring their suppression and negation as a condition of capitalist dominance" (see also Gibson-Graham 2006b: 12). This violence is a form of discursive erasure and omission of non-capitalist realities and the lining up of economic identities with reference to capitalist categories (see Gibson-Graham 2020c). For example, this is the case when the empirical realities and importance of non-capitalist economies are not recognised and accounted. When non-capitalist and 'alternative capitalist' economies account "for well over 50 percent of economic activity" in "both rich and poor countries", Gibson-Graham (2006b: xiii; my emphasis) "cannot help but be struck by the *discursive violence* enacted through familiar references to 'capitalist' economies and societies". Or again, "less than half of the total product of the U.S. economy is produced under capitalism. From this perspective, referring to the U.S. or any economy as capitalist is a *violent* act of naming that erases from view the heterogeneous complexity of the economy" (Gibson-Graham 2003a: 55–56; my emphasis). This complexity is what feminist economics and statistics has helped us to see and make quantifiable, and "[s]uch quantitative representations exposed the *discursive violence* entailed in speaking of 'capitalist' economies, and lent credibility to projects of representing economy differently" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 615; my emphasis).

These examples are centred on the national economy designated as a primarily (or wholly) capitalist space, but as Gibson-Graham (2006a: 235) show, a similar logic is at play when spatial economies such as 'the local economy' are represented primarily or solely in terms of a capitalist economy – for example, 'a mining town'. Or we may consider the *temporal* exclusion of care and commoning in a "discursive violence [that] obliterates from view the economic activity that engages more people for more hours of the day over more years of their lives than any other" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2001: 14). A further complication to capitalocentric violence issues from the fact that not only are representations of capital(ism) seen to enact it, but sometimes this violence is associated with the capitalist activities themselves. For example, drawing on Marx

to think a generalised production of surplus channelled into private capitalist profits, Gibson-Graham state that the "interdependencies that connect producers of surplus and nonproducers in the being-social that is society are, *within* capitalist economic activities, *violently effaced*" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 91–92; my emphases). Here, then, capitalist activities with/in themselves mark the 'violent effacement' of interdependencies insofar as surplus is privatised while its production is overdetermined by all sorts of relations of care, commoning and other 'reproduction'. In other words, there is some productive ambiguity as to whether it is the *representation* of economic sites/practices that perpetuates capitalocentric violence or is also a characteristic of capitalist modes of organisation *as such* – and how to differentiate between these.[32]

It is noteworthy that discursive violence is something that takes place not (only) as a foreclosure of future possibilities or a restriction of political choice, but primarily as a dissonance with the already existing heterogeneity of economic *reality*. At stake is a biased, violent accounting of economic differences that to some extent were already there. Although the discursive violence of capitalocentrism is characterised primarily as a discursive exclusion and omission of more-than-capitalist economies and of economic heterogeneity in general, its solution is not simply a more *inclusive* economic language. Indeed, Cameron and Gibson-Graham (2003) decidedly oppose their approach to an inclusive feminist economics of 'adding on and counting in', because the latter misses the transformative political potential of retheorising economies as such from the perspective of difference. As a feminist strategy, simply making more inclusive accounts of women's work is not sufficient:

> "[B]y staying within a binary framing of economic activities (masculinised/market and feminised/household etc.), the 'added in' sectors, though recognised and counted, remain locked in the subordinate, under/devalued position vis à vis the 'core' economy" (151).

Thus, the discursive violence of capitalocentrism is not corrected simply by better calculations, more inclusive accounts of economy, which in themselves demand no transformation of the ordering categories themselves. The implication is that if you want to take economic difference seriously, it will need to interrupt the calculative

32 This is consistent with the assumption of economic heterogeneity and interdependence as the starting point, meaning for example that "a capitalist site or practice is 'overdetermined': entirely (rather than residually) constituted by all other practices, processes, events" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 16). These interdependencies need not be acknowledged, however, and arguably this is just what happens in the capitalocentric organisation of capitalist sites 'in themselves', insofar as they by definition are organised around the selective, differentiated and restricted acknowledgement and compensation of 'producers' and 'nonproducers'. In this sense, the capitalist class process drives these kinds of asymmetrical relations of power, attention and commitment, in spite of its embedding in ideologies of free exchange. It compensates for some of its debts to more-than-capitalist economies, but on restricted terms, and in view of the reproduction of its class process. Then again, what is recognised, critically here, in and as a 'class process', is *already* indebted to a specific conceptual or cognitive economy that sees sites of (re)production in terms of their capitalist processing. A critical class analysis is in this sense *already* a contribution to the process's reproduction, the critical apprehension of 'capital' being a cognitive and conceptual requirement of 'class'. We have (at least) two definitions of capitalocentrism working against each other: on the one hand, the determination of a capitalist site/process seems to be necessary to define the exclusive capitalocentric dynamics that it organises. On the other hand, this very determination *already* assumes the sort of consistency (a site, a class process, a relation etc.) that, by refraining from other accounts and names – and by simply *re*cognising some relations and not others – is *already* capitalocentric. Capitalocentrism against capitalocentrism. *Economy* of capitalocentrism (cf. Derrida 1978: 117).

rationale of capitalocentric ordering, the restricted economy of its thought. What is to be done is a task of 'deconstructing the economy', for which the diverse-economic vocabulary emerges as a new representation, in which "the economy is emptied of any essential identity, logic, organising principle or determinant" (152).

Now we begin to see how the processes of deconstruction, hegemony and violence come together in Gibson-Graham's trajectory from a capitalocentric representation of economy to a diverse-economic one. A hegemonic order of discursive violence is dislocated, so as to reinscribe *all* economic processes within a landscape of heterogeneity, non-predetermined power relations and political contingency. Does this process correct the violence of capitalocentrism? I think much depends on the answer we give to this question. A post/critical answer would be: yes, to the extent that it allows for languages of economy more in tune with the heterogeneous realities and (previously) subordinated economic forms. But there is a host of issues opening up here, if we take capitalocentrism seriously. Let me propose three problematics openings from this line of answering, and the way it influences the *historical* treatment of capitalocentrism and diverse economies.

Firstly, there is a sense of *non-violence of reading* that runs through a post/critical articulation of capitalocentric violence. In diagnosing capitalocentrism *as* discursive violence, much depends on the terms that set the contents ('discursivity') and spatiality ('hegemony') of its existence. As we have seen, following Laclau and Mouffe, Gibson-Graham often stage an interplay between hegemonic, territorially exclusive capitalocentrism and its alternatives found through its deconstruction, a process that uncovers the underlying (ontological) indeterminacy and contingency – enabling, in its turn, more space for breathing. This is a particular pairing in which, as Barnett (2004: 515) puts it in a critical examination of Laclau and Mouffe, "deconstruction is aligned with a notion of ontological flux (the realm of the political), and hegemony is aligned with territorial closure and temporal fixity (the ontic realm of politics)". What is violent is the hegemonic order of calculation in capitalist terms. The non-violence that I want to highlight is not any straightforward sense an idealisation of linguistic harmony, but rather a kind of structural non-violence pertaining to Laclau and Mouffe's account of 'essential contingency', also termed 'essential undecidability', which is uncovered by/in the dislocation-cum-deconstruction of discursive hegemony.[33]

In other words, this is an ontological contingency, relationality and interdependence that hegemonies allegedly seek to foreclose, whose *identification* becomes central for another politics. The political project, or rather the pre-political project (in the sense of a deconstructive *phase* that comes before the political moment of decision – post-

33 As my interest is to understand how Laclau and Mouffe's particular pairing of hegemony and deconstruction translates into the work of Gibson-Graham, and what kind of difference this makes compared with Derrida's deconstruction, it is important to mark the limits of my trajectory. Crucially, I am not rehearsing Laclau and Mouffe's complex work in any detail; nor am I making an account of how their work has long been used by Gibson-Graham and other diverse economists (see e.g. Özselçuk 2009; Cameron & Gibson 2005; Miller 2013; Gordon 2016) to variously productive effects. There is a complexity here that I can only mark in passing in this context. My point is rather minimal: whatever 'hegemony' and 'deconstruction' do in diverse economies more generally, in the vicinity of 'capitalocentrism' their play seems to organise a rather straightforward post/critical trajectory that announces an end to the discursive violence of capitalocentrism. We may compare this with capitalism understood as a hegemony, and how reading for *this* hegemony for difference produces a heterogeneous landscape where more minimally and situatedly understood capitalist processes can also fit in, but with their relations reinscribed. Out of capitalocentrism as hegemony, by contrast, reading for difference most often produces a landscape where the problem is no more, not even as situated capitalocentric tendencies or processes of capitalocentring. The difference between these two 'hegemonies' and their methodological processing is the crux of my attention here.

capitalist politics), becomes one of uncovering this sphere of *ontological* non-violence time and again, and then *keeping* it as open as possible. This is why the looseness and simplicity of diverse- and community-economic vocabularies becomes so central, because they seek to resist the kind of political (fore)closures associated with capitalocentrism in order to keep the negotiation going (see Miller 2013). But this very move from closure to opening – associated with deconstruction – requires the *positing* of capitalocentrism as a hegemonic order. Again, there is an irony in the constative register that identifies capitalocentric orderings in order to open space for their alternatives, *simultaneously* performatively positing the problem at stake.

While the diverse economies framework does not mark an end to empirical violence, it does seek an end to the discursive violence enacted by capitalocentrism. As I see it, this is achieved in the proximity that the language of diverse economies posits with the diverse empirical reality. Insofar as violence is concerned, a two-level model is at play: first, the discursive violence of capitalocentrism, portrayed most often as omission, suppression and invisibility of heterogeneity; second, the empirical violence of our coexistence, which is rendered more visible and acute through the dislocation of the discursive order of hegemony. In the light of diverse economies, we begin to wake up from the night that capitalocentrism was. The non-violence of the reading works at *this* level, as a dislocation of the 'hegemony' we come to recursively realise as having blocked our economic imaginaries. Crucially, while the second-order violence remains to be negotiated, the effects of this deconstruction include the treatment of the first-order violence of capitalocentrism as present and accessible to its uncovering. It is a corrigible violence. What are left unasked are continuing and remaining forms of (discursive) violence, violences not undone by their apparition, not least notably the violences *enacted by* the language of diverse economies: its identification of capitalocentric hegemony and strategy of deconstruction.

Second, the *difference* that is offered for reading – as the blinding violence of capitalocentrism is superseded – is characterised by its *readability*. The choice of the favourite visual metaphor of the diverse-economic iceberg is not accidental, but a perfect illustration of the textual metaphor *already at play*, the becoming-readable of economic difference in the light of diverse economies. We are presented with "a hidden economic geography that awaits analysis" (Gibson *et al.* 2018a: 132), and energised by the injunction "to bring what is unsayable into language and what is hidden into visibility" (Community Economies Collective 2001: 5). This invitation happens, again, in a place that is already assumed to be beyond the night of capitalocentrism, one that allows the *recursive* identification of the violence that capitalocentrism was. This is what correcting the discursive violence of capitalocentrism feels like: the beginnings of another language, the becoming of another subject; and as such, it is an inviting and necessary strategy. Nevertheless, I do not think it is the only task at hand.[34]

34 Ken Byrne (2003: 179–181) interestingly describes the birth and usefulness of the iceberg diagramme, outlining the intuitiveness of the metaphor and thus its easy circulation within different pedagogical contexts. This, I think, provides a crucial testimony of the potential of a post/critical rendering of capitalocentrism as a hegemonic formation and the energising realisation of its non-necessity and contingency, the enlarged space of breathing beyond its discursive violence. There is an unparalleled force to this move that demystifies economies and renders them re-cognisable in malleable terms. Simultaneously, I do not think we should stop here, and model the concept of capitalocentrism *solely* based on the most readily available pedagogical emancipations. There is critical work to do, and pedagogical, emancipatory opportunities can exist side by side with critical approaches questioning those very emancipations – and vice versa (see Gaon 2019).

To consider how this affects the historical treatment of capitalocentrism and reading for difference, we may consider the genealogical perspective that both gains its strength through and reconfirms the extent of capitalocentrism's readability. Even in the most insightful diverse-economic analyses that work with historical materials and archives, we find an absence of epistemic and historiographical problematisation in the sense of an opacity or unreadability that would trouble their reading (see e.g. Drake 2020; Gabriel 2011; Gabriel & Sarmiento 2020a, Gibson-Graham 2020b; Sarmient & Gabriel 2020). In no substantial sense does capitalocentrism 'look back at us' from the pages of history; nor, for that matter, is it suspected to be a matter 'looking through us', in the sense of forming the sensorium that posits itself under analysis. Rather, the problem is assumed to be sitting in the archives, awaiting *our* dislocative, differentiating, deconstructive readership.

If capitalocentrism and economic difference are assumed to be readable in this sense of history as an open book, this is crucially strengthened by the non-problematisation of the historical economies of the archival that collectively constitute our sensorium today. Questions concerning the diverse economies of collective memory, the capitalocentring of/in archival institutions and practices, and the blinding as well as visibilising aspects of archival techniques and data formats are some of the things not questioned from an anti-capitalocentric perspective. This is what I mean by saying that capitalocentrism is found *in* the archives instead of being a question of their constitution. Not because it is not understood as a question of the constitution of what is archived and what is not – this is, after all, the crux of capitalocentric discursive violence as a question of (in)visibility, erasure and omission. Rather, it is locked into the archives in the sense that these are not seen to collectively constitute the faculties that theorise and submit them to reading today, including the capacity to call into question something like capitalocentrism. There is therefore a rift between the archives of domination and difference, assumed to be readable and available for our rereadership, and the perspective from which that readership emanates, which is left *un*read. In other words, the memory that allows us to cognise capitalocentrism is itself left unhistoricised, and as such it is positioned outside the archives of capitalocentrism. The problem that is left unstudied: "[t]exts are all we know" (Rose 2002: 397).

Third, these characteristics together conspire to make capitalocentrism an *ahistorical* object in the very mode of historicity that is afforded to it. With no historiographical questions in sight, and with the conviction of a non-violent readership, the 'reading for difference' is free to operate wherever and whenever. The anachronism, or the violence, of attending to 'economic difference' in different times and places does not become an issue. Now, Gibson-Graham are of course careful to recognise the existence of other languages for economic diversity prior to the language of diverse economies – for example, discourses of feminism, informal sector analysis and Marxism (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 57–59). It is not that capitalocentrism has ever *fully* 'colonised' the landscape, although sometimes we surely find ourselves close to such propositions (see Gibson-Graham 2020a). Yet the diversity of these languages does not call into question the designation of capitalocentrism as a hegemonic formation, or the performative problematics of doing so if only to be emancipated from it. I am less concerned about the (always) partial acknowledgement of academic and political languages that came before, and more concerned about how easily histories of capitalocentrism turn out to *reconfirm* its hegemony by staging its rupturing.

Consider, for example, Gibson-Graham's (2020c: 476) recent summary of their methodology, starting by rehearsing that 'the economy' is "usually seen as the ultimate

'real' – the obdurate container and constrainer of life". In the face of this hegemonic landscape (marked by what is "usually" the case), the choice is clear:

> "We can either retreat into the passive embrace of the couch reader who lets the text/world lead and refuses to interrogate the author about motive and outcome, or we can act as more engaged and feisty readers who battle with the story and try and shape it".

But is this how language, reading or 'the world' work? What work does this *assumption* of passivity perform? How does this assumption restrict the way we are able to identify languages of economic diversity? In order words, that people have been and continue to be resistant to capitalocentric discourses (*avant la lettre*) – struggling against them, negotiating with them, disappearing from them, staying indifferent to them, hiding from them, playing with them and laughing at them – is not an issue. The language that we are thus made to speak by calling capitalocentrism a hegemonic discourse, even in order to identify its 'alternatives', is, quite bluntly, not alive.

What is alive instead is the *present* moment teeming with possibility. If there is a flatness to the problem of capitalocentrism as a representation of (arguably) more-than-capitalocentric discourses, and if it is not a cause of epistemic troubles or doubts about its readership's complex performativity, these characteristics together produce a sense of *immediacy* (as opposed to mediacy) of the historical problem and its negotiation. A number of issues come together here: *if*, to start with, we assume capitalocentrism as hegemony *today*, the historical task becomes largely synonymous with tracing its genealogical constitution and affirming what supposedly escapes its logic. It is crucial to attend to how the assumption about the territorial and exclusive size and topology of the hegemony is translated into the terms of attending to its history and alternatives. The problem with this model is that it performs the most capitalocentric framing of the 'mainstream', its 'alternatives' and their historical rendering as a time of hegemony and of ruptural emancipations/dislocations. But notice also a narrowing of historical discussion and method: the 'here and now' becomes *the* time to be concerned with, as it provides us with the only chance to dislocate the hegemony's power. *This*, *now*, is where difference becomes readable, and where the violence of capitalocentric exclusions becomes corrigible. Responsibility before history becomes *our* historical responsibility: "[l]ike the Lacanian analyst, then, we recognized that a new future requires a new past" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 230 n1). And with 'reading against the grain' available to us, such a 'new past' indeed appears doable.

3.3 Memories of Violence: Demanding History

What is there to do, then, if we are not to reconfirm the hegemonic dominance, exclusivity and normativity of capitalocentrism in our historical accounts, and if we are committed to exploring it as an enabling and haunting matrix of power? How to think and undo its violences if any absolute overcoming is not an option? In this section, I ask Derrida for help in thinking the question of history in relation to capitalocentric violences, and thus to think another mode of deconstruction aside from its role as a 'dislocative' force (as in Laclau and Mouffe). With Derrida, wherever we believe ourselves to be is the place of inheritors, exhorting work with/in as much as against determinate legacies. It is a place riven from the 'inside' and from the 'beginning' with the problematics many other approaches would rather help us to see spatially externalised and temporally insulated 'in' history. Derrida's historical

approach can be characterised as trying to demand more of historical accounts – and letting history demand more of us (see Bennington 1987). As with the question of inheritance, the task here is to think (from) a positionality *within* the historicity that we seek to interpret, without claiming a perspective *absolutely* outside or above or aside from its objects – and yet *also* bearing responsibility for the *inevitable* 'outsideness', alterity or singularity of any such perspective. It is thinking in complicity, or in inheritance.[35]

Such an endeavour must seek to take into account what is ultimately unaccountable, namely difference and alterity, the otherness of history in multiple dimensions: e.g. the unavoidability of anachronism, and the unreadability of historical phenomena 'as they were'; still, the necessity of historicisation and genealogies, and their limits; the already-otherness of historical accounts and archived matters as they will have been read, without any final closure of that 'future' reading's context and motives; the responsibility to bear witness to history's horrors, and the horrors of specific modes of bearing witness; the historicity of structures and systems, including their non-closedness; the ethical imperative of alterity etc.: "If the word 'history' did not in and of itself convey the motif of a final repression of difference, one could say that only differences can be 'historical' from the outside and in each of their aspects" (Derrida 1982: 11). The task that Derrida thus proposes is to think history *différantially*, which means seeking to think with specific genealogical projects, but also with the closures and openings that define such historical accounts.

My argument's organisation echoes the three issues identified in the previous section, namely the *non-violence* of reading, the *readability* of the legacy, and the *ahistoricity* of the problem. Reviewing some of deconstruction's contributions for thinking violence and/of history, I will connect these issues with three themes arising from Derrida's work: the economy of violence, the (a)economy or general economy of memory, and the memory of promise. These correspond very roughly with the respective thematisations in *Of grammatology*, *Archive fever* and *Specters of Marx*. What emerges is a different view of what a deconstruction of capitalocentrism might mean and demand in terms of historical enquiry. After this detour, the concluding section of this chapter will return the focus to capitalocentric histories.

3.3.1 Economy of Violence

Much of Derrida's work consists of a kind of analysis that attests to the irreducibility and unavoidability of violence, inscribing restricted and calculable types of violences within an 'economy of violence'. The commitment to ethics that opens up from such an analysis is oriented against any ultimate closures that would associate ethics as such with finite forms of non-violence. Rather, the ethical task issues from the fact that violence is an irreducible part of existence, but treating it uncarefully is not. In a 1964 essay on Emmanuel Levinas's thought, Derrida (1978) intervenes forcefully in the making of a sphere of non-violence out of speech and discourse. Sensing a thrust to purify language into an ethical realm and therefore foreclose the very possibilities of problematising the inescapable burdens of that language, Derrida asks us to think about irreducible violences pertaining to discourse as such. I cite this famous passage

35 This is of course just one interpretation – a relatively straightforward, simplified one – of everything that has to do with 'history' and 'time' in the writings of Derrida. For good overall discussions, see Gaston (2019) and Hodge (2007).

at length, since it serves as a key coordinate for much of the following discussion:

> "There is war only after the opening of discourse, and war dies out only at the end of discourse. Peace, like silence, is the strange vocation of a language called outside itself by itself. But since *finite* silence is also the medium of violence, language can only indefinitely tend toward justice by acknowledging and practicing the violence within it. Violence against violence. *Economy* of violence. […] If light is the element of violence, one must combat light with a certain other light, in order to avoid the worst violence, the violence of the night which precedes or represses discourse. This *vigilance* is a violence chosen as the least violence by a philosophy which takes history, that is, finitude, seriously; a philosophy aware of itself as *historical* in each of its aspects (in a sense which tolerates neither finite totality, nor positive infinity), and aware of itself, as Levinas says in another sense, as *economy*. […] Speech is doubtless the first defeat of violence, but paradoxically, violence did not exist before the possibility of speech. The philosopher (man) *must* speak and write within this war of light, a war in which he always already knows himself to be engaged; a war which he knows is inescapable, except by denying discourse, that is, by risking the worst violence" (Derrida 1978: 117).

This is a remarkably dense passage from which, for our purposes here, two things need emphasising. Firstly, Derrida reverses the stakes of an originally peaceful language (speech) and exceptional or accidental violence (writing) by positing a transcendental, originary violence that constitutes or marks discourse per se. Language does violent things, or it happens in violence (we will soon see why), yet it must be employed against what he calls 'the worst violence', the repression of discourse. The only thing worse than discourse is no discourse, and therefore such repressions and forms of preset silencing must be opposed. The promise of a non-violent language marks, then, a denial of the violence that is constitutive of language/discourse. Secondly, the 'least violence' that can and has to be chosen is an attitude of 'vigilance' by "a philosophy aware of itself as historical" and "as economy". It still *is a violence*. Here we may recognise the familiar structure of inheritance, in which philosophy (or thought more generally) is situated within the legacy of (inescapable) violence, but how this legacy – its historicity, its economicity, in all of their specificity – is related to makes the difference.

Why and how is language inescapably violent? In *Of grammatology*, Derrida distinguishes between three types of violences, a distinction that will be repeat in many of his works (see Haddad 2008). These provide a way to understand what he calls the "originary violence of writing" (Derrida 1997a: 37). For Plato, argues Derrida, writing is violent in the sense of "dissimulation of the natural, primary, and immediate presence of sense to the soul within the logos" (37), and therefore, speech without writing, living memory without aides-mémoires, is spontaneous, natural and good. The task of deconstruction is not to reverse these values, but instead to show "how the violence of writing does not *befall* an innocent language" (37). One of Derrida's important interventions is to use the connotation of writing as something artificial (as opposed to natural speech) and as something violent (as opposed to peaceful speech), but to reverse the order of things so that both the 'originarity' (its 'always alreadiness', without origin, as differentiated from 'original') and the violence of writing (as arche-writing, text or discourse without outside) come to the fore, to demand responses to the unavoidability of both alterity and violence.

The three violences in *Of grammatology* are introduced in a critical examination of Claude Lévi-Strauss's anthropological account of the Nambikwara, in which he treats the problematic of proper names. Derrida is again after what he considers Lévi-Strauss's idealisation of a people supposedly "without writing", living in a state of natural innocence and non-violence. Derrida uses Lévi-Strauss's account to turn it upside down, as it were, by analysing this idealisation and the irreducible violences it fails to attend to. Of the three violences Derrida posits, the first two have never taken place as such, as empirical events. In other words, their historicity does not belong to a time of 'the past present', a time already positioned within the linearity that Derrida associates with "the metaphysical concept of time in general" (67). The first violence is quasi-transcendental or pre-empirical in the sense of being logically prior to the determinability of empirical violence. It is the violence that has already ruptured any determinate unit or identity through the fact that they are already implied in a system of non-present differences or *différance*. Units and identities 'emerge' from and as part of such a system, but this 'system' itself is not a closed context, nor is it understandable in the empirical sense of a temporality 'past present' – if we are to resist the metaphysics of time.

> "To think the unique *within* the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of the arche-writing: arche-violence, loss of the proper, of absolute proximity, of self-presence, in truth *the loss of what has never taken place*, of a self-presence which has never been given but only dreamed of and always already split, repeated, incapable of appearing to itself except in its own disappearance" (Derrida 1997a: 112; emphases modified).

This 'loss of what has never taken place' is crucial for appreciating what and how Derrida is trying to think here: not solely a system of (present, locatable, knowable, ownable) differences as we usually know them, for instance in structuralist theories of language systems, but a radical non-presence of an entity (identity, meaning, sense, sign etc.) that will have already been 'there' – or rather, will have ruptured any 'thereness' – for any presence and any entity to be. In other words, Derrida describes a structure of differentiation that makes differentiation possible through the establishment of differences. He calls "absolute past" that which "can no longer be understood in the form of a modified presence, as a present-past" (66). But this is not an ahistorical past either, because such a past would mean repositing a transcendental past untouched by writing and the system of differences that is to be thought with/in. This would be an elevation of an *arkhe*, whether in the sense of Levinas's transcendental "absolute past", Lévi-Strauss's state of non-violent innocence, or arguably Laclau and Mouffe's "essential indeterminacy" with its ontologised flow of difference. In this way, Derrida's thinking is positioned against *both* the empirical time of presence and linearity *and* the transcendental time of an ahistorical *telos*, and the way these two conceptions intermingle in a metaphysics of time.

The only way to resist this metaphysics is by thinking both the empirical and the transcendental differently, or *différantially*, as Derrida's quasi-transcendental strategy suggests. This is why Derrida couples his first violence with a second one, still pertaining to non-empirical 'time' and characterised as unavoidable. The originary violence as 'loss of the proper' is not available *as such*, not even for thought, which is why it is necessarily trailed by a secondary violence that is "reparatory, protective, instituting the 'moral,' prescribing the concealment of writing and the effacement and obliteration of the so-called proper name which was already dividing the proper" (112).

The loss of meaning implied by originary violence, 'the loss of what has never taken place', is thus necessarily reconfirmed by the compensatory effort that any identity is. This is irreducible, unavoidable violence precisely because the 'absolute past' at stake is *not* a transcendental past that is simply inaccessible to writing, but instead is *only* accessible *as* inaccessible through writing. "The trace must be thought before the entity", writes Derrida, implying that each presence (or entity) is already part of a system of differential play, which means that it is not present as such. But, he continues, "the movement of the trace is necessarily occulted, it produces itself as self-occultation. When the other announces itself as such, it presents [itself] in the dissimulation of itself" (47). The 'other' that is to be thought here is, in other words, already marked by the violence of dissimulation in its figuration. The secondary violence, then, concerns the violent cover-up of an originary violence, a cover-up that is as irreducible as that which it cannot help but seek to cover (by instituting an entity, figure, identity, mark etc., and therefore occulting the alterity of the originary loss). Identity implies closures *already* committed.

As Gasché (2016: 77) explains, this "second violence consists of covering up, of concealing, of drawing a protective veil over what language has always already done" to proper names and identities. Or as Grosz (1998: 193) has it, it is "a kind of counter-violence whose violence consists in the denial of violence", one "that refuses to face up to its own dependence on, and enmeshment in, the primordial structure". That 'language' will have always already committed these violences is to say that they will have always already taken place, without agent and without agency.[36] Crucially, this 'protective veil' does not seem like a violent cover-up, but instead merely like an identity. But insofar as this identity is predicated on a repetition with/in alterity, a non-presence and non-unity erased by the positing or re-cognition of a present unity, violences will already have been committed. The language that we inherit assigns us the capacities for (constatively) describing and (performatively) positing, but the system of its non-present differentiation is never reducible to specific (systems of) constatives or performatives.

36 My account here proceeds fast and bypasses a number of important issues, not without committing a certain violence to the specificity and situatedness of Derrida's interventions. Consider 'language', not the least of my simplifications here, and its association with 'text' in the case of *Of grammatology* and 'discourse' in the case *Writing and difference*. These terms have their strategic roles as keynotes of Derrida's interventions in determinate discussions and legacies, and serious attention to these would necessitate differentiating carefully between all the terms. He recounts his whole effort to come to terms with logocentrism by distinguishing between language (as centred on speech and the naturalistic values of voice) and text, *reversing* strategically their order of significance: "[l]a déconstruction est souvent représentée comme ce qui dénie toute extériorité au langage, elle reconduirait tout à l'intérieur du langage. Comme j'ai écrit qu"il n'y a rien en dehors du texte', tous ceux qui se plaisent à nommer langage ce que je nomme 'texte' traduisent, veulent traduire : 'il n'y a rien en dehors du langage.' Alors que, pour le dire brièvement et schématiquement, *c'est exactement l'inverse*. La déconstruction a commencé avec la déconstruction du logocentrisme, la déconstruction du phonocentrisme. Elle a essayé de dégager l'expérience, de la libérer de la tutelle du modèle linguistique qui était si puissant à l'époque – je veux parler des années soixante. […] Bien sûr, pour pouvoir déconstruire l'autorité du logocentrisme et du modèle linguistique qui était prévalent à l'époque, j'ai dû transformer et généraliser le concept de texte, si bien qu'il n'y a pas de limite, pas de 'dehors' au texte. Mais le texte ne peut pas se réduire au langage, à l'acte de parole au sens strict" (Derrida 1995b: 108–109; my emphasis). As so often is the case, Derrida resists the decontextualising representations of 'deconstruction' and insists on the specificity of each intervention's spatial and temporal context. Here, this consists of resisting the hasty association of deconstruction with an attention to language (and text) 'in general' and of reminding of the logocentric and phonocentric legacy where its specific interventions took place. Although there is no way to avoid the problem of decontextualisation altogether (see Barnett 1999), much depends on the degree of patience and nuance accorded to reconstructing a text's context in its deconstruction.

This is what Werner Hamacher (1991: 1140 n12) calls the "afformative stratum of language [that] merely *lets*, but never *posits*".

If these two arche-violences can easily be dismissed as theoretical or philosophical, which they are, their relationship to Derrida's third violence begins to clarify the political stakes of this economy of violence. The third violence, finally, is what we would call and recognise as "[e]mpirical violence, war in the colloquial sense" (Derrida 1997a: 112). What makes this contribution to thinking empirical violence and its historicity interesting is the complex relationship that it has to the arche-violences. The third violence

> "refers at the same time to the two inferior levels of arche-violence and of law. In effect, it reveals the first nomination which was already an expropriation, but it denudes also that which since then functioned as the proper, the so-called proper, substitute of the deferred proper, *perceived* by the *social* and *moral consciousness* as the proper, the reassuring seal of self-identity, the secret" (Derrida 1997a: 112).

Derrida thus associates empirical violence with both of the prior senses of violence: it "reveals" the (originary) violence of nomination and "denudes" compensatory (secondary) violence that pretends to be "the law, right, or reason" (Grosz 1998: 193), recognising it instead *as* violence. Grosz describes it thus:

> "Mundane or empirical violence reveals 'by effraction' the originary violence, whose energy and form it iterates and repeats; yet it 'denudes' the latent or submerged violence of the law, whose transgression it affirms, while thus affirming the very force and necessity of the law" (194).

This third violence is an empirical possibility; it can "emerge or not […] within [*dans*; also 'in the form of' or 'in the case of'] what is commonly called evil, war, indiscretion, rape" (Derrida 1997a: 112). Derrida's examples of this third violence are not mild, and they issue us with the necessity to carefully think through this empirical violence with the prior two non-empirical violences. Haddad (2008: 125) summarises the relations between the three violences: "There is the originary violence that always inhabits the proper, a secondary violence that seeks to deny this and maintain the integrity of law, and a tertiary violence that may follow from the impossibility of this maintenance".

The implications of this strategy of thinking about violence are multiple. Through the relationship of the originary and secondary violence, Derrida is positing an unavoidability of violence as such. What can possibly be avoided is third violence, the empirical violence that dissimulates the violences already pertaining to a proper. Importantly, Derrida also resists here any principled demarcation of the good and the bad. Empirical violence can mark the subversive ending of an oppressive law or moral code, themselves claiming to be the 'proper'. But it can also mark the annihilation of an always precarious body clinging to its identity and coherence and its all-too-finite life as a 'proper' being. Derrida's haunting insight is that these belong to the same economy and the same history – *ours* – and it alerts us to consider the precarious achievement (and collateral damage) of any relative, finite non-violence. As Grosz (1998: 194) describes this intertwining of primordial and empirical violences, Derrida "manages to show that everyday violence, the violence we strive to condemn in its racist, sexist, classist and individualist terms, is itself the violent consequence of an entire order whose very foundation is inscriptive, differential and thus violent". This is not in the slightest to denigrate the condemnation of specific empirical violences, but simply to point out

that such condemnation never arrives from a non-violent place, and thus it should not afford itself any gracious self-contentment (see also Malabou 2002).

This is why one "*must* speak and write within this war of light, a war in which he [sic] always already knows himself to be engaged; a war which he knows is inescapable, except by denying discourse, that is, by risking the worst violence" (Derrida 1978: 117). The vigilance chosen as the lesser or least violence (*la moindre violence*), in a determinate context, is all that can be done, within this inherited economy of violence. Everything depends on the abilities to tend the precarious achievement of lesser violence. By showing how the reproduction of a corporeal being or a solidary economy of coexistence are implicated in the *same* structures of irreducible violence as the most oppressive regimes and horrendous acts of obliteration, Derrida wants us (and himself) to keep awake. Hence the recurring call for *vigilance* as watchfulness, wakefulness, to the point of pathological insomnia (see e.g. Derrida 2002a; Derrida & Roudinesco 2004). Insofar as deconstruction tries to practise such a vigilance within the economy of violence, alerting us to "the irreducible violence that inheres in every moral claim, edict, or law" (Gaon 2019: 247), including ours, its key political intervention is to be found in just this kind of vigilance as a *critical* examination of any political projects and structures. If there is a recurrent concern in deconstruction for various forms of dogmatisms and hierarchies, says Gaon,

> "[i]t is because deconstruction radicalizes the critical philosophical imperative to provide grounds, or the ethical-legal imperative to seek justice, by submitting those very spheres to their own normative presuppositions. […] Deconstruction simply enacts the most vigilant response that is possible to the demand, whether ethical, political or critical, that already *has* been or *is* being affirmed" (Gaon 2019: 247).

What this means for capitalocentrism we shall soon see. But let us first bring this violent problematic closer to a historical thematic.

3.3.2 Aneconomy of Memory: The 'Origins' of Namelessness

The threefold structure or economy of violence that Derrida originally thinks in the context of Lévi-Strauss receives many iterations and transformations in the course of his work. Here I would like to turn more explicitly to a historical theme, although bearing in mind Derrida's warning against the burden carried along with this intuitive concept of 'history' and the way it too calls for our vigilance. The task here is to understand these violences in relation the constitution of collective memory and therefore of history, which Derrida especially tackles in *Archive fever* (1998). I am especially interested in mapping how the economy of violence relates to another economy, that of memory. Of particular interest is the relationship between general economy and restricted economy, the relationship between loss and accounting, as it will help us elucidate the stakes of assumptions about the (un)readability of history as an archived matter.[37]

37 My use of 'general economy' (or, 'aneconomy') and 'restricted economy' roughly follows Derrida's use of the notions in his reading of Georges Bataille and elsewhere (see Derrida 1978: 251–277, 1982: 1–27; see Plotnitsky 1993, 1994). Alan Bass (1982: 19–20) explains it helpfully in a translator's note to Derrida's "Différance": "For Derrida the deconstruction of metaphysics implies an endless confrontation with Hegelian concepts, and the move from a restricted, 'speculative' philosophical economy—in which there is nothing that cannot be made to make sense, in which there is nothing *other* than meaning—to a 'general' economy—which affirms that which exceeds meaning, the excess of

Archive fever is an intervention with/in Freudian legacy, and it puts forth a complex argument that essentially pivots on the identification of two voices of Sigmund Freud. On the one hand, Freud's work on the unconscious originates a profound challenge to Western metaphysics, as it intervenes in conceptions of the sovereign self and the cumulation of memory. On the other hand, in Derrida's reading, Freud also tames the radicality of his inventions by reintroducing metaphysical values to them. *Archive fever* thus intervenes in the prioritisation of living memory – with its natural relations to organic presence, and therefore to truth and origin as guiding values – vis-à-vis the secondary, technical and exterior accumulation of (written) memory relegated to the archive (compare with speech and writing in the above discussion on *Of grammatology*). This tension marks the book's argument and helps to clarify its stakes. But the book is also a work on archives, and on the interplay between specific, determinate ('empirical') archives and the ('theoretical') question of archives in general.

Originally delivered at the inauguration of the Freud Museum in London, *Archive fever* presents a sustained oscillation between considering the specific place (*topos*) and organisation (*nomos*) of a legacy's institutionalisation and the ways that a legacy necessarily ruptures efforts at its institutionalisation – and the way this plays into and against responsibilities towards that legacy's multiple injunctions. At the same time, Derrida's intervention tries to resist the value of *arkhe* implied by 'the archive', which he sees as allied to the logocentrism of living memory (or anamnesis, distinguished from secondary, technical hypomnesis). This is a system of values that allies the accumulation of memory in the archive (nothing is lost from/in the archival) with the proper places (Greek *arkheion*) and guardians-interpreters (*archons*) of the said archives. The restricted economy of the archival is thus allied with a topo-nomological ordering of memory, with the proper place and law of what is put in reserve. Additionally, another layer of the argument issues a sustained questioning of Jewish thinkers (Freud, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi) in the context of the 20th century's horrors, most resonantly archived in the book's original title, *Mal d'archive* ('evil of the archive') and then practically lost – in a perfect illustration of loss of meaning – in its English translation.[38] This consideration

meaning from which there can be no speculative profit". Derrida's chief contribution to the thinking of general economy is in his insistence on writing, inscription, and the introduction of quasi-concepts – *différance*, trace, supplement, dissemination, archive, writing… – that expressly *enact* "an irreducible, general economic loss in all representation by ineluctably—always already—subtracting from the fullness of any presence, original unity, centrality, or plenitude—whether they are conceived of in terms of form, content, structure, history, logos or telos, or other concepts defining Western philosophy." (Plotnitsky 1994: 41) If Bataille (1988) allows us to think of primary loss and superabundance (of energy) and the relationship of meaning and non-meaning in new ways, with a vocabulary for an "economy [that] is not ours—not ours to give nor *ours* to take" (Rose 2018: 9), then Derrida's contribution is to underline how such a movement (from restricted to general economy) negotiates and struggles with its inherited discursivity, its conceptual and textual economies which never attain a pure or absolute 'generality'. The question is of bringing restricted (philosophical, conceptual) economies to their limit by marking the traces of radical loss, alterity or non-meaning, rather than representing such losses 'as such' (as if such representation could simply transgress its inherited, restricted conceptual economy).

38 Carolyn Steedman (2001) clarifies the loss of meaning in turning the French title *Mal d'archive* into the English *Archive fever*. What gets lost is a whole thematisation of evil, an evil that is never far removed from the horrors of the 20th century. This connection is made clearer in the French insert to the book, which further explains its relation to 'archives of evil'. As Derrida writes: "[l]es désastres qui marquent cette fin de millénaire, ce sont aussi des *archives du mal*: dissimulées ou détruites, interdites, détournées, 'refoulées'. Leur traitement est à la fois massif et raffiné au cours de guerres civiles ou internationales, de manipulations privées ou secrètes" (Derrida cited in Steedman 2001: 8). Here, Derrida refers to the destructions, prohibitions and deceptions of archives and their 'massive

of 'the evil' helps elucidate the argument's sustained consideration of violence as an archival (and in this sense historical) issue.

Writing in such a context and as part of the Freudian legacy, Derrida puts much effort here into elucidating the loss of meaning that pertains to the archival as such and always threatens efforts at remembering and institutionalising collective memory. It is crucial to note how, through the oscillation between determinate 'topo-nomological' archival institutions and the general theme of the archival, Derrida is inscribing a *shared* economy of memory without an outside. In other words, the quasi-transcendental logic or strategy of argumentation is again at play: the restricted economy or topos of an institutional archive and the general economy of *différance* are to be thought together. This oscillation or double bind is visible, for example, in the way he first makes note of the institutional side of archives in the situated context of the Freud Museum, and then immediately generalises from the topo-nomological sense of archives to what he terms 'consignation':

> "By consignation, we do not only mean, in the ordinary sense of the word, the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit), in a place and on a substrate, but here the act of *con*signing through *gathering together signs*" (1998: 3).

A 'new' concept of archive ensues, one 'archived into' the concept of archive, and one whose sense as consignation in fact broadens the concept to denote *writing* as such (in the generalised, *différantial* sense of Derrida). If for *Of grammatology*, famously, "there is no outside-text" (Derrida 1997a: 158), then in *Archive fever* there is no outside-archive. A new concept of archive thus comes to being, but this newness is inscribed within the inherited (name, structure) (see Derrida 1981b: 41–42). This is, crucially, not to get rid of the empirical problematics we associate with archives as determinate institutions, or archiving as situated practices (which we cannot help but think with/through), but to elevate the sense of problemage by calling into question the basic (metaphysical) values and *arkhe*s that hold archives in their topo-nomological place – located within a calculable *topos* and *nomos*, under the auspices of an unproblematised *logos*.

At the centre of Derrida's thinking here is the loss registered as archives' 'death drive', a term borrowed from Freud. This is an originary loss that can be read as Derrida's effort to rub against the conventional promise/idea/*telos* of archives as cumulative and reproductive institutions – as storage facilities preserving original 'meanings' for (potential) future capitalisation. Each archive posits a law (*nomos*) and a proper, even if in the minimal (non-empirical) sense of repetition as secondary violence, as seen above. Because it repeats, by default, it is an effort that saves the singular while saving what is *archivable* (repeatable, iterable etc.) in it. It thus fails from the start, due to economic restrictions pertaining to its finitude (memory is always finite, partial, constrained by space and time, infrastructures etc.), but also due to what Derrida calls the "*in-finite* movement of radical

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and refined' use in wars and manipulations of all kinds. As Steedman continues: "[t]o say the very least, if you read in English, without the insert and with the restricted, monovalent, archaic – and, because archaic, faintly comic – 'fever' of the English translation, rather than with 'mal' (trouble, misfortune, pain, hurt, sickness, wrong, sin, badness, malice, evil…) you will read rather differently from a reader of the French version" (Steedman 2001: 9). Of course, this untranslatability of '*mal d'archive*' is a prime example of the loss of meaning itself. But it also matters for us here because in reading the English version of the book, something of the *violences* (and the evils) gets lost. In this sense, another violence of omission and amnesia is committed *by the translation*, which fails to emphasise this thematisation and haunting register of violence. Translation matters. See chapter five.

destruction without which no archive desire or fever would happen" (94). Just as the originary violence in *Of grammatology* marks the loss of what has never taken place, so this in-finite threat of archives is a threat to what has never taken place: a proper identity or entity, present as such, available for future recording and transmission through archives. Such an identity, a proper, is *already* marked by the violence of the archival (in the sense of differential repetition), which compensates for another violence that has already taken place (without taking place as an empirical event).

When an institutional archive is founded, then, or when an origin(al meaning) is conceived, the *arkhe* of commandment and origin is capitalised. Derrida is saying that this is not secondary to a meaning already established, but rather such 'meanings' derive from the repetition that allegedly marks their recording and simultaneously erases the signs of originary violence:

> "[T]he archive, if this word or this figure can be stabilized so as to take on a signification, will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory. *There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside*" (Derrida 1998: 11).

The translation here erases the topological doubling that Derrida's French allows in the expression "l'archive a lieu au lieu de défaillance originaire et structurelle de ladite mémoire" (Derrida 1995a: 26): "a lieu au lieu" meaning both 'taking place at the place of' *as well as* 'instead of, in place of' the memory's originary and structural "défaillance" – its failure, weakness, fainting. There are two places in this place. An archive that records meanings and therefore allows us access to what has taken place before. Everything is neatly in order, as long as we have an archive and it seems perfectly able to compensate for the finitude and biases of human memory. Its omissions are inevitable but also calculable, governable. End of story, but only if we have first assumed the archivability of original, present and proper units. If they are, by contrast, marked by *différance* 'from the start' – that is, marked by the loss of a property and unity that has never taken place, *and* by a repetition, archival, that posits the law and erases the traces of originary violence – then the ordered topos of the archive is doubled. Its double is precisely what cannot be accounted for by the archiving logic, that loss of presence and origin which is strictly illegible, a loss of what has never taken place. It is such an aneconomic and atopological outside or exteriority that marks archives constitutively, not (only) the empirical possibility of being with or without or in or out of them.[39]

39 I use 'atopology' quite simply as an (a)spatial 'equivalent' of general economy or aneconomy, as "something that cannot be reduced to the order of the same" (Kauppinen 2000b: 40; see also Plotnitsky 2007). Like with general economy, a conceptual economy is at stake, which is captured by the double sense of 'topos' as place and as a literary convention or theme. As Jari Kauppinen (2000a: 16) underlines, atopology refers to topology in the geographical sense but also to a "discourse (*logos*) *about* a topology." (my emphasis) This means that when something is atopological in Derrida's vocabulary, it always veers close to the *alogical* both in the sense of something non-logical and something without discourse, speech or voice (*logos*) (see e.g. Derrida 1981a: 156–7, 1988: 92–3, 1992b: 35). Therefore, with 'atopology' I refer simultaneously to that which exceeds clear spatial legibility (whether understood in territorial, relational or topological terms) and does so precisely by marking the limits of these inherited conceptual economies. I reckon that this is a rather hasty summary of Derrida's 'atopology' whose major implications for topological thought (see Kymäläinen & Lehtinen 2010; Martin & Secor 2014; Joronen 2016) remain to be explored.

While these concerns may seem abstract, they are never far away from a concern with empirical violence. But as with the economy of violence discussed above, here empirical violence is a (possibly avoidable) possibility that mimics the arche-violences. Again, the point of questioning archives as violent 'in themselves' is not to impose a moral judgement on them, as if we could do without archives and without their violence, and most certainly not to lament the biased archivation of originally peaceful, harmonious and unified entities. Rather, it is to call into question archival and memory work as such, by inscribing them within an economy of violence and a general economy of loss. What is lost in archivation? What motivates Derrida's concern with it? In an interview, he admits that his interest lies with the "non-repeatable singularity" exemplified by tears, singing and laughter (1995d: 388; see also 1987: 14–15). These are not readable in the same sense as sentences are, meaning transportable to another context; their texture is different, unique. As representation of singularity, however, they also escape full *un*readability:

> "[T]here is a certain readability of tears; but if in the absolutely unique moment of the song, the tears, or the laughter, there is already repetition, this repetition is much less obviously destructive of singularity than it is in a philosophical or journalistic or other kind of discourse" (1995d: 388–389).

The violence of tears and the violence of discourse are different, although both are inscribed within the economy of violence. At stake is the archivability of the singular only in a loss of singularity, or of specificity only in the loss of specificity.

The singularity of tears takes on a more haunting sense when Derrida associates it with the victims of history: "One of the meanings of what is called a victim (a victim of anything or anyone whatsoever) is precisely to be erased in its meaning as victim" (389). This "absolute victim is a victim who cannot even protest", and whose signs are erased from language and from history, making them impossible to identify. Writing, like archivation, Derrida reminds us, "is also the production of a system of effacement, the trace is at once what inscribes and what effaces", and the task it issues forces one to "meditate constantly on what renders unreadable or what is rendered unreadable" (389). Again, we see how Derrida locates the need for vigilance ('constant meditation') in the (impossible) task of reading the traces of the unreadable. Or, using the vocabulary of *Archive fever*, the death drive marks our collective memory from 'the beginning', and it leaves behind it "no document of its own" (1998: 11) or "no document proper to itself" (my translation), just "impressions" to remind us of the singularity therefore forgotten, in the very act of remembering: "memories of death" (11).

In other words, there is an irreducible and inescapable unreadability to archives that marks them from the start. A singularity matters as it matters in a *determinate context*, then and there – the event of tears or the precarious achievement of a person's life or the event of reading are not repeatable or archivable or readable *as such*. This is *not* because they are 'proper' and their archivation or recording in writing idealises or fetishises this truth. Rather, what is seemingly 'proper' to them in the sense of a singularity is *already* a repetition (secondary violence), a compensation for "the loss of what has never taken place" (1997a: 112) (originary violence). Their 'property' is therefore already a twofold violent effacement by and of *différance* as the deferring-differing of identity. "There *is* a certain readability of tears", says Derrida (1995d: 289; my emphasis), and "in the absolutely unique moment of the song, the tears, or the laughter, there is *already* repetition". This is why singularity is strictly unreadable, and why Derrida needs the notion

of 'trace' as a placeholder. Singularity is already lost, before the event, including for any phenomenological experience or self-apprehension of it, which makes 'meditating' its traces and unreadables no less crucial.

Crucially, however, after introducing this 'absolute victim', Derrida goes on to relate it to empirical violences that, we could say, again simulate the first two inevitable violences of this economy:

> "[T]here is also the unreadability that stems from the violence of foreclosure, exclusion, all of history being a conflictual field of forces in which it is a matter of making unreadable, excluding, of positing by excluding, of imposing a dominant force by excluding, that is to say, not only by marginalizing, by setting aside the victims, but also by doing so in such a way that no trace remains of the victims, so that no one can testify to the fact that they are victims or so that they cannot even testify to it themselves" (Derrida 1995d: 389).

This is why his discussion of archives constantly veers close to or is even presented in the key of evil ('*mal d'archive*') as an empirical act and fact, because the making of unreadables is such a repressive, denigrating force: "[t]here is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory" (Derrida 1998: 4 n1). It allows the rulers of archives to forget victims of history, and to forget their exclusion, by dissimulating the inevitable violences that already cover over their (absolute) singularity. Thus the *empirically* violent exclusions and repressions that mark 'the violence of the night', and a language/discourse that *evitably* covers over its victims, follow the trails of inevitable violences. We need language (or consignation, archivation) to testify to what it cannot possibly testify to: singularity.

This is not only an effect of malicious archiving, however, but also or primarily an effect of the finitude of any archive and any memory. There is *always* something and someone more, and something other, to remember. To underline this inevitability of loss is to compel us to relate to it, and how this relating happens is what makes the difference. But because the finite economy of archival institutions is *also* a political tool and negotiation, and this is an economy that cannot be cleanly described from an outside, the selectivity and (in)evitability of exclusions will always need to be questioned. The jarring part of all of this is that the avoidable and unavoidable violences mix in the *same* economy of violence, and we can never know for sure whether forgetting is necessary or not. As Matthias Fritsch (2005) argues, there must be an oscillation between the (transcendental) insistence on the unreadability of violence and a political commitment to make violence legible, two strategies he associates with Derrida and Benjamin respectively. These can also be understood as injunctions to think the impossibility of historical remembrance *and* its necessity as memories of the nameless. We inherit a deeply troubled legacy, a legacy marked by violences 'from the start', and these violences ought to make us vigilant, however unreadable their effects. But these unreadables always mix with the finitude of our institutional and collective memory, its political silencings and malicious exclusions: its ontic realm outside of which no ontology or transcendentality is accessible. This is what it means to oscillate between the restricted economy and the general economy of memory, or the topo-nomological and institutional archives and the atopological otherness and aneconomic loss always already at play. This is also why the figureless figure of the spectre emerges in Derrida's writing, to let us be haunted by the violences of memory.

3.3.3 Demanding History: Of Responses

Having revisited some of Derrida's violences, as well as their relationship to history and its struggles/victims, we can now begin to grasp the futural or promissory aspects of these considerations – the responses they demand. Here I wish to revisit Derrida's discussions of deconstruction as responsibility to history, and to connect this to the promises of the past. History demands a response. If there is a unifying motive behind Derrida's formulation of economies of violence and archival violences, it is so as to allow a 'raising of the stakes' (*surenchère*) of responsibility for memory and for questions of history. This is particularly clear with regard to his thematisation of *justice* in relation to history, memory and their inheritance:

> "As to the legacy we have received [*ce qui nous est légué*; also 'what is bequeathed, transmitted to us'] under the name of justice, and in more than one language, the task of a historical and interpretative memory is at the heart of deconstruction, not only as philologico-etymological task or the historian's task but as responsibility in face of [*devant*; also 'owing'] a heritage that is at the same time the heritage of an imperative or of a sheaf of injunctions" (Derrida 1991b: 953–955).

Crucial to whatever Derrida writes of memory or archives is a commitment not 'only' to the past or anteriority, but to what is *to come*. This, as Haddad explains, is the importance of the little word '*devant*', which is repeated in much of Derrida's work on responsibility – a word meaning 'before', but also the present participle of '*devoir*' ('to owe'): "[S]o Derrida's claims concerning a legacy lying 'before' an heir always carry an echo of the obligation to respond that inheritance entails" (Haddad 2013: 151 n17). What is bequeathed to us 'under the name of justice', the justice we inherit, and as a legacy that is itself multiple and contradictory, is both given and given to our reaffirmation – preformed and owing its performance. For there is no justice and no responsibility – and no inheritance – for Derrida if it does not take place in the aporetic negotiation of faithfulness and unfaithfulness to their given names:

> "One must be *juste* with justice, and the first way to do it justice is to hear, read, interpret it, to try to understand where it comes from, what it wants of us, knowing that it does so through singular idioms […] and also knowing that this justice always addresses itself to singularity, to the singularity of the other, despite or even because it pretends to universality" (Derrida 1991b: 955).

Precisely because it wants something from us, and that something is not reducible to singular idioms or addresses made in its name, since they do not help us here, now, to "be *juste* with justice". Therefore, in the name of justice, Derrida exhorts us "never to yield on this point", but instead to "maintain an interrogation of the origin, grounds and limits of our conceptual, theoretical or normative apparatus surrounding justice" (955).

Everything transmitted to us 'under the name of justice' must therefore go through a vigilance which affirms this legacy with the most detailed interpretative attention, but which also ruthlessly critiques its limitations, in the name of a justice that is – in a quasi-transcendental way again – excessive to the determinate history of justice's names and uses but nonetheless only accessible and readable through/in their reinterpretation and renegotiation. This is what it means to say that deconstruction "hyperbolically

raises the stakes of exacting justice": "it is sensitivity to a sort of essential disproportion that must inscribe excess and inadequation in itself" (955). Therefore, responsibility is responsibility *devant* a heritage, in the face of it but also owing it its reaffirmation as vigilantly as possible. This complicates the picture of an inheritance or a history for (or before) which we bear responsibility. Note how Derrida, in the quotation above that opens this section, distinguishes the task of deconstructive memory from "the historian's task" through the notion of responsibility before a heritage that simultaneously assigns us imperatives and injunctions. This is not to deprecate the necessity of historical memory and a genealogical effort to retrace histories as seriously as possible. But the injunction issued by a heritage cannot solely be tied to its repetition and reproduction, if only for the reason that repetition is already traversed by inevitable transformations and cannot but repeat *differently*, even if its best intention and effort is to simply reproduce. A constative description is *already* marked by the performative of *différantial* repetition.

The crux of this responsibility is the injunction to negotiate the undecidability between repetition and alterity, reproduction and performance, and truthfulness and promise. Derrida's historical perspective is demanding because it uncovers how and what history demands of us and *through* us. If in this historicity "we are in a region […] where the category of choice seems particularly trivial" (Derrida 1978: 293), it is because of the irreducible and ungraspable asymmetry that marks our finite being's relation to its inheritances. As we saw in the introduction, we cannot select our own our own heritage any more than we can choose where we are born, the first language we learn or the societal structures that infrastructure our being: "it is what violently elects us" (Derrida & Roudinesco 2004: 3). But its *reaffirmation* is our responsibility, a relaunching of the heritage that "continues and interrupts, resembl[ing] (at least) an election, a selection, a decision" (4). That it (only) 'resembles' these acts of a sovereign subject means that there is no certainty as to whether it is 'we' who choose, or whether it is the heritage that chooses to live through 'our' choices. The sovereign subject as we have come to know it is trivialised by this history. After all, there is no possibility to choose without an inherited possibility to do so, an inherited language to make sense of the options, and so on, which is also why heritages are not terminated even by their undoing.

This asymmetrical position of inheritors assigns an *excessive* responsibility. Its excessiveness is indispensable, argues Derrida (1991a), in order to avoid its turning into a "limited, measured, calculable, rationally distributed responsibility" that would amount to, "in the best hypothesis, the dream of every good conscience, in the worst hypothesis, of the small or grand inquisitors" (118). There are many important interpretations as to where this excessive responsibility arises from, whether its ground is found in the promise of repetition (Fritsch 2005, 2013), the aporetic heterogeneity of inheritances (Haddad 2013), or the violence of a closure having taken place before any affirmation of a norm or a position (Gaon 2018, 2019). The details of different readings of Derrida matter for clarifying whether his work provides a normative agenda oriented towards the unconditional affirmation of the other, or whether it is rather marked by a critical commitment to elucidate how any normative agenda is *already* marked by closures, already compromised.

In the context of the economy of violence and memory's (in)evitable failures, I think Stella Gaon's interpretation is most consistent and useful. Gaon associates the force of deconstruction with the vigilance with which one is to attend to the *inevitable* violences already committed by the inscription of any affirmation in relations of *différance*:

"[W]hat is normative […] is the vigilance with which deconstruction attends to the violence that eradicates (or seeks to eradicate) difference" (2018: 206). This applies to intentional and dogmatic erasures of differences, as in the empirical violences outlined above, but it also has an unconditional source: "[o]ne seeks to eradicate [difference] in order to establish meaning at all" (206–207). In other words, meaning (or identity, entity etc.) is already marked by the first two of Derrida's violences in *Of grammatology*, and its condition of possibility stems from the erasures by and of *différance*. To have meaning means that (at least) two sorts of violences will have been committed. Therefore, to return to Derrida's early formulation of the lesser or least violence that must be sought, it is so, writes Gaon, "because every determination of an ethical, political or legal norm (for example) that promises peace comes at the cost of violence" (208). Gaon's deconstruction thus becomes a critical enterprise cultivating a vigilance oriented to the "revelation of how, where, and at what particular cost, or through what particular violence, an irreducible openness has been closed" (209). There is no option not to close this openness, but this closure always has specific effects and determinate victims, be they readable or not. Attending to these as vigilantly as possible is what Gaon understands as the critical task of deconstruction.

One of the most jarring insights guiding Derrida's intervention within Marxist heritages is his way of filtering between Marx's voices and his insistence that the totalitarian nightmares of the 20th century – and I would add the continuing nightmares in the name of Marxism, for example as it is associated with various statist ideologies – are indeed inheritors of Marx. It is not that Marx's totalitarian followers betray his spirit; instead, they cling to a specific spirit, one against others. Derrida's effort in *Specters of Marx* is "to provide the beginnings of an account of *disastrous historical failures* on both the theoretical and political plane, as well as to effect a different kind of *repoliticization* of a certain inheritance from Marx" (1999: 221). This repoliticisation must also be distinguished from the "anesthesia of a new theoreticism, […] a philosophico-philological return to Marx" (2006: 39). This is "not to avoid its taking place, because it remains just as necessary", but simply not to allow it to prevail. The spirit or voice that Derrida affirms, then, is "what has always made of Marxism in principle and first of all a *radical* critique, namely a procedure ready to undertake its self-critique" (110). Like justice in or since *Force of law*, radicalisation is here understood as a vigilant movement of self-critique. This spirit or voice of Marx is described as an inheritance that Derrida or deconstruction cannot (not) choose but must reaffirm and relaunch as responsibly as possible. In *this* specific sense of radicality – a relationship of inheritance that assigns the responsibility of the most vigilant (self-)critique – Derrida also refers to his own practice as "this attempted radicalization of Marxism called deconstruction" (115).[40]

Fritsch (2005) connects this affirmation of a specific (non-totalitarian, non-quietist) Marxist heritage to the openness of the future, or rather to an openness *towards* the

40 Derrida's uses of 'radical' and 'to radicalise' differ. He sometimes uses the notion to refer to an 'absolute' rupture, and sometimes to an other of such an absolute. For our purposes, his use of the term in *Specters of Marx* is most pertinent and systematic. The 'radical' critique associated with Marx's legacy "*wants itself* to be in principle and explicitly open to its own transformation, re-evaluation, self-reinterpretation. Such a critical 'wanting-itself' necessarily takes root, it is involved in a ground that is not yet critical, even if it is not, not yet, pre-critical. […] It is heir to a spirit of the Enlightenment which must not be renounced" (Derrida 2006: 110). A footnote further explains the term in Derrida's call to 'radicalise' Marxism, and the risk of such attempts to reach for the roots (*radix*), the origins and the *arkhe*, and from this original place to assume an ontological unity of the tradition. His is precisely an effort to resist such a rooted movement; hence the constant insistence on the *radical* heterogeneity of the tradition (see also Alhojärvi 2019b).

future to come. His argument starts from Derrida's iterability. If any identity is already a repetition, that is, already inscribed in the economy of violence, this means it is also "never given in advance, in full flesh and self-presence", but rather is marked by the "possibility of repetition […] even in its singular occurrence, as a *trace of repeatability*" (67). An identity is enabled "by this possible absence", by its promise of future repetition so that it "can be understood by others and at different times. Otherwise, it could not be reidentified, remembered, reproduced, or signified" (67). A promise has therefore been made, in the very violence of the economy of violence, in that what was seen as the effraction of the proper now reveals itself to also be a promise towards the future to come: "[t]he promise is not a figure but the promise of a figure", as Hamacher (1999: 188) puts it, implying that the promise of repetition and alterity, indifferent to containable contexts and interpretations, is already issued, in the language we inherit (see also Barnett 1999).

This refers us to an openness that Derrida (2006), adopting Benjamin's vocabulary, calls "the messianic without messianism": "[A] certain experience of the promise that one can try to liberate from any dogmatics and even from any metaphysico-religious determination, from any *messianism*" (111). This means a turn away from specific regulative ideals and horizons of anticipation ('the future', 'utopia'), and towards seeking to affirm the promise of repetition as an openness to what is to come, meaning radical, unownable and unknowable alterity. But as Fritsch (2005) aptly underlines, to *try* to liberate a political project from any messianism (as Derrida has it) is not to say such liberation is possible *as such*. Rather, it is to ascribe what Fritsch calls a 'postutopian' promise that

> "does not deny, but rather implies, the possibility and importance of the projection of horizons of political change, although it directs us to a 'messianic' future that, being beyond all horizons, radically exposes all horizons to their instability and reinterpretability, such that no utopia can harden into a dogmatic eschatology or teleology" (Fritsch 2005: 91–92).

The promise is unreadable because it refers us to a future beyond our knowledge, but also because it is issued by a legacy that is strictly non-recurrable. Moreover, as the 'absolute victim' reminds us, at stake is a history of violence where the readability/nameability and unreadability/unnameability of victims are always co-implicated without clear lines of demarcation. The archives we inherit are violent on a transcendental and empirical level, and distinguishing between these levels will have been both impossible and necessary.

3.4 Violence, Our Memory

After this detour to study some of the questions Derrida asks of history, archives, legacies and violence, we are now ready to return to Gibson-Graham's problematic of capitalocentrism. How does all of this help us think a postcapitalist politics of the archival? How to understand capitalocentrism as a historical and historiographical matter? What kind of specific questions does it help us to ask of history – and what kind of general ones about the historicity of it all? Before we turn to these, however, a quick recap of the argument made so far in this chapter: through my effort to understand the sort of violence capitalocentrism denotes, the path took us to its role as a 'discursive violence' to be interrupted by the language of diverse economies. I argued that a post/

critical reading of this violence might prevail, and I illustrated this claim by tracing the interplay of a territorially and exclusively understood 'hegemony' of capitalocentrism and its 'deconstruction' understood in the dislocative sense of Laclau and Mouffe. The risk within this interpretative strategy, I argued, is of reducing the violences at stake and underexamining how this influences, as a pre-empirical set of assumptions, the kind of work that 'reading for difference' hopes to do in the archives. In contrast to this interpretation, then, I suggested another deconstructive take, this time more closely following Derrida's problematisations of violence, history and responsibility. The path took us to three elements in Derrida's thinking around history and violence: economy of violence, aneconomy of memory, and responsibility to history. Now, to conclude, let us fold this discussion back to capitalocentrism as a question of history. I divide the following into three parts that roughly correspond to the themes raised in the previous two sections: brushing against history's grain, the diverse (an)economy, and memory of the postcapitalist promise. The task is to work towards the theoretical infrastructuring of the reading for trouble to come.

3.4.1 With/in Violence: Brushing Against History's Grain

To begin, consider again the violences of our own inheritance. Let us return to the scene of the crime of capitalocentrism's invention – to skip for now, somewhat violently, the prehistories of the concept – in Gibson-Graham (1995). We should not neglect the fact that whatever capitalocentrism is, does or means, it also names a theoretical object performatively posited by Gibson-Graham. As we saw, capitalocentrism is introduced through an analogy with Mouffe's (and Laclau's) rethinking of 'the social' in terms of openness and multiplicity. Deeming that 'the economic' warrants a similar project of rethinking, Gibson-Graham write that it

> "might suggest, at the very least, that the economy did not have to be thought as a bounded and unified space with a fixed capitalist identity. Perhaps the totality of the economic could be seen as a site of multiple forms of economy whose relations to each other are only ever partially and temporarily fixed and always under subversion. It might be possible, then, to see contemporary discourses of capitalist hegemony as enacting a discursive violence upon other forms of economy, requiring their suppression and negation as a condition of capitalist dominance" (Gibson-Graham 1995: 277; see also 2006b: 12).

It is crucial that we weight the words here. Note the conditionals: the suggestion that the economy *might* not "have to be thought" in terms set by capitalocentrism, itself characterised by discourses that "*might* be possible to see", "[p]erhaps", as "enacting a discursive violence" and "requiring" the "suppression and negation" of other forms of economy. The simple proposition for an 'alternative' way of approaching economies thus posits, between the words, the already-thereness of "a bounded and unified space with a fixed capitalist identity". What is erected is a hegemonic or mainstream way of conceiving economies, which, however, *might* not need to be the only framework of conception.

As with 'capitalism' before – the seeming dominance constructed by capitalocentrism and dislocated by an anti-capitalocentric reading – here we have a seeming domination by 'capitalocentrism' that is to be dislocated. A hegemony is posited in order for us to be able to think beyond it. The positing of the capitalocentric

hegemony thus promises itself to deconstruction-cum-dislocation, a scene whose reference and reiteration guarantees a similar dynamic and strategy in most (post/critical) encounters with the problem of capitalocentrism. I think it is fair to call this a discursive violence *committed by* Gibson-Graham, as they confidently line up economic discourses under a seemingly "unified space with a fixed capitalist identity" – in order to call out another type of discursive violence (committed *by* capitalocentrism). We see how capitalocentrism comes to occupy the spatial-temporal architecture of systemicity previously occupied by capitalism, and similarly all sorts of identities/discourses – here, the heterogeneity of our economic languages – are lined up within its reach. The irony of positing a near-total coverage of their concept of capitalocentrism in order to call out hegemonic capitalism seems to escape Gibson-Graham as they lament "the violence entailed by normalising impulses, including the impulse to theorise a social site as subsumed to a hegemonic order" (Gibson-Graham 1999: 83). Thus, their own 'normalising' force in the very nomination of capitalocentrism seems to be left unquestioned.

What results from this substitution of global capitalism with an equally global capitalocentrism is an interesting landscape. Arguably, anti-capitalocentric thought reproduces the structure of anti-capitalist emancipatory thought in combining an apparently globally dominant 'hegemony' (capitalism/capitalocentrism) that more or less fully dominates its 'territory' with an emancipatory rupture or 'dislocation' that is surprisingly accessible to its claimant – 'surprisingly' because it interrupts so swiftly the hegemonic structure that is said to cover so much (of others') 'territory'. An all-too-all-encompassing (non-empirical) 'hegemony' is coupled with an all-too-easily available practice of 'dislocation'. The fact that Gibson-Graham's account reproduces, now on the level of 'economic discourse', "the twin dispositions of utter submission and confident mastery" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 94) of economic thought (as we (supposedly) knew it) is left unmarked and untheorised. My point is not to discredit Gibson-Graham's invention. Quite the contrary: insofar as 'capitalocentrism' names something to push against, a new line of struggle, and a new organisation of performative complicity with capital(ism), it is an original, singular intervention within the harmonious organisation of variously capitalocentric (anti)capitalist thought. It is interruptive in the sense that it denotes a new problem, a new performative entanglement, and new lines of struggle. It provides much to reflect on, and much to dislocate. My point here is not non-violent; rather, it is a call to reflect on, perhaps even radicalise, this violent intervention.

There is also another sense of violence(s) that intertwines with the nomination/positing of capitalocentrism. Consider the last lines of *The end of capitalism*, where Gibson-Graham (2006b) wedge a "divorce" in the "marriage" between their version of Marxism and the capitalocentric representations of a total, unified and singular Capitalism that, they argue, have so far characterised many (if not all) Marxisms. Their aim with this divorce is to increase the utility of (anti-essentialist) Marxism for concrete "socialist or other noncapitalist construction" (263). First marking their respect for the historical avail of the marriage, Gibson-Graham concede that "[t]his marriage has spawned a healthy lineage within the Marxist tradition and has contributed to a wide range of political movements and successes". Now, however, "I am suggesting that the marriage is no longer fruitful or, more precisely, that its recent offspring are monstrous and frail". These are the critically capitalocentric approaches to political economy critiqued throughout the book.

> "Without delineating the innumerable grounds for bringing the marriage to an end, I would like to mark its passing, and to ask myself and others not to confuse its passing with the passing of Marxism itself. For Marxism directs us to consider exploitation, and that is something that has not passed away" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 264–265).

We see how the continuing utility of Marxism is marked by the way it "directs us to consider exploitation", a direction arguably heightened through Gibson-Graham's ubiquitous politics of class relations and their resistance to equating diversity itself with positivity. To stay true to *this* spirit of Marxism, we must let go of Capitalism. The humorous phrasing of this letting go as a 'divorce' has very serious undertones, for it is a question of the continuing relevance of Marxism, and more decisively of capacities to both attest to exploitation and build a transformative politics around it.[41]

This provides grounds for my somewhat counterintuitive claim that both diverse economies and community economies entail an *increase* in our sense and experience of violence. In diverse economies, violences are multiplied and diversified through a language that allows a wider and more situated array of empirical violences to come into the light of its discourse, compared with any totalising anti-capitalist critique or idealising capitalist apology. While Capitalism blocks attention to exploitation and domination in its multifarious forms by centring attention on a restricted line of (class) struggles and their respective agents, starting from heterogeneity enables domestic feudalisms, contemporary slaveries and primitive accumulations to be studied and struggled against in more creative, nuanced and (hopefully) liberatory ways. In community economies, then, the increasing sense of contingency and negotiability arguably raises our sensibility to spaces of movement and action, but in this very movement it also alerts us better to obstacles to and reluctances for such action. Through the axiomatic assumptions of contingency and our capacities for ethical (i.e. not structurally predetermined) agency, we become tragically aware of how restrained that agency still is, and how strong the forces of reluctance will have been. We are reminded of Sedgwick's (2003: 146) comment on the painfulness of reparative reading (as opposed to paranoid necessity):

> "Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did".

41 This eulogy for the marriage has a last footnote contending that "[m]any Marxists will argue, rightly, that the reports of the demise of Capitalism are greatly exaggerated" (265 n24) and that Marxisms will have room for a diversity of positions regarding the possibility and desirability of this divorce. Yet, as representatives of "the anti-essentialist strain that has always existed within Marxism", Gibson-Graham put forth its necessity on political, theoretical and empirical grounds. 'Capitalism', in other words, continues to have relevance, "rightly", even if not within Gibson-Graham's approach. We might interpret this as a concession to capitalocentrism in its classic form: as an admission that 'capitalism' continues as a productive trope. I would be tempted to fold this concession back to nuance and complexify the polemical simplicity of 'divorce' as a key trope in Gibson-Graham's argument. Instead of an on/off (marriage/divorce) decision, we might need to study a much more complex, haunting and prismatic set of attachments between any critical apprehension of capitalism and its effects. Such an attention would not turn away from capitalocentrism due to its "monstrous and frail" offspring, but would instead be ready to negotiate and care for a decidedly non-nuclear family.

Therefore, I think a whole vocabulary of multiply articulated and differently conceptualised violences are promised to *increase* through the diverse economies framework. And that is how Gibson-Graham's work follows Marx's, Benjamin's, Derrida's and many others' legacy of interrupting the peace of homogeneous time (and space).[42] In this sense, indeed, at stake is "brushing history against the grain" (Benjamin 2007; Gibson-Graham 2020c: 484 n3).

The crucial blindness, as I see it, emerges from the lack of (self-)critical acknowledgement of the violences increased but also committed by Gibson-Graham. There is an economy of violence that is left untheorised and unpoliticised. Arguably, this is partly due to how the 'discursive violence' that capitalocentrism marks, understood as a hegemony already promised to dislocation, is a way of *restricting* attention to violences more generally. This 'discursive violence' still operates as a flat description of exclusion and omission through the 'hegemony' that is being dislocated by the language of diverse economies. As we saw, although empirical and corporeal forms of violence are nowhere near being eradicated, an end to discursive violence is arguably promised by the diverse economies framework. We begin to see the irony and the problem in claiming a movement from hegemonic discourse to an 'undecidable' terrain marked by essential contingency and flow of difference, a claim that is simultaneously associated with the end of capitalocentrism. In this sense, the problem with the performative nomination and identification of capitalocentrism appears to me to be not the radicality but rather the *limitation*s of its violent interruption – not the lack but the *disavowal* of its own violent operation.

Why and how does this matter? As we saw above, the importance of Derrida's irreducible and unavoidable economy of violence is that it issues a call for a vigilance that is not – or does its best not to be – satisfied with specific forms of non-violence. By assuming (transcendental, originary, irreducible) violences, and by relating possibly avoidable empirical violences to these, we are inscribed into a haunting space of negotiation. Now, if the diverse economies framework is marked by violences committed and disavowed – and not only opposed and negotiated – by it, a very different space of negotiation emerges compared with the simple ending of discursive violence proposed by hegemony/dislocation. The discursive violence enacted by the assumed starting point of 'hegemonic capitalocentrism' is a good example, because it lines up so well together, assuming people 'everywhere' to share its concern with the tip of the iceberg – as if such a concern were not a sign of privilege in the first place. For instance, the beginning of *Take back the economy* frames the obstacle of the book's propositions as an economic common sense produced by economic representations circulated in evening news programmes and newspapers (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013: 10), representations that systematically miss and marginalise economies 'below the waterline'. To 'take back' economies means reclaiming agency from this alienating 'machine economy' that portrays economies not only as having to do with 'the tip of the iceberg', but also as being technocratically operated by a class of economic experts. Again, this is a pedagogically and politically powerful vision.

42 Consider, for example, how Catherine Malabou (2002: 193) explains it: "[w]e do not at all think that Marx criticizes capitalist violence and its alienating power within the horizon of a communist promise of non-violence. Once again, struggle is the fabric of life. What Marx criticizes in capitalist violence is the fact that it ruins, numbs, and annihilates men by denying and obscuring itself qua violence, in the guise of the naturalistic ideology of the peacefulness of origins and of the equality to come. It is in this sense that this violence is unacceptable. It is in this sense that one must struggle violently against it, always play violence against violence – there is economy here too, but *revolutionary* economy".

Yet, by *presuming* (or positing) a 'hegemonic' economic discourse – and omitting any sense of language/discourse as a practised relation – the framework is in fact providing a very specific address to people who afford and are accustomed to take economic news seriously as their primary source of information concerning livelihoods and economic policy. That the non-primacy of the 'tip of the iceberg' might feel like a non-issue, or that newspapers might be read as ideological attacks against one's already precarious livelihood and concerns, or that one might be leading a life in perfect ignorance of expert-ruled economic fantasies, or that the visibilisation and pedagogisation of this 'machine economy' might imply its own violences of abstraction and presencing, are issues not delved into. There are thus closures from the beginning, and this needs to be acknowledged as part of the address's function, performance and limits. This does not tie the address to a particular reading of it, of course. But if we represent capitalocentrism as a more or less all-encompassing hegemonic formation, even (or perhaps especially) if this is only to dislocate it in order to analyse diverse economies, the violence that will have been committed should alert us into careful attention.

All of this is to say that economies of violence need to be understood as irreducible and (to an extent) unavoidable, so as not to foreclose the problematic before having read for it. At the same time, the very force of the diverse economies framework might be conditioned by violently exclusive moves. This is not to deny the framework's force or necessity, but to call for another form of critical vigilance precisely in the name of this legacy. As Mitch Rose puts it in a statement whose effects still demand our attention:

> "While it is no doubt right and proper for Gibson-Graham to help others create new visions of what they can become, she should be mindful of the calculus such visions necessarily unleash: the grids they establish, the margins they engender, the violences they perpetuate. The debt goes on and on" (Rose 2008: 151).

Conceptualising these violences within the diverse economies framework in terms of a shared inheritance of capitalocentrism yields the benefit of enabling us to work with what we have, and in the name of its radicalisation, to practise a self-critique without end. But this again demands that the problem as such is not present and transparent in any of its manifestations. An economy of capitalocentric violences, rather than (only) the violence of the capitalocentric economy. Violence against violence.

3.4.2 Diverse (An)economies of Memory

Derrida's historical thinking is characterised by an insistence on the unreadability and unnameability of victims of history, which many would like to see turned into motivation for a political movement. However, Derrida's insistence does not operate solely at the level of (transcendental, theoretical) unnameability, but must always also work with specific accounts and specific names – without the violence of nomination having *already* taken place. This is part of the violence of our economy: names will need to be used, even though we know they do violent things. The restricted economy of memory that accounts, calculates, names, approximates and so on – proceeding *as if* history were readable – must be related to a general economy or aneconomy of memory – a theory relating to the loss of meaning, memory, traces and unreadability. This is the shuttling – between the calculable and the noncalculable, the singular and the iterable – that is characteristic of Derrida's practice of memory work. We saw that this movement and negotiation between memorial economies is helpfully conceptualised by

Fritsch as an oscillation between Benjamin's nameable victims of capitalist injustice and the unnameable 'absolute victims' of Derrida. The latter's key ethical-political insight, then, would be to always seek to relate that which is nameable, accountable and readable to that which absolutely and irrevocably escapes those possibilities – but *also* to relate the unaccounted back to the possibility of the non-inevitable, political, suppressive archival. The archival 'death drive' or 'the archiviolithic', as well as 'trace' and 'cinders', are Derrida's ways of strategically marking the limits of knowledge, rather than proper names for what escapes it.

To begin to draw this back to Gibson-Graham and capitalocentrism, I want to highlight again how Derrida's problematisation of archives proceeds through specific, determinate archives understood in economic and spatial/topological terms. This is particularly clear and explicit in *Archive fever* and *Specters of Marx*, arguably two accounts concerned with the *topoi* and *oikoi* of memory and inheritance – the practice of economic geography. To begin *within* a specific legacy or inheritance is to resist its historicisation and contextualisation in the typical terms that allow a view over it or from aside it (see Barnett 1999). This means that each time we begin, in the banal finitude of where we believe ourselves to be, it must be justified, just as no *absolute* justifications for the beginning can be given (see Derrida 1997a: 162). But if, with Derrida, we find ourselves amidst specific legacies, and moved by the injunctions of these legacies, themselves always heterogeneous, they also call for us to resist their conventional frames of reference.

What is called into question is the starting point and the strategy that inherit a determinate, restricted sense of a text (e.g. a book), an archive (e.g. an institution) or an inheritance (e.g. an author's oeuvre) – and remain just as solidly and restrictedly *within* it by staging its ruptures *elsewhere*. Derrida's strategy is to remain *and* to differ with/in the terrain. A *determinate* archive (as institutional setting, discursive domain, geographical context, historical conjuncture, intellectual debt etc.) is inevitable and warrants the closest possible attention/account. But, precisely in the name of what binds one to an archive and its sheaf of injunctions, these determinations must then be called into question insofar as they restrict the very call (for justice) of what is inherited. Therefore, *another* concept of archive emerges: "The structure of the archive is spectral. It is spectral a priori: neither present nor absent 'in the flesh,' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met" (Derrida 1998: 84). But as we have seen, this spectral sense of the archive must always be related to specific institutional settings, the archives that we find ourselves in: "[d]econstruction is an institutional practice for which the concept of the institution remains a problem" (2002b: 53; emphasis removed).

Whatever archives are in a general, abstract or spectral sense, they are also economies of memory understood in an infrastructural, material and institutional sense. Consignation takes place *here* too. The difficulty, and the promise, is in seeking to relate this here and now with its immediate necessities of reading and acting to the *différantially* mediated, unreadable memory. As we saw, Gibson-Graham (2020c) relate the act of reading for difference to Benjamin's 'brushing history against its grain' in his *Theses on the philosophy of history*. In his thesis number seven, Benjamin famously portrays the continuous, homogenous procession of history as the history of victors. The cultural treasures and documents of civilisation that mark the developmentalist narrative of historical progress and linear time are, for Benjamin, a reason for "horror":

> "They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries.

> There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another. A historical materialist therefore dissociates himself [sic] from it as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain" (Benjamin 2007: 256–257).

This is part of Benjamin's argument against bourgeois historicism as well as teleological versions of Marxism that amount to quietism in the face of history's inevitable progress. 'Brushing against history' is to be understood in this context as an interruption of homogeneous time and history as progress, as the continuous accumulation of 'cultural treasures' and 'civilisation' – a chain of events he also calls "one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage" (257). Both the existence *and* the transmission of any "document of civilization" from "one owner to another" is tainted by "barbarism", the silence of "anonymous toil" – or as Fritsch (2005: 29) translates it in slightly more haunting terms, of "nameless drudgery".

As Shoshana Felman (1999: 210) explains: "Because official history is based on the perspective of the victor, the voice with which it speaks authoritatively is *deafening*; it makes us unaware of the fact that there remain in history a claim, a discourse that we *do not hear*". Fritsch notes that Benjamin (1974: 1241) elsewhere calls for a "memory of the nameless" (*Gedächtnis der Namenlosen*), even dedicating his 'historical construction' to "the nameless". Fritsch (2005: 29) reads in Benjamin a consistent concern with the erasure of the drudgery of the nameless, an omission of the "many lives who are not represented or acknowledged in our heritage". The point of distinguishing between the memory of the nameless and the memory of the dead in general, says Fritsch, is to distinguish a materialist historiography from universalising historiography, thus resisting histography's "complicity with oppression and disenfranchisement in the present" and its tendency to "sever its link to present oppression and a power that can be resisted in the here and now" (161). Reclaiming this interruptive 'brushing' of memory's grain, in the present, is the task.

This provides an interesting possibility to compare Gibson-Graham's anti-capitalocentric reading with Benjamin's brushing against the grain – two attempts at a violent interruption of the homogeneous or peaceful time of history. What is clear by now is that archives need to be studied as economies of memory, and this includes the effort to read practices of collective memory as difference, thus brushing capitalocentric homogeneous time (and space) against the grain. What a reading for difference promises is to populate the abstract landscape of archives with actual bodies and practices. For every *archon* with a sharp pen, there is a *arkheion* waiting to be cleaned (cf. Fraad *et al.* 1989). For every piece of data, there is an infrastructure to be upkept; for every text, a con-text to be managed. Consignation, and the archival, is metabolic – its interdependency and infrastructuring need constant reproduction. Nameless drudgery is all over the place, before some of it – and some part of what it is – will have become inscribed in archives. And while Fritsch's (2005) account oscillates between two senses of namelessness he finds in Benjamin – 'nameless drudgery' and 'drudgery of the nameless' – we may note the crucial consideration opening up from the difference between the (un) accountability of toil and the toiler. There are missing toils, and missing toilers, and their topologies and economies may intersect, but not necessarily or homologically.

Again, nomination is *already* indebted to arche-violences, or the archiviolithic, which will have left behind an originary loss and an absolute victim. The heads (*cap*) that *can* be capitalised in and as archives – and those that *will have been* capitalised – are always

different, but the difference is hard, perhaps impossible, to establish.[43] More archives and more *inclusive* archives; more of *other* archives and more inclusive of *others of* archives – all of these are empirical possibilities. More names for the nameless, and for the nameless drudgery. Yet they will have remained all too finite to remember it all, and they arrive all too late, with debts already fatally forgotten. The debt is immeasurable. "It is only in the bind to labor that we can start to decrypt our possibilities of collective liberation", as Benjamin Noys (2016: 147) writes. Yes, but only if we take this 'labour' in terms much more expansive and demanding than have been archived in any critical common sense of the term. This 'decryptation' itself is bound to and by the drudgery of the nameless as well as the nameless drudgery.

What I mean to propose through this is a kind of anti-capitalocentric memory work that takes seriously the challenge of history's unreadability as well as its readability. A diverse economy of memory work could take as its mission the elucidation of all of these necessary and unnecessary omissions – including their epistemic consequences for knowing historically. Moreover, an anti-capitalocentric effort will need to seek to acknowledge and interpret *what reads through us* – and how that may affect how specific phenomena are readable or not to us. We should not rush to collapse theoretically or empirically the differences between firstly what is archivable in principle but has not been archived in practice (whatever the reason), secondly what is not archivable even in principle, an omission that does not prevent attempts at compensation (which may or may not be archived as traces), and thirdly what may have been archived but not in an archive (a medium, a form, a language etc.) accessible to a specific viewer, positionality or literacy. This third form of unarchived allows us to assume other archives that are unreadable for a specific viewer – say, *us* – but may not be so for others. This includes archives that are untranslatable into a specific language – say, the language of general equivalency (money), or the language of global English, or language as a restricted economy of communication (see my chapter five). This unreadability traverses the two prior ones in a sense that introduces epistemic uncertainty to them and a necessity for critical self-reflection to us. These three unreadabilities may well be merged in ways that make any such differentiations utterly difficult, and indeed impossible in any absolute or unproblematic manner.

What emerges from this discussion of economies of memory in a diverse-economic register is a historical imagination that insists on the importance of *archivability* in performing the effects we understand as capitalocentric – the givenness of global capitalism, the restrictedness of our economic vocabularies, the homogeneity of economic forms and relations, etc. Again, to follow Derrida's legacy on archives means that we cannot pass

43 I am thinking here of Derrida's differentiations in *The other heading*, his play with capital matters: "beyond *our heading*, it is necessary to recall ourselves not only to the *other heading*, and especially to the *heading of the other*, but also perhaps to the *other of the heading*, that is to say, to a relation of identity with the other that no longer obeys the form, the sign, or the logic of the heading, nor even of the *anti-heading* – of beheading, of decapitation. The true title of these reflections, even though a title is a heading or headline, would orient us rather toward the other of the heading" (Derrida 1992c: 15–16). If we start to think of memory as archival capitalisation, or of capitalocentrism as a process of centring on various headings, this playful passage gains a capital seriousness. At stake are other capitalisations, other memories, other inheritances, but also the others of these 'caps'. Now, whatever the title of his book, Derrida concentrates here as elsewhere most explicitly on *the other of the heading*: the aneconomic or general-economic openings of restricted capitalisations. Hence his mention of his "true title". I suspect that if one were to return the favour of critique and deconstruction presented in this thesis and turn the attention mainly to Derrida, one could look into how 'other headings' (*other* restricted economies) are in fact sidelined and treated largely as a given in his capitalisations of the 'other of the heading' (general economy).

over the fact that we are always amidst determinate archives, always indebted to specific legacies, while what is given is neither reducible to them, nor can it be understood as singular, homogeneous, or univocal in its injunctions. Thus, the general economy of unavoidable archival loss must be related to avoidable loss, empirical violence, omission and silencing of more-than-capitalist economies and of heterogeneity within the economic. The difficult, and promising, part is that no clean demarcation between these two violences can necessarily be found or even conceptualised in any sufficient manner. If *all* of history – at least since the beginning of discourse and of capitalisation – is a history of the capitalocentric matrix, whatever it also is, this means that ours is a legacy that builds upon layers upon layers of unavoidable and avoidable violences committed against those whose 'nameless drudgery' will have remained outside of archivability. Then again, as the archival and nomination also do violences, the namelessness of drudgery should not simply be equated with a lack; nor is there anything unproblematic, non-violent, in the desire to give names to the nameless. It might be the least violent thing to do, but not always and not necessarily.

This should alert us against any quick efforts to associate capitalocentric memory with (only) a specific form of archiving, or conversely to posit in 'reading for difference' a straightforward, transparent solution to the problem of namelessness. For example, Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2016) rightly diagnose a capitalocentric tendency in theories that associate the commons primarily with a legal form of property, thereby missing the relational common*ing* that makes the commons and can in effect be practised with *any* form of property. To remain within an imagination of what is and can be archived within the property form and legal code is a restricted economy for sure, productive of what Peter Linebaugh (2014: 255) calls the "invisibility of the commons". Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2016) instead call for attention to the empirics of commoning. They propose an "anti-capitalocentric approach of reading the commons for difference", which moves its attention away from "formal and abstract legalities" and into the "actual practices of maintaining or creating commons, or commoning enclosed or unmanaged resources" (198). There is much promise in this approach for an enlivened enquiry and politics of the commons, one that is able to trace other genealogies than those recorded in legal property forms.

Yet we should not forego legal forms, or assume that our other genealogies can be free from the formative language of law and access relational forms of commoning directly, as it were, without interference from and epistemic trouble caused by (capitalocentric) economies of the archival. The danger here is to have operated with a thin (post/critical) capitalocentrism (associated with legal forms) that will have allowed us to posit its alternatives as a "different historical trajectory" (207; cf. Healy 2018) independent of those forms and problems that constitute our diverse-economic economic archives. Just as commoning will have needed to take into account the obstacles and possibilities presented by specific property forms and specific apparatuses of governance, even if only to remain *strategically* indifferent to them, we will need to study how the inheritedness of our economic languages and archives of property and ownership obstruct any simple politics of an outside to capitalocentrism. The history of legal forms carries the histories of commoning, as if in spite of itself (cf. Fritsch 2005: 158, 170). Will the namelessness of commoning have been avoidable or unavoidable? How shall we know? The promise here, in this sense, is not an end to the night of capitalocentric violence as it becomes illuminated by the light of diverse economies. Rather, it alerts us to a mode of enquiry that will need to be ours, *assuming* that we are sleepwalking, for now.

3.4.3 Remembering Postcapitalist Promises

Let us now return to the violences I associated with diverse economies and community economies. I argued above that both of these vocabularies or strategies should also be understood as violent interventions, not only as emancipations from the violence of capitalocentric discourse. Let us restate the argument. In diverse economies, violences are multiplied and diversified by interrupting the ideological homogeneity of capitalocentric discourse (insofar as it consists of a 'tip of the iceberg' imaginary). We get a reality that is much more heterogeneous – much better and much worse – than capitalocentric ideology acknowledges. And it demands our equal empirical, theoretical and political attention to the most emancipatory solidarity economies, as well as the most exploitative slave enterprises, which are *both* marginalised and ignored in capitalocentric discourses. Again, this is a prismatic economy, defying the scheme of light usually allotted to 'economy'.[44] This underlines the importance of starting (empirically, theoretically, politically etc) from an economic heterogeneity much more promising *and* devastating than the peace of capitalism professes. By engaging with this diversity, we get a deepened sense of the discursive violence that capitalocentrism, understood in the thin sense of hiddenness, *was*. We start to ponder the distance between what appear *simultaneously* as an easily undoable obstacle and a global 'hegemony'. Also, quite bluntly, the diversity of economic exploitation comes to the fore, as it is not guard-railed by assumptions of capitalocentric non-violence – for example, the symmetrical freedom of wage relations, or the intuitive good and *telos* of economic development. In community economies, then, the increasing sense of violence emanates from the recognition that things could be and could have been different. By *assuming* contingency (as opposed to predetermination) and ubiquitous economic agency (as opposed to presocialised necessity), we are confronted with the violent restraints, reluctances and objections to a more sensible economic life.

One thing that has so far received limited attention in diverse-economic research is the assumption that economies have already been diverse. Each time ethical negotiation has been practised to decide against seeming necessities, each time interdependency has been negotiated to sustain good livelihoods, each time capitalocentric (*avant la lettre*) orderings have been bypassed, *promises* will have been issued. These promises are not directly communicated from then on to now, but instead always mediated by archives of different sorts – think of the mediacies of language, institutional archives, intellectual legacies, political movements and archival economies in the diverse-economic sense outlined above. To hear the injunction of postcapitalist memory, here and now, will have demanded some kind of negotiation of these infrastructures that transmit the promise of

44 The diverse economy, again, is not a dualistic categorisation of light (good) and darkness (bad), or just a new categorisation of the shades of economy (e.g. from black and grey economies to transparent, enlightened ones). These terms refer us to some of the most concerning ethnocentric and classist assumptions of conventional economic thought (including its critique) and the ways its 'colour scheme' and implicit values work in racialising ways. If I return to 'prismatic economy', it is also to draw attention to the continuing assumptions about light (transparency, ethical economy) and darkness (hiddenness, exploitation) that continue to influence work on diverse economies – not least in the case of the iceberg and the agenda of illumination that it offers. It is also to push a consideration of visual metaphors more generally, e.g. the way 'sensorium' and 'blindness' operate in my own text, not without ableist burdens. Here I also want to mark the crucial and deeply challenging, *radical* work that is beginning to emerge at the intersections of diverse economies and the critical study of racial capitalism (see e.g. Bledsoe *et al.* 2019; Hossein 2019). I consider that some troubling and productive insights will be excavated by challenging the diverse economists among us to take racial capitalism seriously.

memory to us. Again echoing Benjamin (2007: 256), we may want to remember how the 'barbarism' of 'civilised' history is not only in a document that partakes in our collective archives known as history; rather, it "taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another". A diverse-economic perspective on archival economies might help us make sense of such barbarisms in transmission or mediacy, but this should not be taken to mean the possibility of a full disclosure of the problem of our inheritance.

This should make us pause to consider that the capitalocentrism of historical 'transmission' (or archival economies) is in the very assumptions that fold together temporalities in diverse-economic enquiry to present us, time and again, with the task of identifying a (discursive) 'hegemony' and looking for its alternatives. As I argued above, we may identify a discursive violence in the identification of capitalocentrism as hegemony, as its nomination performs a lining up of economic-discursive realities under a prevailing object, capitalocentrism. We now begin to sense how exactly this violence might translate itself, through the (post/critical) methodological strategy that cannot but identify and dislocate a 'hegemony' in capitalocentrism, into a capitalocentrically structured binary dynamic between the mainstream history of capitalocentrism and the alternative histories of its others.

Within this structure, non-capitalocentric accounts indeed remain "faint stutterings of a new language" (Gibson-Graham 2020a: 3) filtering through, (always) from the future. This is because when economic discourses are aligned together under hegemonic capitalocentrism, their diversity and prevalence are missed – thus also missing resistances to capitalocentrism, differences from it, etc. And when *this* is missed and rather wilfully omitted by the positing of capitalocentric hegemony as having colonised the space of economic discourse, the capacities for accounting for slippages of this narrative escape the language and project of diverse economies. Careful historical genealogies would need to retrace various discourses and practices that defy capitalocentric motives – I am thinking for example of histories of resistance, silence, defiance and escape – while remaining attentive to the reproduction of their erasure in the very terms of their testimonial. Without such other histories, and simultaneous accounts of their archival economies that allow their transmission, we are left with an eternal present moment, with its compulsive repetition of a repressive and homogeneous (capitalocentric) past in order to be emancipated towards a future of diverse economies.

In a recent text that demonstrates some of the potentials of a historical-cartographical approach to diverse economies, Luke Drake (2020) takes up the case of Mexican-American neighbourhoods razed and displaced during the urbanisation of modern Los Angeles in the first half of the 20th century. This is usually recounted primarily in terms of communities' historical eviction from the land, and Drake identifies a capitalocentric narrative that defines and identifies the communities primarily with reference to their displacement, thus contributing to a unilinear history of modernisation and apologising (at best) for their *necessary* annihilation. Making use of various archives, Drake construes an alternative cartography of these communities that uncovers socio-economic heterogeneity and a variety of professions and economic sites. Arguing for historical methods that take economic diversity as their object and read against "the strong theory of historical change" (498), Drake outlines an important historical task. Interestingly, he says, to reaffirm already known accounts of historical change would be easier, affirming a given "timeline of displacement and destruction" (498) and victimhood. But "[t]o do so would have performed a discourse of dominance, and the neighbourhoods would have remained erased". This is a curious phrase that offers a double lesson for a materialist-postcapitalist historiography.

Firstly, what Drake manages to emphasise here with great clarity is the promise and injunction issued by diverse economies as a historical assumption guiding empirical work. Whatever the more-than-capitalist diversity of actually existing livelihoods, it warrants the most serious historical accounting that works against capitalocentric homogeneity, undifferentiation, and the inevitability of historical development. The promise of past diversity is that it can be rendered visible again, and accounted for, in light of another economic sensibility and politics. The task we receive comes with an equally dangerous proposition: that the omission of diversity, or the erasure of communities such as these, is *reproduced* by capitalocentric silences – and to the extent that we fail to make accounts, and fail to respond to the call of more-than-capitalist promises, their erasures are carried on into the future.

In this sense Zanoni *et al.* (2017: 581) are correct to identify in postcapitalist historiography the "historical responsibility for the decisions we take in our scholarly praxis everyday thereby bearing responsibility for the future that is coming". This is not solely in the sense that we have the responsibility to make things better; rather, we face the injunction to choose a lesser violence, reproduce capitalocentrism a little less. The inadequacies of diverse-economic scholarship today – insofar as it cannot and will not have made all possible accounts of economic heterogeneity – will have reproduced the capitalocentric default omissions. Choosing the lesser violence means attending to the specificity of each more-than-capitalist economy and making as clear accounts as possible. Erased communities, in this sense, call for us not to reproduce their erasure through silence, the worst kind of violence, as Derrida has it. Again, as Derrida (1995d: 389; my emphasis) puts it: "One of the meanings of what is called a victim (a victim of anything or anyone whatsoever) is precisely to be *erased* in its meaning as victim". This is not a process without remainders, without impressions left in memory. Capitalocentric accounts of homogeneous, incontestable development are undoubtedly a form of violence that will have cultivated a specific type of victimhood – as collateral damage and martyrs of 'economic development'.[45]

But there is a second lesson that might provide less directly empirical and more haunting tasks: by saying that the communities "would have remained erased" without their 'reading for difference', Drake might be seen as claiming that *now*, with his account and others, such an erasure is not the case. In this interpretation, the task of diverse economies would again be a post/critical emancipation of previously silenced/erased economies. The responsibility for history is collapsed, quite hyperbolically, into *our* historical responsibility. While this is an exhilarating proposition that underlines the power of historical reinterpretation and its force to quite literally change history, I think we ought to tread extremely carefully here. We might contrast this belief in the power of performative historical accounts with Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's (2019) recent work on 'potential history' committed to 'unlearning imperialism'. In her work of political and photographical theory, Azoulay revisits a number of colonial and imperial archives

45 I am also thinking here of Timothy Mitchell's crucial work on the violent modernisation of Egypt: "[a] violence that erased every sign of itself would be remarkably inefficient. The death, the disappearance, the physical abuse or the act of torture must remain present in people's memory. To acquire its usefulness in the play of domination, violence must be whispered about, recalled by its victims, and hinted at in future threats. The disappearance or the hidden act of terror gains its force as an absence that is continually made present" (Mitchell 2002: 153). *Mal d'archives*, again. Mitchell brilliantly outlines the kinds of 'hauntologies' (Derrida 2006) that might traverse the 'ontology' of private property and social hierarchies, not so much threatening *them* but rather transmitting and amplifying the threat of their predication.

and their others, theorises histories detached from imperial timelines and structures of power, and discusses a breathtaking array of sites and practices of archiving, recording, remembering and resisting. She gives a well-articulated, bold set of propositions for an interventionist historiography

> "as an active mechanism that seeks to maintain the principle of reversibility of what should have not been possible, a refusal of imperial shutters closing in the first place. Potential history does not mend worlds after violence but rewinds to the moment before the violence occurred and sets off from there" (Azoulay 2019: 10).

This is the crux of her notion of 'unlearning' the imperial drive towards progress. Unlearning means seeking to uncover forms of resistance to archival practices and to the possibility of archivability in the accumulative sense of colonial-imperial archives. Along the way, alliances are claimed: "Unlearning the archive as a place is instrumental in joining others who resisted against it in claiming that not everything should be archivable and that not all forms of relationship should be mediated by the archive" (41). Azoulay's potential history differs from the imperial logic of archives, then, by interrupting the relegation of struggles to the past.

The commonality between Azoulay and Drake's point – and we might read Walter Benjamin's materialist historiography as one earlier prefiguration of the force of this perspective – is in their commitment to the reversibility of historical violences of imperialism and capitalocentrism respectively. We might find important parallels, solidarities and reciprocal challenges through a careful contrasting of these projects. But it is this reversibility that demands commentary here. For if we associate the power of historical accounts today with reversing past violences, as if without residue, without irreversibility, what is lost is the ethically and politically crucial *loss* that should inform any historical practice. As Rei Terada comments on one materialist-historiographical effort to mobilise Benjamin for historiographical reversibility:

> "The desire of this position lies in its ambition to reach into the structures that produce history and the sensorium, thereby arriving at a means of generating histories and sensoria, potentially for all. Changing the past is a crucial revolutionary desire for which Benjamin is a very good keynote. I do not mean to derogate it in the slightest by suggesting that it has been given most serious expression in the mode of impossibility. Rendered possible, it is no longer the same desire, no longer revolutionary but totalitarian" (Terada 2005).

There is, in other words, a revolutionary wisdom that insists on what is lost for historical reinterpretation that seeks to correct capitalocentric (or imperial) violences. This is surely not to argue for restraining projects of postcapitalist historiography, but simply to rase the stakes of their ethical and political considerations and the necessity of their limits. If capitalocentrism is not simply a correctable violence or a reversible history, it is so precisely because diversity does not (simply) wait for us in the archives. Diversity is already lost, from the first inscriptions, just as it is only saved and accessible (to the extent that it is) as impressions or traces of this loss. There is no direct, unmediated, non-capitalocentric access to history. Communities will have both remained and not remained erased after diverse-economic accounts of them. The promise of historical unlearning, however necessary, needs to be haunted by its own impossibility.

Also, and more disturbingly, this warns us not to rush to think *we* know what the correction (or undoing, unlearning) of historical violence looks like. Is *ours* a simply non-capitalocentric (or non-imperialist) desire and practice? Are *we* in control of *what remembers* through these accounts? Rather than offering a simple index of emancipation, postcapitalist historiography might be better understood in terms of the troubles it insists on, the troubles it unleashes, and the troubledness of its own illuminations. 'Reading for difference' is endlessly complicated by the problemage of capitalocentrism. This takes nothing away from its necessity, but it does show just how difficult and demanding – impossible, Derrida (1995c) would say – historical responsibility is. Gibson-Graham thus in fact proposes an aporia, with 'difference' and 'capitalocentrism' *both* demanding incommensurable, infinitely demanding tasks. It is a self-deconstructing framework.

For there will have been promises lost, of which the apparent newness of our postcapitalist desires and problematics is a good reminder. Promises will have been issued. Histories of more-than-capitalist realities are painful. Painful in the sense of having often been crushed and silenced, but also in another, equally profound way: their *successes* have always been too limited, too compromised, too tainted, too short-lived and too local. Too dampened by capitalocentrism, including of the kind that has been able or willing to read difference solely in terms of its ordering within a capitalocentric value system. But the lesson of complicity with capital(ism) that Gibson-Graham issue reminds us of our complicity with that dampening. Insofar as postcapitalist promises have remained silenced, it is also because of the emancipatory languages that have given them hope of a better tomorrow. This is a third dimension of pain, perhaps the most concerning of all: because the traditions we find ourselves within are complicit with these silencings and crushings, we inherit the non-capacity to bring these histories to light, organise economies around them, scale from them, archive them etc. The pain of inheriting a sensorium might actually be a reason for preferring to avoid the problem of capitalocentrism altogether: it uncovers too impartible a problem, located too intimately within, too constitutively bound to the predicates of its re-cognition. A hindsight that cannot cope with this pain with anything other than nostalgia, doom or redemption promises itself to the night of capitalocentrism.

4 Postscripting Capitalism: Capitalocentric Remains and the Trouble of Postisms

4.1 In the Fold: Post/Capitalism

Perhaps to compensate for the imminent loss of inhabitable planetary conditions, recent years have seen a surge of political and analytical works operating in a register of *postcapitalism*. While Fredric Jameson's (2003: 76) famous dictum "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism" still often rings true, variations of 'postcapitalism' as a world beyond capitalism have emerged on the scene of anglophone politics and thought (albeit without making it any harder to imagine the end of the world). There is something in the air that pushes thinkers and activists to try to imagine and construct postcapitalist realities into being. These are characterised by the momentum of 'today'. As the influential postcapitalist genre setter Peter Drucker already put it almost 30 years ago: "Every hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp *transformation*. […] We are currently living in such a transformation. It is creating the Post-capitalist society" (Drucker 1993: 1). This is a present precipitated by concerns about and desires for liveable futures, and characterised by deep transformations (political, technical, social, cultural, economic etc.) in the social formation known as capitalism. Times are going 'out of joint' (Derrida 2006), 'now', and postcapitalist writings emanate from the heart of this storm.

In addition to Drucker's early work and Gibson-Graham's (2006a) *A postcapitalist politics*, this genre includes a wide variety of books and articles that accumulate in our postcapitalist archive: from the techno-optimistic socialisms of Paul Mason's (2015) *Postcapitalism* and Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams's (2015) *Inventing the future: Postcapitalism and the end of work*, to Massimo De Angelis's (2017) post-operaist systems theory in *Omnia sunt communia*; from Raphael Sassower's *Postcapitalism* (2009) and *Digital exposure: Postmodern postcapitalism* (2013), proposing a centrist 'hybrid model' of capitalism and socialism, to Brian Massumi's (2018) *Postcapitalist manifesto* emerging from activist work with financial experiments; from Dave Beech's (2019) *Art and postcapitalism* to Harry Shutt's (2010) *Beyond the profits system: Possibilities for a post-capitalist era*.[46] Interestingly, these books span a variety of political positions, thus shattering any presumption that 'postcapitalism' belongs to any single legacy (although differently Marxist versions seem a majority position). This makes the topic all the more interesting, since it allows us to trace commonalities (and differences) between various perspectives whose only point of convergence would seem to be an interest in what comes after capitalism. They are also united by being anglophone works, [47] and by being predominantly written – with

46 By concentrating on capitalisations of 'postcapitalism', I exclude more general and differently conceptualised views on the future of or without capitalism. This is a practical choice to keep the quantity of the reviewed literature reasonable, but it is also motivated by my interest in the political literality of the postprefixation of capitalism.

47 My own linguistic inadequacies are of course also responsible for this Anglocentric view, and these are undoubtedly amplified by the Anglocentricity of the Internet search tools available. We could well study the Anglo- and Eurocentric biases in postcapitalist literature, research and politics (cf. Levisen 2019), but my strategy here will be different: treating 'postcapitalism' as a notion that quite literally emanates from and is fostered by anglophone literature and publishing economies, I seek to keep in mind its provinciality. Not in order to invite questions regarding its others, at least not yet (for these, see the next chapter), but in order to test out the hypothesis that these are problematics literally emerging from the English language and some specific Euro-Anglocentric debates.

the exception of Gibson-Graham and many other diverse economists – by men (as far as I can tell from the authors' names). I do not think these are trivial characteristics, as will become clear as the argument proceeds.

There is also a vast body of relatively recent academic texts tackling and mentioning postcapitalisms. In geography, most of the attention has been drawn to Gibson-Graham's 'postcapitalist politics', developing its specific vocabulary and strategy forwards (e.g. Safri & Graham 2010; Healy 2015b; Madra & Özselçuk 2015b; Miller 2015; Morrow & Dombroski 2015; Wilkinson 2017; McKinnon *et al.* 2018; Sato & Alarcón 2019; Schmid & Smith 2020; Smith 2020). Additionally, there are efforts to bridge diverse economies with other postcapitalist works (Schmid 2019; Chatterton & Pusey 2020). 'Postcapitalisms' also circulate widely in the literatures on commons transitions (Chatterton 2016; Bauwens & Ramos 2018; Cohen 2018; Gerhardt 2019), degrowth (Schmid 2019), environmental humanities (Jones 2019), sharing economies (Peticca-Harris *et al.* 2018) and alternative currencies (Cohen 2018). There is also a non-negligible variety of important, shorter-than-book-length Marxist engagements with the notion (e.g. Altvater 2008; Arvidsson 2009; Dean 2012, 2015; Pitts 2017; Pitts & Dinerstein 2017; Sculos 2018). Additionally, a continuous stream of references to postcapitalism are made in a more inconspicuous and non-conceptual register. The notion often finds its way into the titles and subtitles of books (e.g. Shutt 2010; Skoll 2010; Feldner *et al.* 2016; Nickels 2018) and articles (e.g. Hopkins 2018; Watson 2019), even if its meaning and conceptuality are not addressed, or are addressed only in passing. Thus, 'postcapitalism' seems often to operate as an inconspicuous background term, setting the tone but not drawing much conceptual attention itself.

In the introduction, I described this moment as a fold: postcapitalist societies are both thinkable and practicable, yet capitalist remains push us from all sides – not least in the capitalocentric omissions reproduced in our sensorium. Also a moment of affirmation and organisation, this fold calls for patient study of what and how we inherit. Take this little word: postcapitalism. Trevor Barnes (1995: 424) already noted 25 years ago that "political economy is increasingly becoming postprefixed". In the case of 'postcapitalism', this means a coming together of two difficult words that are usually known and recognised with surprisingly *little* difficulty. 'Post-' is a notoriously ambivalent prefix with a multitude of uses and derivative potentials, as linguistician Rostislav Kocourek (1996) shows. 'Post'- can denote 'after' but also 'behind', or both, and it can mean a part of X or non-X. Additionally, it has all sorts of uses related to postage (see Bennington 1990). "*Post-* prefixation is a productive derivational type", writes Kocourek (1996: 106–107), with "considerable syntactic flexibility" but also "motivational ambiguity". If "[t]erms are supposed to have meanings delimited by definitions" (105), then the promiscuity of postprefixation causes problems for the desire for the definitive.

These ambiguities have of course been widely capitalised. As Robert Young (1982: 3) explains with regard to the case of 'poststructuralism', meaning both something 'coming after' structuralism but also something 'behind' it:

> "This uncanny antithetical doubling is rather humbly embodied in the word 'posterior', which means both 'coming after', 'later in time', as in 'posteriority', as well as 'situated behind' – and hence its familiar use as one of the tenderest of our euphemisms".

An additional strangeness to this spatial-temporal ambiguity derives from the fact that 'post-' is a prefix, thus also coming before – not (only) after – the fact, as Bennington

(1990: 123) notes. Thus, the ambiguity of the 'post-' begins to challenge any simple, linear history that "maintains its grip by a violent reduction of this scandalous instability of the prefix 'post-', which raises philosophical questions in excess of history" (see also Byrne 2001). Some of these questions have to do with how postprefixed categories allow us to question their base, and what kind of negotiations take place in inheriting via postprefixation.

Postcolonialism is another good example. Does it come *after* colonialism, *behind* it, *alongside* it, or perhaps, in some odd sense, *before* it? For Walter Mignolo (2017), "the 'post' keeps you trapped in unipolar time conceptions […,] a universal time that is owned by a particular [Western] civilization". *De*coloniality, by contrast, "opens up to the multiple times of cultures and civilizations upon which Western Civilizations impose its conceptualization of time". 'Post'- thus keeps one locked into the very colonialist (or Western) temporal framework whose end it calls for. Arif Dirlik (1994: 356) is equally critical of 'postcolonialism', but his critique highlights how 'postcolonial' thought is indebted to the effects of 'global capitalism', such as a new division of labour, new information technologies and the fragmentation of national borders. For Dirlik, "postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism". The question is how this 'class position' is recognised, and what kind of "thoroughgoing criticism of its own ideology" and "practices of resistance against the system of which it is a product" (356) are available. Stuart Hall (1996: 244) disagrees, making note of Dirlik's economic reductionism but also a "certain nostalgia […] for a return to a clear-cut politics of binary oppositions" in some critiques of the 'postcolonial'. As Eleanor Byrne (2001: 56–57) further notes, "this discussion has primarily tended to privilege linear temporal and epistemological implications in the search for postcolonialism's beginnings and ends".

If this detour characterises some of the other postprefixations' potentials and limitations, with 'postcapitalism' we often are located all too comfortably within a discussion of 'beginnings and ends', and a discussion often starting off from capitalism *as if* we already knew what *that* was. When the troubling and ambiguous little 'post-' is prefixed onto 'capitalism', the result seems most often to be neither spatial-temporal confusion, fierce conceptual debate, nor a proliferation of distinctly new strategies of thought and practice.[48] Rather, the inconspicuousness of and/or hype around the prefix comes to confirm things we already knew. Among them are the reconfirmation of 'our' present locatedness *within* capitalism, its systemic totality being in need of replacement, 'our' task becoming then to match its size and topology, and 'our' modes of knowing, publishing and mediation being conveniently left out of the question. In short, then, I wish to read the genre of postcapitalist thought not for what it claims to revolutionise,

48 Like the 'cybernetic fold' (Sedgwick & Frank 1995) briefly discussed in the introduction (see footnote one), the postcapitalist fold presents us with the task of attending to the richness and contradictions of everything 'postcapitalism/t' has meant in different contexts and at different times – including (but definitely not limited to) a difficult postprefixed word alongside others (Soja 1985), a name for actually-existing socialist societies (ie. pre-postsocialism) (Szczepański & Furdyna 1977), and the latest form of (quasi-)capitalist societies (Olsson 1978). Compared to the diversity, ambiguity and contradictory uses of the 'same' term, the apparent intuitiveness of 'postcapitalism' today can be read as an *impoverishment* of meanings – an all too "sleek trajectory" (Sedgwick & Frank 1995: 508) indeed. Although it is beyond my capacities here, a genealogy of 'postcapitalism' – with more expansive and plural differentiations than my concern for capitalocentrism allows – could help us allow the term "to mean more different and more interesting things" (508) than what survived into its current resurgence and self-evidence. Instead of rushing to the givenness of the 'post-', there might be value in postponing the emancipations that it proclaims in order to study where this givenness comes from and at what cost: "Perhaps the serpent snatching its own tail actually is a good symbol for the human condition in the postcapitalist state." (Olsson 1978, 121)

but rather for how it negotiates the burdens inherited in the task of differentiating the postprefixation from its '-capitalist' stem.

I track this question of inheritance again through capitalocentrism. Differentiating between Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics and others' postcapitalisms provides us with a site for asking questions about these inheritances, as the differences in these concepts clarify some capitalocentric negotiations. In the first instance, this means reading postcapitalisms for capitalocentric troubles. Secondly, I examine how Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics enables negotiation with these troubles. This entails interpreting Gibson-Graham's non-conceptually oriented notion in a conceptual way, trying to distinguish it from postcapitalisms, although this distinction has rarely been made or emphasised. But the problemage that capitalocentrism introduces does not stop here. Rather, it forces us to read *negotiations* of its problemage with an eye to raising its stakes for the sake of a more demanding problem space. By treating Gibson-Graham's formulations and strategies as helping us to negotiate with inheritances rather than to get rid of them, I also uncover how the troubling character of capitalocentrism needs to push these negotiations into a territory ungoverned by a post/critical security. The trouble becomes an index of a postcapitalist *study* rather than a new political ground.

My strategy runs against the postcapitalist current in two main ways. First, the postcapitalist literature in general can be characterised by a non-conceptual and decidedly non-textualist spirit. The disastrous and urgent moment that summons postcapitalist desires and projects warrants politically strategic responses and analyses that provide them as directly as possible. Many (if not most) of the postcapitalist accounts are guided by an acute sense of thought-in-the-moment and are written in view of praxis. While this spirit is warranted, and its necessity is not doubted here, this chapter is based on the observation that this sense of political immediacy is easily translated into an anti-theoretical and explicitly non-conceptual strategy of thinking – an affirmationist celebration of 'becoming' (see Noys 2010). An attention to language and to the literality of what is written is often the first thing to be sidelined, insofar as it represents an allegedly superfluous and elitist concern with literality while 'the world is on fire'. One of the risks thus taken, in this supposed retreat from textual concerns, is the reproduction of counterproductive tendencies within the thought that celebrates its closeness to worldly praxis. Capitalocentrism, I will argue, provides us with an opportunity to call into question the effects of such a strategy, and to demand its negotiation in other terms.

My second and closely aligned countermovement runs against the tendency to turn critical thought into movement-building, or to judge its merits by its proximity to so-called political practice. The risk here lies in dismissing differences that might be of critical importance in a sense other than direct political value. For example, Paul Chatterton and Andre Pusey's (2020) recent account of various postcapitalisms and geography does a good job of reading through the postcapitalist literature and differentiating between different accounts. But by doing so in view of a "constructive dialogue" (41), they end up treating the differences between the approaches as commensurable and negotiable under the same wide umbrella of postcapitalism. As if what was at stake were, after all, one and the same thing. In this sense, the critical work of examining the differences is reduced in a post/critical way. By contrast, taking up Gibson-Graham's capitalocentrism to enable us to read for trouble within postcapitalist accounts means treating, for now, the critical commitment as of primary importance. While the obvious downside is that my examination in this chapter will not provide very good material for movement-building and postcapitalist convergence, it places its hope elsewhere: in the

risk that critique entails as a commitment to self-critique from *within* the postcapitalist fold, even if it is committed to questioning the dearest assumptions of emancipatory politics: "[t]o enact responsibility in this way, by undertaking the kind of critique that arises from an uncompromising interrogatory spirit", as Gaon (2019: 251) writes, "without apology, without guarantee and without respite".

This means reading quite literally that which is written in the name of post-capitalism. The choreography of this chapter goes as follows. Dividing my task into roughly two segments, I first engage with various accounts that revolve around the notion of postcapitalism. I look for capitalocentric inheritances based on Gibson-Graham's (2006b) earlier critique of a 'politics of postponement'. To some extent this necessitates rethinking the inherited problematics in view of a politics decidedly positioned *against* any such postponement, in the name of postcapitalism. Then I turn to Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics, to explain and amplify its differences with regard to these five inheritances. I also seek to show how in each of Gibson-Graham's negotiations, burdens remain to be negotiated. Thus, the problem of capitalocentrism is never *fully* dealt with. I close the chapter with a short conclusion that draws the meandering argument together and proposes some coordinates to guide such study into the future (be it postcapitalist or not).

4.2 Postcapitalism (As We Already Knew It)

In *The end of capitalism*, Gibson-Graham (2006b) argue that the performative omission and marginalisation of non-capitalist openings in the form of messianic promises of future revolutions forecloses opportunities for action in the present. What they lamented in 1996 was a lack of praxis. As I have proposed, and as Gibson-Graham (see 2006a: introduction) themselves recount it, the situation now seems profoundly different, with a proliferation of imaginaries and practices that concretise utopias – or "nowtopias" (Carlsson & Manning 2010) – in the here and now. It might seem like nitpicking (or just a rehearsal of an obsolete tune), then, to propose to read signs of *post*capitalist proliferation as testimony to capitalocentrism. The paranoid (and self-congratulatory) risks of this strategy should be clear ('oh, so you think you're exiting Capitalism? Well, let me explain…'), and so should its political stakes as possibly contributing to an unhelpful divergence between postcapitalist approaches ('I'm *so* much post*er* than you'). There is the additional risk of elevating a piece of thought from the 1990s into a transcontextual and transhistorical measure of Truth ('don't you see you are just rehearsing the problem Gibson-Graham already solved in 1996?').

These are risks that will need to be dealt with as we move along. What I propose to do is not to categorise capitalocentrism as a problem of some in order to exalt the seemingly unproblematic alternatives practised by others, nor to diagnose some and venerate others. Instead, I read for structures of argumentation that traverse many of the postcapitalist accounts, despite (or in) their irreducible differences and singularities, to (re)produce givens that tend towards capitalocentric effect. What interests me most is everything that stays the same while the 'content' of respective postcapitalist visions varies. Interestingly, these are characteristics that seem to repeat themselves even in explicit *renouncements* of the term 'postcapitalism' and the societal transformations it characterises. In these commonalities, I read for capitalocentric inheritances whose unquestionedness holds together the intelligibility of postprefixations and the givenness of a shared and at base undifferentiated moment (say, '*the* postcapitalist fold').

Simultaneously, the layers within texts and authorial voices are multiple and contradictory, and readings and uses of a text or a postcapitalist project are bound to produce results that are irreducibly uncontrollable and unknowable. To claim a place and a type of knowledge that pre-knows their fate would be antithetical to what I am trying to say and how I am attempting to know. Thus, the task is not to read for homogeneity and solidity, or for inevitable effects or burdens, but for structure in fragmentation (or repetition in difference) that can be of use for a postcapitalist study. This reading is a work of inheritance as "reaffirmation of a debt, but a critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation" (Derrida 2006: 114), as well as an attempt to analyse and evaluate the very postcapitalist imaginary and language that allow me to bear witness to it. The question guiding these analyses remains: how to inherit the postcapitalist promise?

I would like to propose five coordinates along which to read for trouble: first, there is capitalocentric realism, or a logocentric and economistic tendency to construct a solid postcapitalist argument that conveniently leaves unquestioned the positionality of its knowing. Second, we encounter a symmetry of 'isms', a spatially homogenising rendering of '*the* present' in the image of its postprefixation. Third, postcapitalist temporality reveals itself as a homogeneous, linear and straight time to be ruptured. Fourth, the vertical systems of scalar ordering that ground the argumentation and its political common sense become the question. Fifth, we return to the lack of positionality through the unproblematised reproduction of horizontal hierarchies of change-making and 'postist' capitalisation.

4.2.1 Capitalocentric Realism

In *The end of capitalism*, Gibson-Graham (2006b: 247) write that capitalism is haunted by its own discursivity, or the fact that the descriptive-constative language used to 'describe' it is doing always something more than that, starting from the constitution of any 'itness' in the first place. This is a blow against the sort of materialist and economistic idealism that purports to have direct representational access to reality through its recourse to specific economic registers and styles of language that signal that we are in the presence and proximity of 'reality'. What happens is simultaneously the reproduction of an inherited, sedimented language about that economic reality, which grants its analysand a secure position of knowledge *and* an equally inherited restrictedness of 'the economic' thus described. The currency of this type of discourse in analytical and political debate incentivises us against any serious examination of the metaphysics inherent to and amplified by such 'materialisms' (see Derrida 1981: 64–65). Both inconspicuous mentions of and detailed analytical-political treatments of capitalism use/produce interesting 'reality effects' (Barthes 1982), creating not only a sense of what belongs to 'reality', but also a sense of direct reference to and experience of 'the real'. Fisher's (2009) 'capitalist realism', a prevalent sense of there-is-no-alternative, is thus paralleled by a sort of 'capitalocentric realism'.

'Postcapitalisms' are of course different in regard to the reality effects they produce. What is interesting from my perspective is the certainty and non-partiality of the perspectives so often characteristic of these debates. Drucker (1993), in his small book prefiguring many later postcapitalist arguments across the political spectrum, clarifies the field of knowns by framing his conceptual invention of 'post-capitalist society' against things already known. To be sure, he does point out that predicting what "the post-capitalist world itself will look like is […] risky still" (3). What is clear is that the emerging, complex world "will be different from anything anyone today imagines" (3).

Equally, that "the new society will be both a non-socialist and a post-capitalist society is practically certain. And it is certain also that its primary resource will be knowledge" (3).

This play of humble uncertainty and definite knowledge is characteristic of much of Drucker's argumentation. As he continues: "Only a few short decades ago everybody 'knew' that a post-capitalist society would surely be a Marxist one. Now we all know that a Marxist society is the one thing the next society is not going to be" (1993: 4). Note the scare quotes: back then we 'knew', now we know. ('We all' is definitely without scare quotes. I will return to this issue.) This difference between futurological speculations and observed societal changes is important to Drucker. The end of the Soviet system is what seems to render this slide from 'knowledge' to knowledge:

> "Only with the collapse of Marxism as an ideology and of Communism as a system did it […] become completely clear that we have already moved into a new and different society. Only then did a book like this become possible: a book that is not prediction but description, a book that is not *futuristic* but calls for action here and now" (Drucker 1993: 6).

Rather than 'the end of history', the collapse of Soviet Communism signals a post-capitalist opening, because the reasons behind its demise are "also making capitalism obsolescent" (6). This is because the economic and societal basis of capitalism in class distinctions is being revolutionised: "The basic economic resource – 'the means of production' to use the economist's term – is no longer capital, nor natural resources (the economist's 'land'), nor 'labour'. *It is and will be knowledge*" (7). This explosive growth of the 'information society' is, for Drucker, as for so many other analysts, creating societal shifts drastic enough to warrant the term 'postcapitalist'. That 'knowledge' becomes *the* economic master term, and that its 'production' is understood as *the* major economic force, in no way shed suspicious light on the constative register practised by Drucker. This is even though, arguably, one of the hallmarks of the transformations that he describes becomes the capitalisability of knowledge, involving the economic centrality of a performative register. In other words, the postcapitalist perspective is not acknowledged as a product of the economic dynamics it portrays.

One of the things that the postcapitalist fold seems to require from us is an ability *to decide* whether 'we' are (still) in capitalism or not. McKenzie Wark's (2019) case is instructive. Wark asks whether "capitalism" has "become too familiar, too cozy, too roomy an idea" (21). Indeed it has, she answers: "If the greatest trick of the devil was to persuade us that the devil does not exist, then maybe the greatest trick of capitalism is to gull us into imagining that there is nothing but eternal capitalism" (22). "It is hard to describe things that change imperceptibly", says Wark, continuing that this has to do with using language that has "something of a binary quality", and it is hard to describe changes that do not "correspond well to the neat digital chop between one term or another". She goes on to describe how both the left and the right seem to agree that "[t]he essence of capital is eternal" (24), even asking "what is the emotional attachment that we have to the idea that this is capitalism, and that it is eternal?" (27) Understanding this attachment to capitalism as ideology, Wark also chastises "all these postcapitalist stories" for disseminating fantasies about how "this is not the same old capitalism – it's better!" (29). But what should interest us here is Wark's solution to this ideological dilemma: "Instead of the line that this is not capitalism, it's better, what if we explored the line that this is not capitalism, but worse?" (29). What happens here, then, is that Wark identifies a classically capitalocentric binary structure, which assures

us 'there is nothing but capitalism', and notes the need to ask "theory as a genre [to] be as interesting, as strange, as poetically or narratively rich as we ask our other kinds of literature to be" (52). The question she ends up posing is: "[w]hat if we thought about a mode of production emerging after capitalism that is even worse?" (82). What if, indeed. All this work is to end up in the same digital or binary space from which we began, but this time with a reaffirmation that 'it's worse' than capitalism. Although Wark constantly exhorts us to put attention into present *forces* of production instead of a *mode* of production, she still seems convinced that indeed 'this' has to be a singular 'something', whether 'it' is capitalism, something better or something worse.

This structure of argument recurs in Peticca-Harris *et al.*'s (2018) research on Uber drivers' motivations and lived experiences, in connection to problematic forms of 'sharing economy' and a postcapitalist thematic. The authors' favoured binary works through two distinct emphases of 'postcapitalism': with "*post*capitalist" they refer to "'alternative economic structures and business models beyond and instead of capitalism" (19); "post*capitalist*" then signals an "intensification or an upsurge of capitalist ideology and practice" (20). The analysis of Uber drivers highlights how "within postcapitalism various precarious circumstances are produced" through the "hyper-capitalist rent-seeking enterprise" (20), and that, perhaps unsurprisingly, this "postcapitalism" concerns a "hyper-resistant platform capitalism" (21) whose alternatives are "still something we are yet to witness" (21).

What we encounter here again seem to be exactly two options: either postcapitalism (or a phenomenon associated with it) is something better, or it is something worse. The 'post-' refers us to a binary vocabulary and mode of assessment. As if we needed to decide – and as if we could. And as if this decision could and should be made in terms of a binary selection. The ambiguities of the 'post-' (Kocourek 1996) are collapsed into a simplistic question of whether postcapitalist X is more 'post-' or '-capitalist'. The simplicity of this question and its binary vocabulary, and the decisionist exhortation that is indexed by the postprefixation, might offer a rather poor starting point for enquiry. However, what also opens from these considerations, through the moments of hesitation that slip in, is the possibility that we do not or cannot know, perhaps even *should* not know, once and for all, which 'it' or 'this' is: postcapitalism or capitalism. Seeking to theorise and study this uncertainty might be more interesting than the flattened requirement 'to know'.

Postcapitalism is thus often characterised by the unwavering belief in (one's own) knowledge about the identity of a 'currently prevailing' economic system, and in the political and conceptual necessity of establishing such an identity as unequivocally as possible. Besides denoting a spatially overlaying structure, the 'ismic' quality of postcapitalism might be best understood as a reconfirmation of the position taken by the analysing perspective. 'Postcapitalism', then, would come to denote a signpost for guaranteeing the size and topology of the theory/perspective that interprets 'it': by knowing 'the system', the grounds of its political and conceptual purchase are to be established. Such a signpost gives its analyst a firm grasp of 'the real' and 'the economy' as a totality in order to sketch departures from it. What gets inflated, from the start, is the possibility of insisting on the partiality of knowledge, as well as the problem of inheriting conceptual and infrastructural systems that allow one a position from above. This can also take a much more mundane form in the claim to formally (be able to) decide whether an entity/identity is (still) capitalist or has attained a postcapitalist state. This is problematic not only due to its binary rendering of the choice, but also due to the accent on choice in the first place – and the questions regarding the status and work of knowledge that get unasked. By presenting the

(economic) world as a set of objects whose status is to be decided, attention is exclusively drawn 'out there', and the problematics of performative interpretation are omitted. The characteristics of such capitalocentric realism, however, are nothing without the spatial and temporal infrastructures that allow the reproduction of its terms of reference and the intelligibility of 'postcapitalism'. Let us turn to these.

4.2.2 Symmetry of Isms: The *Present*

If there is one thing that grounds this aura of certainty, it is probably the banal fact that in thinking 'postcapitalism' we are dealing with things that come *after* capitalism. This is, after all, the most common feature of inconspicuous mentions of 'postcapitalism' as it serves as the background of any argument. Often, its use does not summon any conceptual or definitional discussion – not to mention problematisation – but instead it works as a given background for whatever the core of the argument is (see e.g. Arvidsson 2009; Shutt 2010; Skoll 2010).[49] That we are dealing with 'the future' seems banally self-evident. Is this not, after all, what the fuss is all about – different *futures* and how to get there from *where we are*? I would be tempted rather to read these invocations as performative descriptions of an analytical-political-imaginative setting producing a sense of '*the* present'. In other words, to evoke 'postcapitalism' is to tap into an inherited sense of a capitalist 'now' that both allows and is in need of a 'beyond'. Through 'postcapitalism', 'we' are thus placed into capitalism, as if recursively. The question becomes: what kind of 'now' does postcapitalism help us imagine? How is this 'now' connected to this collective agent, 'us', that seems to undertake the task?

In *The end of capitalism*, Gibson-Graham (2006b) analysed some of the organistic and mechanistic metaphors that serve to totalise 'capitalism' by deciphering economic changes, varieties and dissimilarities as always ultimately connected to a shared 'system' with its defining logics, heartlands, and factors of evolution. With postcapitalism, despite the hype and the magnitude of the changes described, we often encounter a reconfirmation of what we already knew about capitalism as a shared present. 'The system', in short, is still alive. As Mason's version goes, "[c]apitalism is more than just an economic structure or a set of laws and institutions. It is the *whole* system", and moreover, "an organism" whose "basic survival instinct is to drive technological change" (2015: xiii). Mason makes explicit his appreciation of "the mode of production" as "one of the most powerful ideas to come out of Marxist economics" (235). This leads him to ask "what reproduces itself spontaneously?", and to answer, in the next sentence, that "in capitalism, it is the market" (236). This mode of questioning then motivates him to seek another singular and equally 'spontaneous' force that would lead 'us' to 'postcapitalism'. This – not so surprisingly, since Mason is explicitly indebted to Drucker – is found in the power of 'information technologies' to bring down marginal costs, to break down forms of scarcity, and to unite a new class of informationally connected people. While these prefigure 'postcapitalism', they do so against the background of 'the capitalist mode of production' whose systemicity and presence might best be seen as reconfirmed by these dispatches.

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49 Skoll's (2010) book, subtitled *Terror, torture, and death in a post-capitalist world*, provides a good example, since the text includes no definition (or to my eyes, even a hint) as to what is meant by 'post-capitalist world' in (and *as*) this context. It is as if we were already on the same page, to the extent that even basic definitional requirements can be skipped. What interests me a great deal is how and why such an inconspicuous agreement is considered plausible and unproblematic, and what happens in 'intuitively' recognising such a 'postcapitalism'.

De Angelis (2017), who is much more nuanced than Mason in terms of allowing multiple coexisting systems, also relies strategically on a vocabulary that insists on the primacy and prevalence of capitalism. He portrays two coexisting systems of capitalism and the commons, which are interestingly contrasted through an insistence on the dominance of "the capitalist mode of production" (135), which is presently threatened by ecological collapse. 'Postcapitalism', for him, is unquestionably a word for a future mode of production (14, 148), and the term comes with the need to take "giant step towards" (371), a "social transformation towards" (372) and a "radical emancipatory change towards" (357) it. Simultaneously, De Angelis's juxtaposition of the hegemonic capitalist mode of production with the commons provides an interesting dynamic: "Commons and capital are two distinct, autonomous social systems; that is, they both struggle to 'take things into their own hands' and self-govern on the basis of their different and often clashing, internally generated codes, measures and values" (103).
On one level, then, we have two "distinct, autonomous social systems". At the same time, there is no question about which of the two is 'dominant' and 'hegemonic', a hierarchy that is reproduced in the very futurity of postcapitalism (because it insists on the presence and prevalence of capitalism). For me, interesting questions would be those foreclosed by this play of the modes of production, which seems to go unnoticed by De Angelis: how is the Oneness of 'the present' affirmed at the same time as it is questioned? How do specific ways of supplementing capitalism spatially-temporally reproduce capitalocentric structures? How might the interpretations of a "mode of production" take part in its reproduction/challenging?

Massumi relies on a plethora of vitalist and technologist metaphors in his account of "neoliberal capitalism". Capitalism has a "heart" that is beating with surplus-value extracted from its "immanent outside", this being its quality/nature as a processual system. The heart metaphor is put to serious use:

> "The engine of surplus-value lies at the beating heart of the capitalist system and dilates its veins. It is the expansive diastole for profit's systolic contraction. More than just the quality of money – that is how it appears inside the system, as a halo-glow around profit – surplus-value is the *processual quality of the capitalist system* [….] It is how capitalism dips into the expanded field of its immanent outside (diastole), no sooner to contract the movements of potential found there into its profit-making system flow (systole)" (Massumi 2018: 15).

This global organism relies on an interplay of the qualitative and the quantitative in what Massumi terms "economization", which he understands as "the conversion of one kind of surplus-value (surplus-value of life) into another (capitalist surplus-value)" (20). And insofar as such economisation happens everywhere, so does capitalism: "Capitalism is *coextensive with economization* […]: the process by which the qualitative field of life is economically appropriated and subsumed under the principle of perpetual quantitative growth" (39). There is a difference between the capitalist system and a wider process of economisation that Massumi underlines, noting the dangers of speaking about "the economy" as if it were a "*self-sufficient system*" (39). Instead, he prefers to call 'it' an "open system" that "needs its immanent outside of the field of life more than its immanent outside needs it (which is not at all), because it is nothing other than the process of appropriating the potentials to be found there" (39–40).

This processing of the 'immanent outside' is where the important things take place – "Capitalism's heart, paradoxically, lies at its limit, where its system re-processes"

(66) – leading to all sorts of consequences for the kind of postcapitalist politics that Massumi proposes. Here let us simply note how Massumi explains how the 'immanent outside' connects to the spatiality of capitalism:

> "The attractor of the capitalist relation is tendentially *space-filling*. It is by nature *imperialistic*. It is *universal* by vocation. Processually speaking, however, it is awaft [sic] in a *great outside* of bare activity. It is hard to describe the 'exteriority' of this field of germinal life, because *we have no words for a nonspatial domain*. As it is used here, the word 'outside' is directly processual and *lacks a spatial connotation*, so in a sense it is *arbitrary* to call it that" (Massumi 2017: 30; my emphases).

While the "outside" "lacks a spatial connotation", this does not prevent Massumi from inscribing it in a spatial language that reproduces a strangely conventional spatial imaginary of a (colonised, filled) container ("space-filling", "imperialistic", "universal") *and* from simultaneously claiming that "we have no words for a nonspatial domain".

One effect of Massumi's spatialisation of a dominant 'system' and the privileged processual relations of this system to the 'great outside' (Massumi 2017) is a totalised space of universal capitalist system and its processes. That is, it is not totalised in the sense of having no outside, but this outside is precisely positioned as a "nonspatial domain" that is both necessary for and always threatened by the process of capital's self-valorisation. That *spatial* difference might be taken seriously as a more-than-capitalist problematic, and that this seriousness might have to include concepts of a spatiality that is different from a space that can be 'filled' and 'colonised', are some of the possibilities thus foreclosed. The only way Massumi can thus retain a concept of postcapitalist *presence* is by positing it as a "nonspatial domain", since space is already – by definition/metonymy, since we are, after all, in the "neoliberal epoch" (Massumi 2018: 55) – filled by capitalism. The marginality of the coming postcapitalist X is here guaranteed by its 'non-spatiality' vis-à-vis a capitalism that occupies *all* of space – that is, a space understood as occupiable (see Gibson-Graham 2006b).

What I see in these cases are different variations of a common theme, in which the future systemicity of 'postcapitalism' is predicated on a present systemicity of 'capitalism'. This is how they appear as symmetrical 'systems'. Spatial and temporal others of capitalism, those that prefigure postcapitalism, are interpreted in view of how they differ from the spaces and times of capitalism. Conceptual and metaphoric cornerstones serve to characterise 'the system' in ways that open towards its others. Yet these cornerstones, and the systemicity and prefiguration that they serve to describe, are inherited conceptions, and part and parcel of the kind of totalising spatial-temporal architecture analysed by Gibson-Graham (2006b). Systemicity is kept in place. And because of it, 'postcapitalism' seems to be more often a reconfirmation of the place we already knew ourselves to be than a task for its reconceptualisation. Let us now turn to a more careful look at the temporal horizons of transformation at stake.

4.2.3 Post/Capitalism: Temporal Rupture

If postcapitalism allows us to tap into received senses of '*the* present', it does so in a decidedly futural register. Its temporality is often characterised by a sense of a rupturing moment that allows 'us', finally, to imagine and practise a politics that breaks with the capitalist homogeneity of time. Frames of reference are warranted:

> "For 250 years, from the second half of the eighteenth century on, capitalism was the dominant social reality. For the last hundred years Marxism was the dominant social ideology. Both are rapidly being superseded by a new and very different society" (Drucker 1993: 6).

Or: "For the first time in 500 years, we could actually change the capitalist system. I mean replace it, not just revise it. I mean get rid of capitalism and create something new" (Signorelli 2016: 1). Thus, against the shared, homogeneous present of the 'mode of production', a rupturing differentiation is now announced and legitimated. Tone is important:

> "Capitalism, it turns out, will not be abolished by forced-march techniques. It will be abolished by creating something more dynamic that exists, at first, almost unseen within the old system, but which breaks through, reshaping the economy around new values, behaviours and norms. As with feudalism 500 years ago, capitalism's demise will be accelerated by external shocks and shaped by the emergence of a new kind of human being. And it has started" (Mason 2015: xiv).

One of the surprising things about these postscripts to capitalism is how often the author seems to have privileged epistemic access to something that has been practically unthinkable for the past 250 to 500 years and is only 'now' becoming available for 'us' to grasp, through his (*sic*) guidance.

It is not that postcapitalist change comes as a surprise. If Marx (1993) knew that "[c]apital is the all-dominant economic power of bourgeois society" and must thus "form the starting-point as well as the finishing point" of critical enquiries (107), he also had much interest in the "historical succession" of economic categories and modes of production, most notably the succession of feudalism and capitalism (a transformation that many postcapitalists seem to recognise as the last time anything remarkable happened in terms of 'global economy'). In postcapitalism, what is at stake is most probably not an event but a long process:

> "[C]hange from one economic system to another takes time. If the postcapitalism thesis is right, what we're about to live through will be a lot more like the transition from feudalism to capitalism than the one the Soviet planners envisaged. It will be long; there will be confusion; and in the process the very concept of an 'economic system' will have to be redefined" (Mason 2015: 234).

The temporality of postcapitalism might be characterised by an interruption *of the perspective* of economic life – a rupture of the homogeneous continuity and inescapability of capitalist spatiality-temporality. The idea is not (only) that everything is about to change as if by itself, but that the changes underway call for new interpretations and languages that help to amplify them and channel energy into making the best out of this 'historical moment'.

As De Angelis (2017: 11) puts it: "I believe there is a social revolution in the making that, if recognised and able to attract more energies from people around the world, could give us a chance to embark on a process of transformation towards postcapitalist society". Later on, he adopts Niklas Luhmann's metaphor of a ship to underline that its chosen direction "is just one selection within a range of the possible provided by the horizons" (262). Futures are open, horizons are multiple (or double, at least: capitalism

and/or postcapitalism). We are, then, on the verge of postcapitalism, and what is needed is an energetic thrust, mobilisation towards it, by affirming its 'seeds' in the present:

> "If commons movements become the expression of a political recomposition that is one with *a mode of production* to expand, to develop and to set against the dominant mode of production, then we have acquired a common sense-horizon, not one that establishes a future model, but a present organisational unit that seeks to evolve and have a place in the contemporary cosmopolitan and globalised world because its power resides in diversity, variety, and complexity" (De Angelis 2017: 386).

The opening of such sense horizons can only occur (always) in the present, in the here and now. This 'now' is the time that gathers the attention, since it is the only time where we can reshape things.

If the temporality of postcapitalist promise can thus be characterised as an interruption (*kairos*) of a homogeneous or linear time (*kronos*), as well as a folding together of futurity and presence in the 'here and now', this postcapitalist temporal common sense can also be confirmed by looking at *rejections* of 'postcapitalism'. Some Marxists might find the provocation and promise of 'postcapitalism' misplaced – or *mistimed*. John Bellamy Foster, for one, opposes the notion:

> "There are all sorts of ways to define *the* present period. My preferred approach is to see *it* as monopoly capitalism at an *advanced phase* of globalization – *a furthering of the logic* of classical imperialism. What is *clear* is that the various 'post' categories are not very useful in any attempt at *periodization*. This is *definitely* not a postcapitalist world, nor is it a post-Marxist one" (Foster 2002: 43; my emphases).

There is much packed into these lines. Firstly, in Foster's "present period", "advanced phase" and "furthering of the logic", we encounter a neatly delineated linear time of shared successive presents in need of "periodization". There is no suspicion that time and history themselves might not necessarily follow this linear pattern as if by 'natural history'.

Foster's account is peppered with a rhetoric that taps into a common sense that allows us to – "definitely" and "clearly" – reject the non-sense that misses the "logic" of history. Again, the greatest problem of the 'post-' is that it is bad at periodisation:

> "[T]he 'post' prefix of postmodernism symbolizes a radical denial of the past at the level of understanding, coupled with the refusal of any future movement – that is, a rejection of any meaningful historical perspective. […] Here, all settled historical perspective is lost and the most discordant temporal elements can be mixed and matched together" (Foster 2002: 43).

While the insistence on memory in Foster's account is crucial, it is compromised in advance by this conviction about what and how is to be remembered, and a distaste for the "mixing and matching" of "discordant temporal elements" so that "*all* historical perspective is lost". It is periodisation that allows historical perspective *as such*, and whose manifestations become a hallmark of and requirement for any *historical* materialism. The 'post-', on the other hand, promises to bring about too much of a mess.[50]

50 A very similar rejection can be found, for example, in Edward Soja's (1985: 187) work in the context of 'postmodern' geography: "[t]he historical geography of capitalism has not been marked by grand

Why do I consider this rejection of postcapitalism to be symmetrically opposed yet similar to most common proclamations of postcapitalism? For one, in the tone of capitalocentric realism, it seems important to *time it right*. Both accounts are driven by a privileged perspective that is somehow able to elevate itself to a god's eye perspective (Haraway 1988) to make analyses and predictions about 'our' moment. Whether 'it' belongs (still) to 'capitalism' or not is the issue. In this sense, it seems that the thinking that 'postcapitalism' summons is not particularly tempted to think of temporal multiplicity or more-than-capitalist temporalities in ways that would be motivated to resist a linear framework. What a rupture *in* time presupposes and reproduces is a sense of a continuous post/capitalist time, of homogeneity or linearity, where ruptures can occur and against which they can be judged. Thus, postcapitalist accounts seem reliant on descriptions of capitalist times, the business as usual whose collapse is promised. Again, being consistent with the received wisdom of capitalocentric realism means the absence of any suspicion regarding this linear, shared time of 'ours'.

In this sense, 'postcapitalism' serves chiefly to situate 'us', once again, 'in' capitalism, as it continuously stages ruptures away from it. Interestingly, then, even after decades of critical and plurivocal discussions about time and history in relation to poststructuralism or postcolonialism, with 'postcapitalism' we seem to be back within 'historical time' as we knew it all along.[51] The haunting prospect that opens from capitalocentrism is not only that this linear history is postponing elements that we might want to call postcapitalist (see Gibson-Graham 2006b), but also a rather opposite point: thought within a framework of oneness, linearity and rupture, postcapitalism might be reproducing a general sense of historicity that will not have fostered a questioning of how more-than-capitalist economies are marginalised by these temporal frames of reference and our inherited conceptions of time. To paraphrase, and reverse, Gibson-Graham's (2006b: 251) jarring question: why can postcapitalists have revolution now, while capitalocentrics have to wait?[52]

4.2.4 Scalarisms: Vertical Orders

In terms of scale, the postcapitalist common sense concerns what many term the 'seeds' of other futures. Much effort is placed in identifying the maximum number of 'openings' and 'cracks' in capitalist façades, then analysing and building convergences

turnabouts and complete systems replacements, but rather by an evolving sequence of partial and selective restructurings which do not erase the past or destroy the fundamental and definitive structural conditions of capitalist social and spatial relations. There thus seems no justification for a 'rush to the post' – to postindustrialism, post-Marxism, post-Keynesianism, postimperialism, postcapitalism – or other proclamations of the 'end' of an era, as if the past can be peeled away and discarded".

51 I am reminded of Bennington's (1989: 25) critique of Terry Eagleton: "[t]he claim to be able to discern the real continuities and thus to ground those fantasies at least partially in 'truth' depends simply on the illusion of an intelligentsia as subject of science to stand outside and above that reality and those fantasies. This is on its own terms not at all a historical or historicising position : to rehistoricise *this* fantasy would be to see in it a story on the same level as others in the text, and to abandon any transcendental horizon, and with it, any notion of *telos*, *eschaton*, guarantees and dialectics".

52 The original, brilliant question is: "why can feminists have revolution now, while Marxists have to wait?" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 251). It opens the last chapter of *The end of capitalism* and paves the way for, among others, a call for a divorce between Marxism and capitalism (discussed in my previous chapter). My question here is not about the postponing of 'revolutions', which, after all, are all that postcapitalists announce, but rather the possibility of their remaining compromised by the more general and inherited (other-than-chooseable) frames of reference. To remain capitalocentric, instead of being post/critically over or above it, would then need to mean the continuing task of the critical questioning of such 'revolutions' and their conceptual economies.

between them. Most analysts of postcapitalist prospects start off with a sense of marginal or small 'alternatives' that must be grown for a postcapitalism worthy of its ismic name. Being realistic means having an accurate analysis of the prospects, which are always a combination of hopeful and dim registers: "While there are many fragments or glimpses of postcapitalism in practice, there are no widespread manifestations across particular territories or sectors" (Chatterton & Pusey 2020: 38). If 'capitalism' unquestionably occupies 'the big picture', then 'postcapitalism' must start from connecting and fostering 'the small'. The portrayal of an undesirable and not inevitable 'present system' gives postscriptures their force and accentuates the need to work intensely towards the convergence and scaling of whatever is deemed alternative to it. As with the 'hegemony' and its 'dislocation' discussed in the previous chapter, the systemicity of the present and the openings 'beyond' it are held together here in a way that is both beneficial and restrictive. The binary of mainstream-alternative (Healy 2009; White & Williams 2016), or global-local (Gibson-Graham 2002), is not easy to avoid – but it becomes crucial how it is negotiated. Here I am interested in looking at some examples of the scalar problematics that open up, and the difficulty of acknowledging inherited problems of scale. There is great variety in how postcapitalists conceptualise their scalar politics. Yet the singular starting point of capitalism is to be transformed and/or substituted, which demands an analysis and politics pertinent to a similar scale.

'Neoliberalism' is the preferred name for 'the present', for both Mason (2015) and Srnicek and Williams (2015). This is where 'we' are now, and thus what is to replace it must be equally extensive, all-encompassing and undifferentiated:

> "To replace neoliberalism we need something just as powerful and effective; not just a bright idea about how the world could work but a new, holistic model that can run itself and tangibly deliver a better outcome. It has to be based on micro-mechanisms, not diktats or policies; it has to work spontaneously. […] I make the case that there is a clear alternative, that it can be global, and that it can deliver a future substantially better than the one capitalism will be offering by the mid-twenty-first century. It's called postcapitalism" (Mason 2015: xii–xiii).

Postcapitalism comes then to mean, by definition, an alternative as total as capitalism is pictured to be. If the problem for Gibson-Graham (2006b) in *The end of capitalism* was the sort of all-pervasive 'hegemonic capitalism' whose monolithic characteristics provide no chance for it to be challenged, here we confront the sort of thinking that actively exhorts us to think big, (at least) as big as that monolith.

Srnicek and Williams (2015) coin the notion 'folk politics' to denote the kind of thinking that fails at or dismisses such a task. The category compiles many characteristics that they portray as counterproductive leftism. Two meanings of 'folk' come together: firstly, a psychological critique arguing "that our intuitive conceptions of the world are both historically constructed and often mistaken"; secondly, a critique of "'folk' as the locus of the small-scale, the authentic, the traditional and the natural" (10). For Srnicek and Williams, folk politics is to be found in any practice that disparages the "abstraction and inhumanity of capitalism" and instead "aims to bring politics down to the 'human scale' by emphasising temporal, spatial and conceptual immediacy" (10). Characterised by a "deep suspicion of abstraction and mediation" (10), folk politics thus "privileges the local as the site of authenticity", "habitually chooses the small over the large", "favours projects that are un-scalable beyond a small community", and "often rejects the project of hegemony, valuing withdrawal or exit rather than building a broad

counter-hegemony" (11). It is "an attempt to make global capitalism small enough to be thinkable – and at the same time, to articulate how to act upon this restricted image of capitalism" (15). The problem is that this is a losing strategy, afraid to ask big questions of counter-hegemonic scale and governance. Rather than "reduce complexity down to a human scale", Srnicek and Williams exhort us to "expand humanity's capacities", which requires the "creation of new cognitive maps, political narratives, technological interfaces, economic models, and mechanisms of collective control to be able to marshal complex phenomena for the betterment of humanity" (16).

Now, importantly, Srnicek and Williams make sure not to reject a local politics per se. In fact the opposite is true, as they claim that "all politics begins from the local". But the problem for them is with thinking that *stays* with the local: "The problem is rather that folk-political thinking is content to remain at (and even privileges) that level – of the transient, the small-scale, the unmediated and the particular. It takes these to be sufficient rather than simply necessary moments" (12). What strikes me as worth critical attention here is not folk politics' rather obvious strawman-like role in this argument, but the 'local' politics that Srnicek and Williams find and value underneath the ideological and self-defeating veil of folk politics. The problem with folk politics may be its inward-looking characteristic, which renders it incapable of providing "an ambitious, abstract, mediated, complex and global approach" (12), but at the same time *all* politics *starts from* the local. One of the implications is that whatever 'folk politics' is associated with is something indolent, concrete, immediate, simple and bound to territory. Srnicek and Williams are not in fact saying that such dubiously *romantic* associations of local properties are worth critical scrutiny; instead, they are promoting them wholeheartedly. The romanticism remains uninterrupted. The problem is solely if we get stuck in the local and do not dare to 'think bigger'.

What, then, is the big? To answer, we must look at what 'neoliberalism' and 'global capitalism' are: "[g]iven the nature of global capitalism, any postcapitalist project will require an ambitious, abstract, mediated, complex and global approach", which means "outlining an alternative – a way for the left to navigate from the local to the global, and synthesise the particular with the universal" (12). We thus get an unquestionably intuitive argument pointing out the banal fact that in order to combat something 'global' you need something just as 'global'. The lack of thinking and organising in these terms is diagnosed as a major constraint of 'the Left'. As Mason pitches in:

> "[F]or decades the opponents of capitalism have revelled in their own incoherence. From the anti-globalization movement of the 1990s through to Occupy and beyond, the movement for social justice has rejected the idea of a coherent programme in favour of 'One No, Many Yes-es'. [… T]he absence of a clear alternative explains why most protest movements never win: *in their hearts they don't want to*" (Mason 2015: xii; my emphasis).

I have yet to see a more patronising treatment of social movements than Mason's explanation of their failures as lacking a will to win "in their hearts". But it is crucial to note how such explanations of local and incoherent movements allow these authors to make claims for a 'universal' and 'global' politics, which are associated variously with policies such as universal basic income, the socialised benefits of automation, shorter working weeks etc. Face-to-face 'folkism' is thus pitted against the realism and 'will to win' of representational politics. What is characteristic is that all of the alternatives thus proposed are tied to the currently available forms of representational politics within the

nation-state and require the parliamentary seizure of its institutional powers.[53] What is thus left unquestioned is precisely the scalar hierarchy that pre-orders scales vertically – a phallic verticality of 'the state' (Marston *et al.* 2005: 424; drawing on Lefebvre 1991: 36). A phallogocentric scalarity of the ordering state remains unsuspectedly the organising centre, the pole-like ladder around which postcapitalists gather to dance.

To be fair, this vertical ordering is not widely questioned by other postcapitalists either. Indeed, we might consider it a common sense that organises the epistemic cleft between the promise of a systemic postcapitalism and its prefigurative expressions in the 'here and now'. Metaphors matter again. I have lost count of the cases where the trope of 'seeds' is used to denote sites and practices deemed postcapitalist. Bauwens and Ramos (2018), for instance, use it to talk about a three-step process of the degradation of 'the dominant system', an exodus of social groups towards alternatives, which leads to "a flowering of many new seed forms that interconnect to form ecosystems, and that will eventually coalesce into prototypal forms of the emerging successor system" (9), leading to a "post-capitalist commons transition". Chatterton and Pusey (2020: 38) talk of autonomous experiments as "seedbeds for innovation, experimentation and learning for how postcapitalist futures may unfold".

Massumi (2018) prefers the metaphor of 'embryos', which he connects to a prefigurative politics as "embody[ing] embryonically the qualities that will characterize the postcapitalist future" (87).[54] He also uses the trope of 'pores' in which to grow and combine "to form a complex, expanding, prefiguratively postcapitalist field" (132). As he explains: "The postcapitalist future will grow in the pores of the capitalist field of life, in much the same way Marx said that capitalist society grew in the pores of feudalism" (87). With or without the organic metaphors, which point towards certain ontological assumptions about life, death, dispersal and growth, a prefigurative modelling of postcapitalist scaling from the small/local to the big/global is widely shared (see Gibson-Graham 2002): "I believe the right focus for a discussion of how post-capitalist entrepreneurship can thrive in a new reframing of the economy is local, primarily urban, while maintaining strong regional and global connections" Cohen (2018: 111). Nothing in this given sense of scalar orders – with the organic and genetic metaphors

53 Pitts and Dinerstein (2017) do a good job of situating the political momentum and popularity of both Mason's and Srnicek and Williams's thought within the success of 'Corbynism' in the British Labour Party. This positioning might give us an important lesson about these two books' respective politics within their 'local' context, thus positioning these authors who pride themselves on 'daring' to 'think bigger'. That we had to wait for critics to position the authors' respective projects undoubtedly tells us something about what allows one to avoid 'folk politics': refraining from positioning oneself, and thus being capable of speaking for 'the whole' (see Haraway 1988).

54 This embryo metaphor is also used by John Holloway (2010) to great effect. Referring to non-capitalist practices and movements, Holloway captures much of the affective tone at stake in the recurring trope of seeds and other organically growing, perennially and prefiguratively promising figures: "experimental projections towards a different world are probably as old as capitalism itself. But there has been a surge in recent years, a growing perception that we cannot wait for the great revolution, that we have to start to create something different here and now. These experiments are possibly the embryos of a new world, the interstitial movements from which a new society could grow" (2010: 11). There is a romanticism, and a thrill, in being part of an embryo. Arvidsson (2009: 97) has similar embryos in mind: "[a]re we in the midst of the transition from one economic system to another, post-capitalist one, or at the verge of a radical reform of capitalism as we know it? The most important question at this point is whether this archipelago of social production can be understood as a (however embryonic) manifestation of a new *economy*". I have a hard time seeing how this question ('can it be understood as…?') could be answered in the negative – why could it *not* be 'understood' as such a manifestation? My question, rather, would be: does this kind of 'understanding' *help*?

only replicating (pun intended) the natural order of growth and reproduction – seems to invite or demand a thorough questioning.

One thing often arising from such accounts is a recognition of scale as a problem *for* whatever is considered to be the 'local' 'seeds' of postcapitalism. Absent are questions regarding *other* scales, or a recognition of 'local politics' as *already* involved with various scalar projects (see Safri & Graham 2010; Safri 2015). In fact, I have yet to encounter a 'local' movement that does not think continuously, and often all too energetically, about issues of scale – for example, in the form of interdependencies, negotiations and struggles that fold 'the local' together with all sorts of other scales (households, municipalities, states, globality etc.). As Madra and Özselçuk are right to point out in their analysis of critical thought that associates Occupy movements with 'the local' and thus fails to recognise much of what the struggle is/was about:

> "These [critical] views suffer from […] reading the Occupy movements literally – restricting them to particular representations, particular productions, and particular places. In so doing, such views misrecognize how the Occupy movements operate metaphorically, as cathected representatives of different ways of organizing the economy" (Madra and Özselçuk 2016: 163).

The problem therefore is not simply that when political promise is associated primarily with representational institutions, all sorts of hierarchies are assumed and reproduced. They undoubtedly are, but the crux here is different: when a host of naturalised values are associated with 'the local' – whether positive or negative – within a context of well-known 'global' dynamics ('global capitalism', 'neoliberalism'), the identification of anything deviating from those valued categories is obfuscated. As in Holloway's version: "The only way to think of changing the world radically is as a multiplicity of interstitial movements running from the particular" (2010: 18). Unsurprisingly, then, if this is the 'terrain' which we inescapably build on – "all politics begins from the local" (Srnicek & Williams 2015: 12) – and if the ideal that we must challenge has its equally well-known 'global' and 'systemic' characteristics, the possibility of questioning and recognising a diversity of scalar relations and politics is restricted.

Thus, what is missing is an interest in how things lumped under banners such as 'folk politics' are actually engaged in all sorts of interdependencies that defy any sort of locality-boundedness and are heavily invested in finding out how to scale *otherwise*. This entails a curious sidelining of language, discourses and mediatisation – often including an ignorance of movements' own efforts to think and practise their mediatised topologies differently – in favour of a given sense of phenomenological intuitiveness and romantic, territory-bound groundedness. As if such orders of positioning and recognition did not reflect an inherited scalar language, one perhaps intensely working to capitalocentric effect, and did not involve an already partial reading. The organistic metaphors of growth and dissemination only strengthen the "romantic anti-capitalist" (Spivak 1985: 79) ordering of scales that thrives through unquestioned heritage. That this heritage might work to capitalocentric effect is my problem here.

4.2.5 Postisms: Economies of Performatives

Lastly, I want to consider the economic routing of societal transformation at stake in these accounts. As we have seen, postcapitalists often capitalise on what seems a particularly unreflected on and unpositioned perspective, a privileged epistemic

vantage point that allows one to claim a rupturing in the homogeneity of the 'mode of production'. A crack in 'the present' is thus located. But where is the crack? What characterises it? What is the light that filters through this illumination? I am tempted here to think of postcapitalism as a genre of 'postisms' (Derrida 1990) and an economy of 'postprefixations' (Barnes 1995), both inherited forms of knowledge production for the consumption of specific audiences. To explain, let us explore the question of what kind of givens might shape the formulation of a postcapitalist address or proposition.

Drucker (1993) provides an exceptionally blunt example. His book begins with a discussion of the "tremendous stake" that "developed countries" have in "the Third World" and how, unless the latter face "rapid development", both economic and social, "the developed countries will be inundated by a human flood of Third-World immigrants far beyond their economic, social or cultural capacity to absorb them" (13). We thus get a solid sense of the kind of perspective and concerns that inform his viewpoint. He continues in a passage I cannot but reproduce at length, to let it sink in:

> "But the forces that are creating post-capitalist society and post-capitalist polity originate in the developed world. They are the product and result of its development. Answers to the challenges of post-capitalist society and post-capitalist polity will not be found in the Third World. If anything has been totally disproven it is the promises of the Third-World leaders of the 1950s and 1960s – Nehru in India, Mao in China, Castro in Cuba, Tito in Yugoslavia, the apostles of *'Négritude'* in Africa or Neo-Marxists like Che Guevara. They promised that the Third World would find new and different answers, and would indeed, create a new order. The Third World has not delivered on these promises made in its name. The challenges, the opportunities, the problems of post-capitalist society and post-capitalist polity can only be dealt with where they originated. And that is the developed world" (Drucker 1993: 13).

I think the utter chauvinism of Drucker's perspective needs no further acknowledgement, nor does it warrant much analysis. We start to get a sense of where Drucker's answer to postcapitalist challenges, "a universal Educated Person" (193), stems from, and what its conditions of inclusion might be. The excessive belief in his own knowledge, and the profound discursive violences perpetuated by this nomination and description of "the Third World", should be clear. What interests me is not the content of Drucker's argument (which we have already reproduced too extensively), but rather the fact that this is an account that has truly found its audience. According to Google Scholar, this book has been cited more than 13,000 times. Some of these are surely critical appraisals, but the majority do not seem to be. Furthermore, generally critical scholars also cite Drucker as if it were an unproblematic act (e.g. Hardt & Negri 2000: 461–462 n18). I would wager a decidedly textualist hypothesis: they perhaps read Drucker *as* "universal Educated Persons", that is, *as if* they belonged to the winners of his postcapitalist vision.

We would be mistaken to dismiss Drucker's textual chauvinism and its readership as a secondary matter compared with the 'main content' of the argument. The main proposition, after all, is clearly that societal changes are on the way everywhere, and that the 'universal educated person', with their civilised manners, stand in a privileged location to analyse and act upon those changes. *Knowledge*, after all, is what increasingly matters socio-economically and decides the fate of (post)capitalism, and Drucker's professionary knowledge certainly is not just one among equals:

> "Post-capitalist society requires a unifying force. It requires a leadership group which can focus local, particular, separate traditions onto a common and shared commitment to values, onto a common concept of excellence, and onto mutual respect" (Drucker 1993: 193).

It is not as if we could all belong to this group of leaders, but we can all read Drucker as if we could. At least, that is, all those who find themselves not directly confronted by the author's abuse.[55]

I would like to make a much more troubling observation that Drucker's honesty about his privileged vantage point, and the abuse its upkeep requires, combined with the fact that his work has found its audience, tells us something more general to think through. Namely, 'postisms' (Derrida 1990) should be studied as addresses produced for and enabled by specific political economies of mediation and the demands of circulation of more-than-argumentative (i.e. affective, identity-building, subjectivating etc.) thought. Drucker thus makes clear a postcapitalist tendency to privilege whatever sites or positions are considered outstanding in their historic role of postcapitalist change-making, *and* to do this in a way that capitalises on the derogation of others and still manages to be read as inclusive (rather than, say, chauvinistic).

If we follow this line of thought, it becomes crucial to read for who and what gets characterised as a privileged agent or site of postcapitalism. Consider, for instance, how Mason's (2015) project relies on a specific address made to the 'networked': "By creating millions of networked people, financially exploited but with the whole of human intelligence one thumb swipe away, info-capitalism has created a new agent of change in history: *the* educated and connected human being" (xvii; my emphasis). Who would *not* want to become this new person? Similarly, Srnicek and Williams's (2015) project puts forward a specific agent by associating their vision of societal change with the most advanced, ambitious and complex characteristics: "*[t]his* is what a twenty-first-century left looks like. […] We must expand our collective imagination beyond what capitalism allows" (183; my emphasis). Who would *not* want to belong to such a 'we'?[56] In Massumi

55 I am thinking of Malcolm Bull's (2011) *Anti-Nietzsche*. Nietzsche attacks almost everyone, and has a very specific reader in mind. His readers, by contrast, *all* tend to find that specificity in themselves: "[t]hrough the act of reading, Nietzsche flatteringly offers identification with the masters to anyone, but not to everyone. Identification with the masters means imaginative liberation from all the social, moral and economic constraints within which individuals are usually confined; identification with 'the rest' involves reading one's way through many pages of abuse directed at people like oneself. Unsurprisingly, people of all political persuasions and social positions have more readily discovered themselves to belong to the former category. For who, in the privacy of reading, can fail to find within themselves some of those qualities of honesty and courage and loftiness of soul that Nietzsche describes?" (35) This is what Bull calls 'reading for victory', which includes taking Nietzsche's categories and trying to overcome him through them. The reading strategy Bull proposes instead is reading Nietzsche *like a loser*: "[r]ather than reading for victory with Nietzsche, […] we read for victory against ourselves, making ourselves the victims of the text. Doing so does not involve treating the text with scepticism or suspicion. In order to read like a loser you have to accept the argument, but turn its consequences against yourself" (41). Perhaps this offers yet another reading strategy to experiment with. Not reading postcapitalisms for dominance or difference, nor for victory, but like a loser. For starters, it might mean suspecting that the insightful (Western, knowledgeable, male etc.) subjects of postcapitalism might not include myself and my community – and that the proliferation of *their* postcapitalist visions might produce insufferable collateral damage.

56 Additionally, we can read here *where* the change that will shatter capitalism is supposed to occur, and what kind of economy of inclusion and exclusion that might demand. In their effort to match neoliberalism using its own tools, Srnicek and Williams (2015) propose a Mont Pelerin of the left: "[t]he call for a Mont Pelerin of the left should therefore not be taken as an argument to simply copy

(2017), things are more complicated, as he discusses subjectivities in some detail and analyses one sense of an emotional, narrativised and capitalist subjectivity. The opening here has an extra-personal intensity: "[a] postcapitalist future will have to operate *beyond the personal*, to reclaim affect and intensity, by whatever means necessary" (81). This means not simply depersonalisation or deintegration, but instead the breeding of "a whole new animal" (87) through affective intensity. Who would *not* want to become a whole new animal?[57]

De Angelis (2017), by contrast, avoids the most straightforward claims for a new subject/collective/animal. His account shows an interest in a multiplicity of actually existing practices and positionalities in their manifold differences. It is explicitly framed as one contribution among others for postcapitalist transformations: "The form of that postcapitalism is not for me to say, since I believe that it will depend on billions of interactions in power fields that we cannot anticipate" (15). Among the billions of alternatives, however, his preferred choice is loud and clear, seeking to foster forms of commons and their autonomy from state and market. What *is* characteristically post-capitalist in this account is the interplay of a declared modesty/uncertainty concerning the variety of agents and perspectives needed and the simultaneous construction of *a* postcapitalist language (here, of the commons) that is posited/assumed to be indispensable – an interplay that is not very much reflected on.

For example, De Angelis writes: "The limit to what can be considered a common good is *entirely* contextual and political, depending on the political boundaries, imaginative capability and involvement in doing in commons that a community can give itself" (63; my emphasis). Again, we are convinced of the situated nature of this endeavour, of a modesty regarding the commons to come. He goes on to note that "[w]hen one speaks of common goods, people in different contexts and involved in very diverse struggles seem to respond", and he celebrates this as "the great potential of the commons' *neo-civilising mission*" (63; my emphasis). This "great potential", reflected in the "endless lists" of commons taxonomies that De Angelis presents, allows him "to say *omnia sunt communia* knowing that if I dig enough I will find a different case or a different method where a particular common goods has been turned into an element of a commons by a commoning plurality of commoners" (63–64). There seem to be no apparent contradictions between an "*entirely* contextual and political" (whatever this means) definition of a common good and the "neo-civilising mission" of (t)his specific language that so well characterises what one finds 'underneath' by 'digging enough'.

Underneath particular differences we find a common ground best described by a language of the commons. We might consider this a necessary and in many ways unavoidable interplay between particularity and commonality, or openness and solidarity

its mode of operation. The argument is rather that the left can learn from the long-term vision, the methods of global expansion, the pragmatic flexibility and the counter-hegemonic strategy that united an ecology of organisations with a diversity of interests. The demand for a Mont Pelerin of the left is ultimately a call to build anew the hegemony of the left" (67). Those of us who have small chance of getting invited to such meetings or wishing to send delegates on our behalf might be left wondering who this 'left' is for.

57 All these proclamations for *the* agent of history remind me of Sedgwick's (2003: 146) remark that a "disturbingly large amount of theory seems explicitly to undertake the proliferation of only one affect, or maybe two, of whatever kind – whether ecstasy, sublimity, self-shattering, *jouissance*, suspicion, abjection, knowingness, horror, grim satisfaction, or righteous indignation". Perhaps this is another key characteristic of postcapitalism: its capitalisation of one or two key affects, modes of attachment, and types of agent, as if a no-nonsensical straightness of argumentation spearheaded us towards the postprefixed promised land.

(see Miller 2013). But what in my reading is decidedly postcapitalist or postist here is the lack of reflection on the potential and actual violences committed in such a move, to verbalise '*entirely* contextual' matters in a shared, not-simply-non-violent language (see previous chapter). What we thus get is a language of the commons that is purified of the violences of 'capitalism' and 'the state', two indexes for the kind of problems De Angelis seeks to solve through the commons. That 'the commons', with its anglophone publishing economies and institutional support, might *also* mark a profound impoverishment of economic vocabulary – or a reproduction of some violences – is left out of the question.

My point is not that these are dynamics to be avoided, but quite the contrary, that they are inherited problematics that will need problematisation and negotiation in each postist case. The widely circulating language of commons is a good example, because its "neo-civilising mission" (De Angelis 2017: 63) is so easily treated as fundamentally different from capitalocentrism as "an overwhelmingly neocolonial approach to thinking about the world, one which erases the diverse epistemological, ontological and even cosmological standpoints of peoples everywhere" (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020a: 17). Again, the mode of performative address tells us about its conditions of both production and consumption. In other words, the question is about who publishes, circulates, reads and cites these postscriptures – and who does not – and what kind of inheritances may be negotiated or left unnegotiated in specific accounts. Capitalocentric privileges do not need to be *explicitly* articulated to live in the address and economy of language.

Hence, a hint for forthcoming readers of postcapitalisms: whenever someone claims a shared horizon, or any 'we' for that matter, we (*sic*) should vigilantly stop and consider what sort of hierarchies are being assumed and reproduced. I would like to note how these ways of inheriting (post)capitalism are profoundly invested in the maintenance of epistemic and political privileges. To be sure, these privileges are not One, nor should they be treated as fully avoidable. Perhaps, then, capitalocentrism is reproduced at the level of economies of thought, which brings to the forefront the differentiated infrastructures, institutions and circulations that enable something like 'postcapitalism' to become an object of debate (somewhere). It also brings attention to how certain articulations of a postism are better capitalised (funded, invested in as an investment for future gains) than others. And it opens the possibility to think that these economies of thought are diverse too, and more-than-capitalist, and that not all capitals are capitalist – and none are *only* capitalist.

Perhaps the most interesting strategy to think with and against such accounts is not to oppose them directly, arguing for the inclusion of everything and everyone that is missing from them. Perhaps we need to take, say, Drucker *at his word*: "The challenges, the opportunities, the problems of post-capitalist society and post-capitalist polity can only be dealt with where they originated. And that is the developed world" (Drucker 1993: 13). Again, the book has surely found(ed) such a 'developed world' in the sympathy of its readers. Rather than claim our stakes in *their* problems, what if we understood this as an unintended admission by Drucker concerning the provinciality of his own problematic? If these problems indeed originated in 'the developed world', and Drucker undoubtedly thinks of himself as being 'in it', then why not admit this and let his 'post-capitalist society' unfold by itself?

I would suggest an anti-capitalocentric reading that works against prevalent capitalisations of the 'post'- by situating perspectives that pride (or cannot help but reveal) themselves on being non-situated. This would constitute a sort of active refusal of the

'god trick', an insistence "on the particularity and embodiment of all vision (although not necessarily organic embodiment and including technological mediation), and not giving in to the tempting myths of vision as a route to disembodiment and second-birthing" (Haraway 1988: 582). Not only situating ourselves better, but letting the non-situated have their world to themselves, and practising instead strategies for its rejection. This would mean a task of situating specific postcapitalist problematics within historically and geographically determinate institutions and relations of production (without a capitalocentric insistence on these as a priori capitalist). This would mean drawing a border, retreating however momentarily from a supposedly shared postcapitalist moment, and claiming that what emerges in Drucker's account is, quite literally, *not my problem*.

4.3 A Postcapitalist Politics

What then *is* my problem? If I have sketched a view of some recurrent characteristics of postcapitalisms, it is now time to juxtapose them with Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics. I will try to do three things at the same time: first, to describe Gibson-Graham's departure from conventional postcapitalist wisdom, thus also clarifying some of their conceptual and strategic trajectories; second, to see how that departure might be explained by the identification of a thin (post/critical) capitalocentrism; third, to see what kind of capitalocentric tendencies remain to be negotiated in Gibson-Graham's propositions. Therefore, the point is not simply to affirm Gibson-Graham's difference compared with (other) postcapitalists, but instead to identify how this differentiation takes place, and what limitations it might yield. What I thus seek is an amplification of Gibson-Graham's forceful intervention not only by insisting on its post/critical credentials, but rather by folding it back for an ongoing critique. This is what I mean by the framework's self-deconstruction.

But first, what is a postcapitalist politics? Curiously, Gibson-Graham explain little and give no clear definition. The notion is in the title of their book *A postcapitalist politics*, enabling and shadowing the book's contents. In contrast to various post-capital*isms*, here we have an adjective – and one preceded by the indefinite article, 'a'. Clear definitions are not found in the text, nor does 'postcapitalist' feature prominently in the book's index. If these are some minimal prerequisites of what a concept is, then the conceptuality of 'a postcapitalist politics' appears insecure at best. Instead of a clearly defined concept, postcapitalist politics operates more as a slogan for Gibson-Graham's and other diverse economists' mode of 'doing thinking'. What it offers, Gibson-Graham argue, is a "counterhegemonic […] project of resignification and enactment" (81) and a "political imaginary" (9); an invitation for "processes of self-cultivation that might equip us to become ethical subjects of a postcapitalist order" (x). This politics is supported by "a discourse of the community economy [that] could act to create and sustain the identity of a postcapitalist economy" (84). It calls attention to "what pushes back against our political imaginary and the techniques of thinking we employ […] that, for many, stand in the way of a politics of postcapitalist possibility" (1).

And it also calls for us "to cultivate new habits of thinking for a postcapitalist politics", that is, "to loosen the structure of feeling that cannot live with uncertainty or move beyond hopelessness" (4). In *A postcapitalist politics* and elsewhere (see e.g. Roelvink & Gibson-Graham 2009), 'postcapitalist politics' comes to denote the whole of the diverse economies framework's rather complex but easily popularisable approach. By pushing on what appear to me to be the differences of postcapitalist politics compared

with postcapitalism, I will risk defining a notion that might have been left a relatively 'floating signifier' on purpose. However, by examining some of the continuing capitalocentrism to be negotiated, I underline the necessity to work on the concept, and to map the distance between the complexities of this politics and the simplicity of *some* of its contagious, post/critical sides.

Again, I have gathered the points under five categories roughly respective to the forms of capitalocentric realism above. First, in addition to capitalocentric realism, which sets the tone in terms of god tricks and certitude, postcapitalism also promises deeply troubling reflective tasks of coming to terms with the limits of 'our' knowledge. Second, it becomes clear that the 'mode of production' that fills up all of 'the present' still and increasingly demands critical attention – not so much because its problemicity remains insufficiently argued within diverse economies, but because this ismic context still influences the *reading* of any postcapitalist promise. Third, if the ism is never one, neither is time: a multiplicity of temporalities is unleashed, and we begin to understand the ethical openings as well as the inherited memories of postcapitalist promises. Fourth, the scalar hierarchy that structures postcapitalisms is here rejected through an active interest in other processes of scaling, some of which might question the very grounds of our givens about what scale is or how it can be identified. Fifth, the arbitration of agencies and horizontal hierarchies of change-making is complemented by a situated, affirmative-critical-deconstructive practice and questioning of every whereness. A pedagogy, that is, with a risk involved.

4.3.1 Situatedness: Knowing Partially

Much of Gibson-Graham's (2006b) original feminist critique of political economy was based on the observation that totalising modes of interpretation are not only not inescapable effects of how the economic world 'really is', but they are also often profoundly counterproductive through their capitalocentric allegiance to the representation of and by 'hegemonic capitalism'. In light of postcapitalism, we need to update this critique, since this genre of postprefixations is so explicitly concerned not only with future transformations of 'the system' but also with identifying and fostering such transformational openings *today*. In other words, in many ways whose effects are not to be undervalued, it seeks transformations by announcing an end to "the politics of postponement" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: ix) of classical capitalocentrism. The point of still clinging on to a critique of capitalocentrism, or seeking to reinvent it in this context, is guided by my simple observation that many of the conceptual structures and argumentative strategies of classical capitalocentrism keep on repeating themselves, even if this time in a decidedly postcapitalist key. Just as the silencing of non-capitalist economies can take the form of an active, intentional politics *or* its unintended collateral damage, or perhaps both at the same time, we should not associate 'doing something' a priori with non-capitalocentricity.

Here opens an important possibility to explicate Gibson-Graham's situated approach and some of its possible limitations. Interestingly, the crux of Gibson-Graham and Dombroski's (2020: 3) short critical remark on Mason's 'postcapitalism' is that such "visions", however "inspiring", fail to "recogniz[e] the very different starting points for people in different situations around the world". A differential, situated politics is arguably the core proposition of diverse economies. As we have seen, it proposes a particular language for being attentive and responsive to the array of more-than-capitalist livelihoods worldwide. In terms of changes in the production of knowledges

and discourses associated with these economies, the task becomes to attentively loosen the grip of explanations and instead seek to observe, against predominant (capitalocentric) frameworks of explanation, what happens on the ground. It thus resonates with Haraway's (1988: 583) 'situated knowledge' as a task of feminist objectivity and limited location, a task of "becom[ing] answerable for what we learn how to see".

If the hallmark of Sedgwick's (2003) strong theory is its incapacity to position itself as one knowledge among others, weak theory by contrast becomes acutely attuned to its own partiality and limitations. Importantly, weak theory, as the name says, is not non-theory, but a strand of theory that "refus[es] to extend explanation too widely or deeply, refusing to know too much" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 619). It is literally weak, in the sense that its explanation *cannot* run wide and deep. It *fails* on these terms: "Weak theory could not know that social experiments are doomed to fail or destined to reinforce dominance; it could not tell us that the world economy will never be transformed by the disorganized proliferation of local projects" (619). It could not tell us this because it refrains from or fails to achieve the size and topology that the knowing of necessity, and of global abstractions such as 'the world economy', warrants. It fails in terms of aligning the 'small facts' with the 'large issues' (Gibson-Graham 2014b). Importantly, I think, this also means that such a theory cannot tell us how the world *will* be transformed by 'local projects'. By refraining from big explanations, it does away with the possibility of positive big explanations too. [58] What is left is a "reparative motive that welcomes surprise, tolerates coexistence, and cares for the new, providing a welcoming environment for the objects of our thought" (Gibson-Graham 2008a: 619).

What this means in terms of Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics is a framework that is well adapted to different conditions and uses, because it offers so little – a language with "rules of syntax and grammar […] loose to the point of nonexistence, allowing for empirical encounters and creative expressions of the new, the unthought, the unexpected" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 60). Insofar as the framework offers an adaptable language of economy, and one in continuous negotiation vis-à-vis contextual rethinking and challenging, we can identify in it a loosening of epistemic requirements about how 'the world' (in general) is or should be, and instead concentrate on working with "*what we have here at hand*" (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski 2020a: 3). There is a strong investment in the 'thick description' (Gibson-Graham 2014b) of practical realities we already have 'at hand', practically and pragmatically available to our senses and the practical negotiation of care. As Pieta Hyvärinen (2019: 379) highlights through the case of beekeeping practices, at stake are not 'only' transformative practical orientations to multispecies and diverse-economic interdependence, but also a way of knowing that is "response-able and surprise-able" and "leaves a space open both for care and response" (see also Alhojärvi 2017; Houtbeckers & Kallio 2019). As an ethical orientation to interdependence, a practical orientation to negotiation, and an epistemic orientation of weak theory come together in this framework, we have a powerful tool for situated transformations. As Lauren Berlant (2011: 261) rightly notes, "[t]his locates politics in a commitment to the present activity of the senses", and for good reasons.

I do not mean to denigrate this strategy in the slightest by calling it a *pedagogical*

58 My interpretation of 'weak theory' differs slightly from Gibson-Graham's (2014b: S149) take that its import for economic rethinking is to allow one to "carefully reconsider the 'large issues' that 'small facts' are made to speak to". I think consistency in terms of the weakness of theory, as Sedgwick describes it, demands an *inability* to know what such 'large issues' might be.

orientation to economic life. There is what we could call a *strategic* metaphysics of presence in loosening the grip of 'big explanations' (e.g. determining structures, systemic necessities, privileged sites) by *assuming* an ethical-political movement space without them. As with Jacques Rancière's (1991) pedagogy of ignorance, there is much potential here for intellectual emancipation and a transformative politics, wherever this framework travels. Where I see the danger is not in the refusal to rehearse 'what we already know' about systemic determination and overriding structures – this is, after all, a domain of structures that weak theory does not claim to know about. Rather, the risk of this pedagogy is the reduction of politics, power and transformation to what is practically present and available to its senses – or an *ontologisation* of this pedagogic approach that involves simplistic juxtaposition against strong theory. "[S]ticking close to the phenomena under study and avoiding overwhelming theoretical foreshadowing" (Schmid & Smith 2020: 15) involves all sorts of theoretical (or pre-empirical) assumptions *in* practice.

The phenomenological intuitiveness of 'practice' and 'situatedness' should not be taken as excuses for loosening up the critical requirements of studying where these come from and what burdens they might carry. Or, to get back to Sedgwick, we might say that one of the characteristics of weak theory is the strength 'within'. As an iterable strategy of knowing, and a trope that circulates far and wide while simultaneously seeking to mark the distance and limits of its own circulation by allegedly refusing a wide 'size and topology', weak theory is strong indeed. This should alert us to any givenness of the 'present activity of the senses' and the apparent concreteness and intuitive nearness of the concerns archived under 'weak theory'. Diverse economies may thus offer an 'ontology', but a *performative* one (Gibson-Graham 2008a), which means not only a productive ontology present to our transparent inspection and control, but one whose productivity requires citationality – a domain of the *pre*formed. The tropological strength and contagiousness of 'weak theory' might provide a good example to think with. It might then not be a futile task to remind ourselves of Sedgwick's 'ecology of knowing', and her insistence on these questions as belonging *within* the space of critical theory broadly speaking. Without this acknowledgement, my fear is that the capitalocentrism identified in postcapitalist epistemic certitude – which cannot but rehearse familiar structures of power – is translated into a differently capitalocentric insistence on the transparency and phenomenological obviousness of the 'here and now', as if this were, finally, a post/discursive space. Instead, one way to loosen the certainties around a postcapitalist politics would be to treat its language and sensorium as inherited problems, as opposed to (or in addition to) being 'present activities'.

4.3.2 Landscaping Diversity

As we have seen, many postcapitalist accounts (and their rejections) are driven by a commitment to an ongoing and underlying system that organises '*the* present' in fundamentally undifferentiated ways. As a postscripting opening that simultaneously pivots on the extensiveness and sharedness of its stem, '-capitalism', postcapitalism cannot but reproduce many of the dynamics of a unified, singular and total economic system analysed by Gibson-Graham (2006b) in *The end of capitalism*. Now, even in the making-present and availability of a non-capitalist politics (as opposed to its postponement), we confront a present system that has "colonize[d] the entire social space" (259) and confronts us "with the task of systemic transformation" (256). To rehearse this critique now, within the fold that these postcapitalist visions constitute, is to take

into account not only how such visions postpone or restrict a different politics, but also how their systemic starting point (reconfirmed in accounts of postcapital*ism*) cannot help but do so.

Gibson-Graham's alternative, it seems, is straightforward: to move from a language of postcapitalism (noun) to a postcapitalist politics (adjective), from blueprints or manifestos or grand analyses to situated practices. This means that a new language needs inventing, one to reorganise the constituents of 'the present' anew, including the practices formerly associated with 'capitalism'. Here the spatiality of an 'economic landscape' becomes crucial. Economic processes such as capitals are placed within a heterogeneous landscape which presents a reorganisation of spatial economies that includes what were formerly the most 'colonised' territories of 'capitalism':

> "In such a landscape the possibility of appropriating surplus labor in nonexploitative ways (in households, firms, and other organizations) and of distributing it to potentiate different social orders becomes present and proximate, instead of unlikely and strange" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2000: 14).

By dislocating the presence of 'global capitalism' that grounds so much of postcapitalist argumentation, Gibson-Graham (2006a: 77) produce "an unruly economic landscape of particular, nonequivalent meanings" that is filled with "sites where ethical decisions can be made, power can be negotiated, and transformations forged". This landscape, as St Martin *et al.* (2015: 4) put it, consists of "radical economic heterogeneity" and it "does not presume that power is structured in any necessary or inherently reproducible manner". The trope of 'landscape' indeed becomes a key notion, as it allows for an intentionally flattened and horizontalised surface of sites and relations, instead of "structurally determined or logically derived dynamics of economic interaction" (4).

I would suggest this landscape is another major trope and strategy in diverse economies, one whose political-aesthetic spatiality deserves close examination. It offers an alternative representation of economy in spatial terms, as a heterogeneous surface of ontologically flat sites and practices rid of pre-known power relations and causal determinations. If we think in terms of such a landscape, the symmetry of 'isms' (capitalism/postcapitalism) involves a spatial homogenisation or totalisation that might propose a new selection of geo-economic heartlands and systemic logics that are capitalised for postist purposes, but it fails to question the parameters of that selection. By contrast, the economic landscape of postcapitalist politics gives us a practically and experimentally oriented framework that is simply not interested in delving into discussions about the 'macro scale' as we used to know it (like the 'isms' of capitalism and postcapitalism) (see Gibson-Graham 2002). It helps us to break with ismic abstractions to read for difference in their stead, and to concentrate on the concrete transformations of postcapitalist sites. Again, we find the commitment to a politics organised around what is present and available for practical transformation – and an effort to carve more space for such transformations through a critique of ismic hierarchies of power: "We bring these issues out of the realm of abstract theorizing and into everyday practices of living together and building alternative futures" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: x).

As we see, a proclaimed movement from the abstract to the concrete happens here. In *A postcapitalist politics* and subsequent works (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 2008a), the former is associated with 'theorising', critiques and paranoid mastery, while the latter presents an honest effort and risk to experiment instead, hands in the mud. This again is a contagiously productive movement, and a partial strategy whose post/critical

predicates and effects would deserve close scrutiny. What interests me here is how this strategic movement enables a distinction between 'postcapitalism' as noun and 'postcapitalist' as adjective, and the break from ismic abstraction thereby announced. As we saw, the latter is left definitionally rather open, which also distinguishes it from its manifesto-like, pre-known sibling (the ism). Being undefined means being open for and in need of future negotiations, a process of recurring work to find out what exactly it is that makes this or that politics 'postcapitalist'.

This is surely a way to avoid the most evident ismic qualities of postcapital*ism*, but what interests me here is the tropic circulation of 'a postcapitalist politics' and the way it is *read*. The conceptual intricacies of Gibson-Graham's propositions – not to speak of the critique of capitalocentrism itself – does not travel as well as does the simple sloganish adjective 'postcapitalist'. Coupled with a decidedly open, non-conceptual strategy that refrains from a conceptual solidification of 'postcapitalist politics' – an imaginary of closure/openness that has important lessons about the language theory and assumptions thus mobilised – this makes it hard to read 'postcapitalist' as composed of a direct challenge to, or even a different strategy about, the ismic thinking organised around 'postcapitalism'. It becomes hard, in other words, to read for the difference.

What I mean to underline with this is simply the fact that Gibson-Graham's post-capitalist politics is read in a context in which the critique of capitalocentrism is *not* an established theoretical accomplishment and precondition for grasping the postcapitalist strategy. For instance, consider how Chatterton and Pusey (2020) skip over some remarkable, perhaps unnegotiable differences between the approaches they frame as belonging to a convergence of postcapitalists. They read *A postcapitalist politics* as if it "elaborated on the term *postcapitalism* as a way of exploring the diverse ways that postcapitalist subjects, economies, and communities can be fostered beyond capitalism" (28; my emphasis), and thus they miss the chance to see the profound challenges of diverse-economic praxis for many other approaches collected under 'postcapitalism'. Of course, there might be strong political incentives to do so, and to skip the contentiousness and build momentum in the name of a shared postcapitalist urgency. But this assumes that the differences are marginal occurrences or bridgeable gaps. This might be so, but I regard it as a serious risk if we prioritise the political requirements of common agendas over critical discussion about the irreducible differences between post-scriptures. This is especially so if the convergence under a shared project of 'postcapitalism' happens precisely in the post/critical terms that leave continuous forms of reproduced capitalocentrism unaddressed and deny the need for critical capacities to do so.

There is a crucial lesson in such readings, which sheds light on the downsides of the risk that Gibson-Graham take by practising textual and conceptual openness. The readership of texts and words usually cannot be governed, and thus openness always risks yielding to *mis*understandings in the sense, for instance, of reading 'a postcapitalist politics' without the critical tendencies or the necessary indeterminacies of 'the end of capitalism (as we knew it)'. Reading Gibson-Graham through the lens of post/capitalism, Chatterton and Pusey (2020) credit them with placing "the capitalist economy" as "only one of a diverse array of economies that co-exist" (34), and with concentrating on "the alternatives that coexist alongside it" (33). Although the critique of capitalocentrism gets mentioned, it is a typically post/critical reading that informs Chatterton and Pusey's engagement with diverse economies as a research programme. What is thus missed is how any positing of 'the capitalist economy' *alongside* other economies (distinct and/or distinguishable from it) might have to be our first suspect, were we to critically examine the continuing marginalisation of its 'alternatives'

(see Healy 2009; White & Williams 2016). That the framework's critical provocations might also exhort us to question the very ismic framework of Chatterton and Pusey's postcapitalism is left unexplored, thus missing any serious challenge to a hegemonic and homogeneous sense of '*the* (capitalist) present' confirmed through its (postcapitalist) 'alternatives'.[59]

Therefore, the reading of Gibson-Graham's work as part of a family reunion of postcapitalists fails to explore the continuing critical challenge it proposes for any approach that tries to think and act upon 'the present' in ways that would not reproduce self-defeating capitalocentrisms.[60] Thus the challenge I propose is of a *context* that might tend to read and use diverse-economic perspectives for the reproduction of capitalocentric common sense. This is perhaps especially true of a 'postcapitalist politics', an easily readable trope that sinks well into the general givenness of the 'postcapitalism' (i.e. all the senses in which the latter does *not* announce troubling inheritances). The periperformative practices around or readings of a postcapitalist politics are of course not under its sovereign control. But the texture of the argument – or its 'texxture' (Bora 1997; Sedgwick 2003) – matters in making specific differences stick. Leaving unnegotiated the difference between a postcapitalist politics and postcapitalism might demand a decidedly anti-post/critical articulation that explicitly includes an anti-capitalocentric negotiation with non-ownable capitalocentric inheritances. What I would argue, then, is that the non-conceptual strategy of Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics might miscalculate its own capacities for fostering environments where its facts can survive, or where the challenges it proposes are read seriously.

If we are to "to create *and sustain* the identity of a postcapitalist economy" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 84; my emphasis) – say, an economy of postcapitalist thinking – then the question of its sustenance, conflicting forces, and potentials and perils of institutionalisation becomes crucial. These are issues not easily collapsed into or captured by the tempting flatness of the 'economic landscape' – reading may be a practice, and a conceptual economy may be an economy, but their representation is a problem in and of itself. Regardless of whether we understand the discourse and praxis of diverse economies to consist of a non-capitalocentric enterprise or not, its wider context and

59 Interestingly, this reading of Gibson-Graham so as to miss their challenge can be compared to some critical dismissals of their work that similarly just read for its post/critical propositions, not its criticism of the framework of capitalocentric intelligibility and self-evidence that summons such readings (see e.g. Dean 2012: 3–5; Dean 2015).

60 More generally, we may note in such political readings a hastiness that wants to skip conceptual issues and the literality of these languages for what appears to be a more-than-linguistic urgency of the present. The rush of a reading that can skip this resistance of the ism is the same as that allowing us to leave unasked questions regarding the status of the parentheses in *The end of capitalism (as we knew it)*, the work of the article 'a' in front of the plural 'postcapitalist politics', or the scare quotes in Gibson-Graham's call for a "quixotic, snail-paced and meandering journey toward putting an 'end to capitalism'" (2010: 127). In short, this reading allows us to skip attending to the letter and the questions archived in, on and through it. In so doing, it also fails to read how the 'unworking' (Miller 2013) so central to Gibson-Graham operates in and through their texts, seeking to foster openness and contingency in many strategic locations and locutions. One of them is undoubtedly the non-conceptuality of their postcapitalist politics. I submit that such a reading can only be legitimated by assuming the literality of the letter to be a secondary matter, perhaps compared with the obviously material matters and concreteness of the signifieds at stake (it is about 'the economy', after all). Perhaps it is also grounded by a praxeology that positions 'theory' and 'concepts' as a superfluous enterprise compared with the immediate necessities of political convergence. What may go unnoticed, among other things, is that the supposedly practical and material signifieds do not have any sense outside language, and that they themselves participate in and produce discourses and theories of all sorts – and carry around a history of problems longer than thought.

readership do not necessarily do so.[61] Thus, even diverse economists' closest allies in the homely field of geography can continue to miss the stakes of capitalocentrism as a living, challenging problematic. Then again, judging others hardly makes sense if the self-descriptions of diverse economists continue so prevalently to perpetuate the post/critical sidelining of capitalocentrism. If its challenge were appreciated, post/capitalisms would find a much more self-critical, vigilant, and conceptually clear-sighted readership. This is why it might make sense, after all, to take the risk and conceptualise postcapitalist politics more explicitly – also, and perhaps especially, to distinguish it from diversely capitalocentric postcapitalisms.

4.3.3 Postutopian Temporality

The temporalities of the 'post-' of postcapitalism most often index, as we have seen, openings towards the future. Together with variously linear narratives occupied with 'periodisation', and allied to a shared sense of 'the present' (as systemic, global capitalism), and the affective politics of forward-looking emancipations, these make for a decidedly future-oriented discussion. The capitalisation of the postcapitalist 'here and now' is conveniently timed as a historical momentum within a linear temporal frame. Again, in terms of temporality, Gibson-Graham pave a way for a distinctly different postcapitalist politics by continuously emphasising the need for other temporalities besides the capitalocentric narratives of development/peril so often gathered under the name of postcapitalism. This includes critically appraising postcapitalist strategies that prioritise certain sites and practices as openings towards the future. It also includes a need to question the affectively rendered future-orientedness that does not simultaneously insist on the necessity of rereading pasts and presents with a similarly subversive, or critical, eye.

Some of the most interesting recent efforts to think postcapitalist temporalities are in connection to 'the Anthropocene'. For example, the Commons Yardstick is a tool introduced by Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2013: 138–147) that exhorts us to think seven generations forwards and backwards in time, in order to consider the sort of intergenerational time of opening to the other that an ethics in the age of global warming requires. Similarly, and as we saw in the previous chapter, in Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2016: 207) we are exhorted to consider "that the commons might be part of a different historical trajectory" than is archived in the static grids of legal property systems. As discussed in the previous chapter, the authors call for attention to commoning instead of the commons as a stable, territorial and legal category, and they also insist on the 'commoning-ability' of *any* property form. What is *post*capitalist about this politics is not that it comes 'after' a capitalist ordering of space and time (an ordering usually just

61 The reader will notice that my argument here hovers close to or perhaps even becomes indistinguishable from the understanding of capitalocentrism as a 'hegemony' (exclusive, territorial, colonising etc.) critiqued in the previous chapter. But the difference is in the assumptions mobilised in erecting capitalocentrism as a canvas in view of its negotiation (simply put: dislocation/overcoming or continuous negotiation). The differentiation of capitalocentric tendencies should be a main objective, asking (here, for instance) what kind of work specific postcapitalist readings do, and how (not) to understand them as a generalised 'culture' of tending to discursive-material objects (such as 'postcapitalist politics') in a similar way. Of course, there is no unproblematic language here, and all these assumptions should be viewed with suspicion. On what grounds can it be claimed that a capitalocentric readership is 'general'? How does such a claim generate, in its tautological operation, these grounds and *still* manage to 'capture' something essential about how such readings tend to operate and how common they are?

confirmed by claiming its 'afters'), but that it supplements it with an anti-capitalocentric interpretation. Yes, there are hedges and wage relations and capitalist corporations – but no, these do not come with a predefined or necessary set of (ethical) concerns or politics. Yes, there are entities with specific economic concerns and relations *right now* – but no, the interdependent relations of their being, or the ethical coordinates guiding their management, are not insulated in a pre-existing linear time, but are constantly reshaped by the connections that are made and sustained, the memories and prospects that are mediated, and the concerns that are kept at the forefront.

From this perspective, commoning can take place with, within and around any resource or property or relation, which again is not to say there is anything necessary or inevitable about it. Each site presents us with *organisational* challenges, tasks for *unlearning* authority, and all too often a violent opposition sanctioned by law and monopolies of violence. To seek to get rid of capitalocentric frames of reference is simply to enlarge a space of operation between what is possible in principle and what is (often) very hard in practice. In this sense, the 'post-' of Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics, to the extent that it does denote an 'after', comes *after capitalocentrism* – a force field of (seeming) necessity and lack of alternatives – rather than after capitalism as legally codified and normalised relations of production (although of course these are reinscribed within a wider, more-than-capitalist economy in the process). This is a politics that seeks to find its ground in any situation, in the vicinity of any diverse-economic form or relation.

Its anti-capitalocentric interpretation proposes a parasitic politics indifferent to the law of its host. If capitalocentrism is formed by periperformative practices and relations around any specific economic form, creating a force field in which it becomes possible, intuitive and unavoidable to recognise the form primarily as aligned with characteristics and values associated with 'the tip of the iceberg', a postcapitalist approach to commoning then seeks to unlearn this intuitive legibility and offer another one that can make an ethical opening anywhere. Like José Esteban Muñoz's (2009: 9) queer cultural workers, who see and practise a quotidian utopia in emancipatory readings of Coke bottles, "detect[ing] an opening and indeterminacy in what for many people is a locked-down dead commodity", the task becomes not a revelatory eschatology of postcapitalist heartlands (guiding the rest of us towards their promised land), but rather a reinscription of the already known (e.g. property forms) in postcapitalist modes, "to tendentially postcapitalist effect" (Massumi 2018: 69).

The critique of capitalocentric tendencies in postcapitalisms would then centre on the fact that by taking capitalist economies too much for granted, postcapitalists restrict the political openings available and miss the performative task of *posting* (i.e. comparable to 'common*ing*') any capitalist (or other) economic form. In contrast, by denoting the 'after' of capitalocentrism (rather than capitalism per se), Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics comes to inhabit – strangely enough – the same space-time as capitalist forms and relations. But it places them within a much vaster and more heterogeneous landscape, and it also practises its politics in close proximity to any capitalist site. Located *behind* the façade of necessity that capitalocentrism posits is a *post*capitalist politics in *a locative tense* (see Kocourek 1996). This would be my reading of one of the main temporal promises of this approach – to turn it into a locational problem and task *already here*, now. Quite literally, then, the politics of postponement recorded in seeming necessities of economic forms are reclaimed for renegotiation.

Reading for difference can help us resituate different practices and sites, substituting seeming necessities of capitalocentrism with difference located within and traversing the properties of the 'tip of the iceberg'. This enables political and empirical purchase that

includes the 'insides' of capitalist sites or organisations, and it uncovers the 'outsides' of seemingly peaceful capitalist harmony by insisting on actually existing, corrigible exploitation, particular each time. But it cannot help us account for the reality of the abstractions that capitalism also indexes, the non-locality or non-particularity of many forms of violence and exploitation. The 'whole' of social relations cannot be represented by 'capitalism', but neither does it allow its reduction to the flat and concrete surface of an 'economic landscape'. To assume so would be to claim the 'performative ontology' (Gibson-Graham 2008a) of the diverse-economic landscape, a horizontal representation, as an underlying real rather than one representational economy among others. This landscape is thankfully made more complexly relational, and more incalculable, by stretching it towards unknown times of the other, exemplified by the Commons Yardstick mentioned above. The merits of the 'post-' might in this sense be related to the kinds of openings towards the other it allows us to orient towards – or how this presence and calculability of such an 'us' is interrupted by interdependencies beyond calculation.[62]

But what does it mean to call this politics precisely *post*capitalist? Where and how is the 'post-' heading? Where are we asked to follow its lead? I would propose that in this politics too there is an avant-gardist or utopian spirit, as in postcapitalisms, but with a twist. As Antti Salminen (2015: 33) stresses in his study of historical artistic and intellectual avant-gardes (drawing on Hans Magnus Enzensberger), the 'avant' of the avant-garde is aporetic. In a sense, calling something 'postcapitalist' *in the present* has a similarly problematic characteristic to calling a piece of art avant-garde today, risking "a doctrinaire formulation", as Enzensberger puts it (1966: 84; see also Salminen 2015: 33). Insofar as a linear, knowable future is summoned with the nomination of the 'post-', a postcapitalist practice or project is already becoming institutionalised and institutionalis*ing*. But the very ambiguities of the 'post-' also help us decipher its promise and its risk, the possibility that objects identified as 'postcapitalist' today will not last – or will not make sense in the same way tomorrow, elsewhere, then and there.

Just as we should not think of our sensorium as independent from the troubles of capitalocentrism, we should not think of our promises as sovereign. This means that they are also not 'our' promises in any ownable sense. I can call something 'postcapitalist', but I cannot make sure this identity will have a generalised, sustained life of its own; I cannot make it recognisable or shareable. The postcapitalist promise thus faces an unknown future and the absolutely necessary risk of utter failure: "Only someone willing to suffer the consequences of error can get involved with the future. The *avant* of the *avant-garde* contains its own contradiction: it can be marked out only a posteriori" (Enzensberger 1966: 85). What this underlines is that a postcapitalist X is not sovereign in the sense of determining its own future, and nor is an interpretation of it sovereign in the sense of being able to determine what will have been read as postcapitalist.[63]

62 From this intersection opens an ethical consideration that would undoubtedly be worth pursuing in detail, although I am not able to do so here. Staying close to a Derridean vocabulary and strategy (if somewhat differently than that I propose here), Gordon's (2020) work offers one crucial coordinate for thinking these openings further, as does Rose's (2018). Also, Bawaka Country *et al.* (2016) offer a committed and interesting effort to think such openings.

63 Bradley Jones (2019), for instance, tends towards such sovereignty by emphasising how precarity can be interpreted "to seed a future otherwise": "[w]e have a choice in how we interpret Sally's struggles, so too does Sally. She seeds herself as cultivating (com)post-capitalism through a kind of weedy work and worlding – without comfortable reprieve, resolution of tension, or wholesale liberation, yet still harboring a hope for reclaiming blasted landscapes. The problem is the solution. Yet another lesson

It is not without inheritances that bind it, nor is it in control of its own fate. We will have known what it can be and do, to the extent that we *can* know (and to the extent that a 'we', at this level, has any significance), only later on. The question, in this sense, is how a postcapitalist object 'lives on' (Derrida 1979).

A postcapitalist politics, then, is offered for the future, and its success might be measured to the extent that it can help communities of its interpretation/inheritance (identifying and performing it *as* postcapitalist, critically appraising and reinterpreting it) to sustain themselves. There *is* in this sense a utopian dimension in a postcapitalist promise, but not in the conventional sense of a regulative ideal posited and guarded against the treacherous waters of reality. Rather, this utopianism, or 'postutopianism' (Fritsch 2005), concerns the promise that will have needed reaffirmation, in the future. There is no way to know what such future reaffirmation demands or looks like. This is what its promise means – not a promise sent in an encrypted package to a known address, but an open letter sent towards the other (see Derrida 1987). But what we also now know, from the memories of postcapitalist promises (see previous chapter), is that we are already in a future, already inheriting futures. *We* have already been promised, although it does not necessarily feel like it. To begin to work towards cultures of postcapitalist interpretation, inheritances will need to be remembered – so as to find ourselves within legacies already underway. A task that this demands from us is to get back to study: to learn the skill of anti-capitalocentric interpretation, which recognises promises that have been issued from under or beside any capitalocentric necessity, homogeneity or boundary. The scriptures that we will need to have studied are not reducible – and they might be quite unrecognisable from the perspective of the literary-political genre known as postcapitalism. The skills for reading these scriptures include speechlessness before the unnameable and the unpayable debt that any speech is made of, just as they include the necessity to name and pay debts in the diverse economies that we inherit. What is needed is diverse economies gathering around any postcapitalist promise worthy of critical scrutiny. This is what infrastructuring postcapitalist futures means.

For latecomers inheriting the postcapitalist promise, the skills of interpretation needed to remember the victims (nameable and unnameable, rememberable and not) of history discussed in the previous chapter are those that a postcapitalist study could hope to undertake. Our moment is also postutopian in the sense that it becomes *after* the utopian, regulative horizons of the past. Therefore, learning from them is crucial. This includes learning continuously from the violences of the past, always all too intimately entangled with its promises. More-than-capitalist practices and relations have been issuing postcapitalist promises all along, in the most mundane and banal of situations, and so far we have not been very good at their interpretation. (But then again, who is this 'we', where and when?) This is testified by the fact that capitalocentrism has become an issue – to the extent that it has – *only now*. The cultures and institutions of interpretation that will enable the deciphering of postcapitalist promises of tomorrow will not have sprung from nothing; instead they are of the same inheritance that marks our moment, just as it did those that came before. The intergenerational emphasis of Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2013, 2016) is absolutely crucial, and it reminds us that cultures

learned" (20). Without questioning such solutions and lessons, I do want to note that this kind of interpretation of the power of interpretation tends to assume a sovereignty on the part of performative interpretations – and it often comes with an ethical injunction to prefer hopeful narratives, problems as solutions (rather than vice versa).

of postcapitalist interpretation will have been more-than-present, intergenerational, by definition (in order, that is, to be 'cultures'). Therefore, it is never too late to start learning skills for postcapitalist study, just as it is always already too late, since all too much is already lost and sedimented.

4.3.4 Mediacy as Topology

Accounts of postcapitalism often implicitly or explicitly assume the existence of a vertically understood scalar hierarchy (from the local to the global, the micro to the macro, the particular to the universal etc.). This not only paves the way for imagining politics as taking place on distinct scalar levels, but it also affects the kind of relations and modes of relationality that are identified and recognised *as* scales. In other words, the question is what counts as scale and how this informs the modes of political action imagined and practised. If the task is one of substituting one form of global (capitalism) with another (postcapitalism), and we need always to start from the level of 'grassroots', 'seeds' or 'embryos', the task is set in terms directly derived from Greek tragedies: as a heroic, exhilarating struggle against an enemy that appears invincible. Godspeed, I say, but I also want to note how this unquestioning of scalar hierarchies might reproduce forms of capitalocentric self-defeatism. As I suggested above, these scalar characteristics are also intimately linked to specific questions of language, most clearly to a postcapitalist disavowal of language as a form of abstraction with scalar (or topological) force in itself.

At the minimum, we should note that wherever 'scale' appears, language is also involved, lending its helping hand to make the object appear as partaking in a mode of relationality re-cognisable as 'scale' (or any of the objects associated with it: 'local', 'global', 'regional', 'the state' etc.). It becomes possible for certain postcapitalists to identify and name a worldwide array of heterogeneous and allegedly disconnected 'local' forms of politics, without wondering about the one inconspicuous mediacy – language – that allows them to make such assessments, or how such a mediacy is inscribed in all-too-material infrastructures and unequal economies of thought that power up our intellect. Because the topological or scalar force of language is not questioned, the most conventional scalar tropes can also be left unquestioned – as if a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' hierarchy were prediscursive elements, natural expressions of how reality is, and not inherited and deeply problematic tropic architectures of thought. This is how a disavowal of language as a scalar or topological force reproduces the most simplistic omission of potentials that are not only already there, but already identified and practised by movements themselves – an omission that takes place in the language that restricts their 'practices' to a specific scale (within a vertical or horizontal hierarchy; see Marston *et al.* 2005) and therefore has them already mapped out, so to speak.

Let us turn now to Gibson-Graham's alternative and its scalar politics. Gibson-Graham's (2003a) situated politics is decidedly allied with a language of the local. They propose a starting point that consists of three guiding principles: firstly, the recognition of particularity, which also includes the provincialisation or particularisation of universalised categories ('development', 'neoliberalism', 'human rights') (52), and contingency, which insists on the un- and redoability of the economy. By being "[s]tripped of inevitability" (53), it becomes a space of potentiality, creative engagement and becoming otherwise. Secondly, this is connected to a respect for difference and otherness. This consists of ridding 'the local' of its parochial necessities (see 'folk politics') and seeing it instead as potentially a place for practising 'pluriversal' values, and in this sense to already be extralocal. Thirdly, these are connected to the cultivation of capacities "to imagine, desire,

and practice noncapitalist ways to be" (53). Thus, the project consists of an effort to "produce citizens of the diverse economy", starting wherever such work may take place. Importantly, the imagining of such positive, more-than-local localities necessitates the dislocation of the local-global binary that usually defines the place of a locality within an already known scalar hierarchy (Gibson-Graham 2002; see also Marston *et al.* 2005).

It is crucial to appreciate the ways that this vision of particulars fits into – and transforms – a scalar imagination. Inspired by feminist movements that have become globally transformative although not necessarily accompanied by overlying institutions, Gibson-Graham (2006a: xxiv) posit a scalar imaginary and politics based on "[u]biquity rather than unity", which means attending to the power of affective and semiotic binds and not only the organisational-infrastructural relations that are most often associated with 'scale'. They posit an almost too simple-sounding but remarkable scalar truism that reinterprets 'self-help' as a scalar force: "*if women are everywhere, a woman is always somewhere, and those places of women are transformed as women transform themselves*" (xxiv). This gives credence to a situated politics of scale, in which each site or place becomes a potential site for transformation, and these are then "related analogically rather than organizationally and connected through webs of signification" (xxiv). Ubiquity and particularity thus come together in this scalar vision.

This ubiquity is perhaps best expressed in Maliha Safri and Julie Graham's (2010, 2015) work on what they call 'the global household'. Making note of how attuned international political economy, institutions governing 'macroeconomic' issues, and our shared imagination of 'the global' are to some economic realities and not others, the authors sketch an alternative based on theorisations, empirics and politics around households. While households as economic sites are conventionally understood as emblematic of 'the micro' – ubiquitous but extremely heterogeneous and unconnected – and distanced from politics, by definition distinguished from the *polis*, Safri and Graham (2015) make clear how that framings are performative: firstly, in the sense of building upon preceding partial understandings of what counts as (or is intelligible as) a 'macroeconomic' category; secondly, in the sense of reproducing and enacting specific connections, coherences and opportunities for politics – and not others. In a powerful feminist twist, they conceptualise "an institution formed by family networks dispersed across national boundaries" (244), calling this object "the global household", and they go on to imagine empirics, institutions and politics suited to this new international political-economic powerhouse. Through monetary and in-kind remittances, unpaid household and care labour, household-based business income, and gifts, this aggregate produces considerable amounts of value and sustenance worldwide. While never undermining the recognition of undesired and negative elements of international households and their heterogeneous power relations, and indeed their enmeshing in capitalist economies, Safri and Graham argue that

> "a global household constitutes a noncapitalist economic site that has the *potential* to be nonexploitative (that is, organized around collective decision-making and the communal appropriation and distribution of household surplus)" (260–261; my emphasis).

This means it warrants serious consideration by those "interested in the politics of noncapitalist development" (261).

This positing of a new economic institution makes clear how economic and scalar politics are inseparable, and how restricted conventional understandings are of what counts and is identified as 'macro'. Economic scale is what we usually recognise, identify

and enact *elsewhere*, in and through *other* processes and aggregates of practices and data. The *reality* of economic scale – its horizon of the possible – is thus performed through citational practices that are selective and based on long histories of other similarly selective practices. As Safri and Graham forcefully argue, despite the historically constructed limitations of our capacities for scalar sensibility, there is always the opportunity for constructing other scales and scalabilities:

> "Just as the focus of international political economy could potentially shift to include more than the global unfolding of capitalism, so political economic ontologies of power could be reworked to accommodate the power of what is small, dispersed, unorganized, and relatively invisible" (264).

Recognising, organising and infrastructuring connections is making scale. This includes the task of negotiating differences as part of a scalar politics. Suggesting that we speak of the global household as an international actor and agenda (on a par with the multinational firm), Safri and Graham note that such a singularity risks obscuring the differences that make up the endless heterogeneity nominated as 'the household':

> "Nevertheless, we find the idea of a global household movement or organization compelling, in part because a democratic process of negotiation would mobilize effort around issues of general concern while also providing an airing for the many conflicting positions of global household members" (261).

While Safri and Graham concentrate on the *affirmative* prospects of constructing a new scalar object and institution, I see another, *critical* project announcing itself between the lines of their argument: an intertwining of scalar understandings and capitalocentric economies, or capitalocentrism and economic scale. If we change the perspective to consider the capitalocentric matrix again, scale emerges as intelligible, is identified, gets circulated and enacted in specific ways – and always building upon and reproducing certain realities and not others. In other words, the performative naturalisation of scalar differences and hierarchies might be seen as intimately interlinked with capitalocentric naturalisations of economic hierarchies. The capitalocentric scalar matrix can be understood as working within a Marxist inheritance (although, as always, this is only one possible lineage to underline). Smith (2008: 186) writes: "Capitalism defines the global geographical scale precisely in its own image. Despite the economic forces and processes that help constitute it, the definition of the global scale is quintessentially political; it is a product of the class relations of capitalism".

Scale (as we knew it) from this perspective is revealed to be an assemblage of relations successfully *capitalised*. This means not only that what is (or appears as, makes itself identifiable as, cannot be recognised in terms other than) big and successful has been resourced to be so, but also that the differential relation between the big and the small, the micro and the macro, is only recognisable within this matrix. From this perspective, scalability is a word designed for capital's purposes (see Tsing 2012). As Holloway (2010: 210) puts the question of scale in relation to governance: "Certainly, some form of global coordination would be desirable in a post-capitalist society, but the forms of global coordination that presently exist are so bound up with capital and the pursuit of profit that they offer little hope of a solution". But the retreat he proposes is from such governance to the phenomenological intuitiveness of "the way we live" and to "the flow of doing", characterisations which hardly bother scalar hierarchies

or organisations. Again, we do not need to break away from such necessary considerations, but 'capitalocentrism' does introduce another crucial twist in this political play of scalarity: it invites us to consider ourselves implicated within the reproduction of scales in capital's image and in the production of class relations through ways of theorising, representing and practising scale. It posits that scale in capital's image was never alone on the stage and never achieved anything by itself. Rather, more-than-capitalist economies were and are involved, from which capitalocentrism produces the effect of capitalism and its scales.

To draw this discussion towards its close, let us revisit Madra and Özselçuk's (2016: 163) argument that what critics of Occupy movements suffer from is "reading [them] literally – restricting them to particular representations, particular productions, and particular places". By contrast, Madra and Özselçuk suggest we read such movements as operating "metaphorically, as cathected representatives of different ways of organizing the economy". While I think they are right, I would add another twist: that such critically (self-)defeating readings are *not* (simply) literal readings but instead a reduction of the literal to pre-established (metaphysical, capitalocentric) values – through which everything falls into its own clearly calculated place within a scalar hierarchy. The fact that language is 'here' to mediate and allow us access to these movements, to enable us to locate them 'in' space and time, that language is already there, bringing us together and enabling a view of these movements (if only to locate them as/to insulated localities), testifies to a non-local (a)topology already at play.

As Derrida (1988) teaches us, the literal is not a topology of closed contexts, or a controlled repetition, or a prison house. The iterability of Occupy (or any 'local' movement) teaches us the non-local, already scalar and unavoidably scalable fact of language. But of course, language also always takes specific forms, calling attention to "the medium of the media themselves […,] that which in general assures and determines the *spacing* of public space, the very possibility of the *res publica* and the phenomenality of the political" (Derrida 2006: 63).[64] Such spacing, or scaling, is inherited with language. Hypothetically, perhaps, we should think of the power of capital(ism) as recorded in our scalar vocabularies and givens – any re-cognition of 'scale'. To call for attention to postcapitalist media, or mediacy, then becomes a matter of urgency. Not because forms of economy may be postcapitalist and we then need to let everyone know it, but because their being as postcapitalist depends on mediation – the language used, the connections made, the media infrastructures built, the meanings condensed and sustained, the organisational ties forged, the connections negotiated. Postcapitalist scale, like non-capitalist supply chains in Safri's (2015) analysis, is a task for more-than-capitalist, care-fully infrastructured mediation – but also an invitation to a critical-deconstructive attention to its impossibilities and limitations.

64 In his critical appraisal of Derrida, Benjamin Noys (2010: 44) characterises the 'hauntology' that rightly troubles stable and present ontology as "depend[ing] on capital to reveal what was always there". The problem according to Noys is that "Derrida's lack of specificity in analysing the relation between hauntology and capitalism results in the tendency of hauntology to slip back into a more general description that occludes the precise forms taken by real abstractions", the favourite object of Noys along with many other contemporary Marxists (see Toscano 2008). As Madra and Özselçuk (2016) also take real abstraction as one their main topics, I think their work paves the way for important opportunities to imagine what an anti-capitalocentric perspective on real abstractions could look like. To begin, we might want to reread some of the origins of 'real abstraction' (e.g. Sohn-Rethel 1978) for the trouble of capitalocentrism.

4.3.5 Any Whereness: A Postcapitalist Pedagogy

To start to draw this whole discussion towards its close – for now – let us revisit the horizontal orderings we recognised in some postcapitalist privileges of classes (e.g. Mason's 'the networked') or sites (e.g. Drucker's 'the developed world', 'universal educated person') that will have had to take on the task of leading the less privileged of us towards the promised land of a postcapitalist society. It is not that the rest of us do not belong to the movement of history, but we are just not at its forefront. This avant-gardist model, which always leans towards chauvinisms, is paralleled by an equally absent concern for the horizontal hierarchies reproduced in the mode of postcapitalist address. Who will have had access to postcapitalist imaginaries – and who these are trying and/or failing to reach – are questions most often left unasked. No wonder the Anglo-Eurocentrism of these perspectives gets so little attention. If it is characteristic of postcapitalism to portray and perform a landscape of epistemic inequality and political privileges in its quest to speak for *everywhere*, the task that opens up from Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics is decidedly oriented to a more modest *anywhere*. This is not to be understood in terms of universalisms, but rather as a pluriversal coming together of particularities. As such, it tries to counter the epistemic security of postcapitalism with a politics of location. This means a specific scalar approach, as we have seen, but it importantly includes the pedagogical commitment of the approach: the explicit attempt at making *any* site the right site for postcapitalist politics (and conceptualising the latter accordingly, through its loose vocabulary, weak theory and situated politics). Here I would like to concentrate on what this means for a postcapitalist politics of the site understood through the situated phenomenology. (That we are always somewhere I take here for granted, for now.) At stake, then, are the hierarchies of the horizontal scales implied by the mode of postcapitalist address.

The phenomenology of Gibson-Graham's pedagogy starts from the proximity of the site through its situated-ubiquitous politics of "taking back the economy – any time, any place" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013: 189). This is posited as an alternative to the expert-driven and hierarchy-inducing 'machine economy' that performs an disenfranchising commonsensical space of 'economy' and whose capitalocentrism is found in the effects of this alienation. If "the economy is an achievement rather than a starting point or a pre-existing reality that can simply be revealed and acted upon" (Çalışkan & Callon 2009: 370), then the task becomes to prepare our skills for achieving liveable economies. Again, Gibson-Graham's ethics-politics of location is made of a resistance against a predetermined order of things and an orientation to enlarge the experienced sense of what is possible (see Gibson-Graham 1999). This is what Ken Byrne (2003) calls a 'pedagogy of disharmony', in which "the goal […] is not to fill in the lack in the identity of the subject or the fantasy of a particular economic or other social structure". Instead, the task is to "seek to assume the ethical responsibility of acknowledging the lack inherent in identity" (212–213). In this sense, the diverse-economic landscape not only inscribes the subject within crisscrossing, overdetermined relations of economy, but it assumes a lack inherent to the subject. In terms of Lacanian vocabulary, this concerns the negativity at stake:

> "As an ontological enterprise, our thinking practices are negatively grounded, starting in the space of nonbeing that is the wellspring of becoming. For us this is the space of politics, and its shadowy denizens are the 'subject' and 'place' – pregnant absences that have become core elements in our political imaginary" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: xxxiii).

The failure of a coherent and stable identity, its incompleteness and unfixity, "stands for the possibility of politics itself" (xxxiii).

As we have seen, practising such a 'queer pedagogy' (Gibson-Graham 1999) or 'pedagogy of disharmony' (Byrne 2003) implies retreating from already known power structures and determinations through weak theory. It is thus also a 'weak pedagogy' in Gert Biesta's (2013) terms, one that embraces the "beautiful risk of education" – the openness of pedagogical encounter – instead of seeking to get rid of it (see also Alhojärvi 2015). *Anywhere* becomes, quite literally, the right place to start, if we resist the strong theoretical interpretation of each 'whereness' as positioned within structures and relations bigger and more powerful than itself. Reversing the usual order of things, Gibson-Graham take their cue from the performative insight that structures are nothing without their continuous performance in practice, and thus each site becomes a 'pregnant absence' for 'taking back' economy. Moreover, when attention is drawn to practices that *already* take place but get sidelined in capitalocentric discourse, a powerful pedagogical effect ensues. We find out that potential for social transformation was always in there, closer than we thought, and within our being and collectives, in the more-than-capitalist practices and the mundane ethical concerns and negotiations that will have guided human existence as such.

Still, this *is* a teaching. I mean this not in a didactic sense, as a moral judgement from without (as if we could go about without teachings), but more in order to underline the fact that this framework does propose a specific language, a mode of intelligibility, and an ensemble of techniques and strategies to reclaim economies in thought and practice. As we saw above with 'weak theory' – which becomes something distinctly 'more-than-weak' as it circulates well from context to context – there is a contagiousness to Gibson-Graham's pedagogy whose problematics should not be bypassed. That it posits and proposes a constitutive lack that seeks to make up space for ethical-political negotiation does not mean that it *is* such a lack, or even that it (actually) performs one (insofar as lack is something that can be 'performed' in the first place). Closures will have remained, and been reiterated, in the act of making and disseminating this teaching of openness. How to point at *those* burdens, the inherited problematic that enables any specific opening, and without assuming that this problematisation falls within a calculable, governable space of one and the same teaching, is the question. The risk of pedagogy also consists of the infinitely demanding task of negotiating the non-negotiables of faithfulness and unfaithfulness with regard to what is received, taught. We should not let the experimentality, weakness, negativity, lack or pregnancy of Gibson-Graham's teaching cajole us into not questioning where it comes from, what its limits might be, and how it might be necessary to supplement it with continuous (self-)critical strategies. Or how its language, as we will see in the next chapter, will need to be relaunched and twisted in translation.

4.4 For Postcapitalist Studies

We have now gone through a rather meandering journey to explore some of the capitalocentric dynamics in postcapitalisms, Gibson-Graham's responses to these via their postcapitalist politics, and some remaining capitalocentrisms that will need to demand attention and negotiation. Now I want to close with some more general remarks about the kind of study I have proposed and – to a very limited extent – undertaken here. This leads us back to the nature of the specific 'post-' that is grafted onto the '-capitalist' stem in these accounts, and how it presents us with both similar and different challenges from other postprefixations.

What the focus on capitalocentric tendencies in the context of postcapitalism reveals is at least three things: firstly, that various postcapitalist accounts have – despite the political range they cover – much in common in the structures of argumentation that I have sought to examine here. Capitalocentrism unites. Insofar as its exploration yields or could yield something productive, this needs to happen in the name of postcapitalism itself: as a call to study and renegotiate all that still binds our hands and imaginations to capitalist realism and its close associates. Secondly, that Gibson-Graham have proposed the framework of capitalocentrism does not mean its problemicity is done away with in their work. Quite the contrary, I have argued: we should follow these tendencies through their work, and frame the task less as one of emancipation and more as one of critical scrutiny and negotiation. In fact, one of the most exciting characteristics of Gibson-Graham's work is that it offers a *self-deconstructing* framework: an identification of a problemage and an affirmation of its solution, both of which are more demanding and more necessary than their alignment under a single methodological pipeline would present. That capitalocentric problems will have warranted negotiation that is not exhausted by diverse- and community-economic affirmations – and vice versa – is testimony to the aporetic nature of this framework.

Thirdly, one additional implication is that none of the accounts that I have explored should be *reduced* to the problems discussed here. In other words, if capitalocentrism is an unavoidable heritage as such, a matrix, this also means that its traits do not doom any approach (or insofar as they do, we are all doomed.) To pretend to know what a specific postcapitalist account can or will do is not only pretentious, but would run against the commitment here by assuming "that language had been paralyzed, frozen in its limitless play and processes of differential repetitions and inventions" (Fritsch 2005: 69). Capitalocentrism is an inherited problemage to coexist and negotiate with, albeit one whose intimacy and closeness to whatever is productive and fruitful in our approaches does not, alas, mean that it is not violent. Rather, the violence and the fruitfulness are very closely related, perhaps impartibly so. That said, I want to stress the openness of my interpretations here: in light of everything we know of iterability and *différance*, a key injunction we receive from capitalocentrisms in postcapitalisms is to critically study them, and to creatively reappraise them without presuming a non-complicit place. One word for such a process is 'reading', which is why I have been stressing its openness and the responsibility to read and reread postcapitalist promises in particular contexts and with unavoidably different strategies. Another word for such a reading would be, quite simply, 'study'.

If I have underlined the textual and linguistic characteristics of postcapitalisms on many occasions, in fact making this my key methodological perspective, it is because attention to topological language and political literality seems to be so wanting in this context. In the spirit that I have sought to cultivate, there is a parallel to Gibson-Graham's (2006b) discursive critique in *The end of capitalism*. To recall this connection is to resist the temptation to read off such critiques as the '90s-style textualism' of a "theory slut", as their self-description puts it, "happily and carelessly thinking around, playing with 'serious' and consequential subjects like political economy" (2006a: xi) – or, we might add, like postcapitalism. Confronting capitalocentrism is surely not a dull business, but its 'carelessness' should not be mistaken for a lack of seriousness. Nor should a literal attention to what is said in the postscriptures that propose to lead us beyond capitalism. In one good summary of poststructuralism, Young (1982: 5) writes that structuralism is

> "[P]ost-structuralism without the postage – without, that is, the letter. Post-structuralism is criticism that attends to the movement, the lability, and the instability of meaning and representation in the play of the signifier. It's criticism that attends to the fissuring economy of a text at work".

Rather than interpreting such fissurings as indulgences of an era before the urgencies of the postcapitalist fold, before the burning of this planet, as it were (as if the apparent newness of these phenomena might be anything but an effect of capitalocentric omission – privileges of a certain tip of the iceberg), I think this interest in language paves a way for a renewed sense of language as a material, topological and economic force.

To insist on opening new questions regarding the received scriptures that postprefix capitalism, and the other-than-present scriptures of capitalocentrism that make them legible, is to the purpose of such study. 'Postcapitalist studies' builds an analogy with its marvellous postcolonial sibling. Proposing such an analogy is undoubtedly a pretentious (and grandiose) claim for institutional legitimacy and general concern. But there might be something else to it too. With 'study', I am thinking of the mutual experimentation with a general antagonism that Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) call the undercommons. Studying, in their vocabulary, refers to mutual indebtedness, to a practice without end, and one that does not surrender itself to the legible metrics of 'learning'. The undercommons, say Harney and Moten, is a fugitive space where study happens:

> "They're building something in there, something down there. Mutual debt, debt unpayable, debt unbounded, debt unconsolidated, debt to each other in a study group, to others in a nurses' room, to others in a barber shop, to others in a squat, a dump, a woods, a bed, an embrace" (67–68).

Perhaps against the variously capitalocentric capitalisations of 'postcapitalism', such a space of critical study and mutual, unpayable indebtedness could provide a fresh space. Not to celebrate its emancipation from capitalocentric burdens, but rather to amplify its radicalising negotiations of their heritage. A task, to draw on Berlant (2016: 399) again, that "uses critique to intensify one's attachment to the world felt but yet unestablished". Say, postcapitalism.

Just as 'postcolonialism' has been vigorously critiqued and substituted with decoloniality, decolonialisation and anticolonialism, postcapitalism undoubtedly will need to index various forms and registers of critical attention. This is precisely the point. What should be clear is that postcapitalism, starting with the word itself, is utterly problematic. Precisely through its problemicity, we can perhaps negotiate some of the conditions that make its thinking plausible. As Ananya Roy (2016: 205) argues, "postcolonial theory is a way of inhabiting, rather than discarding, the epistemological problem that is Eurocentrism". If postcolonial studies attends to the way Eurocentrism thinks through a thinking thought, then postcapitalist studies intends to do the same, but with capitalocentrism. Yet these are not merely paralleling, analogous projects. As we have seen, many postcapitalisms are utterly predicated on unproblematised forms of Eurocentric (or technocentric) chauvinisms, and postcapitalist studies signals not their discarding but an effort to come to terms with the depths of our problemage, for the sake of vigilant, critical negotiation. Claiming (only) an analogy makes a distinction, a distance, between the two projects. But as critics of capitalocentrism since at least René Gallissot (1980a) have made clear, capitalocentrism and Eurocentrism are

deeply intertwined if nevertheless separable projects. What is 'capitalism' other than the self-representation of a certain Europe that got capitalised through plundered resources, slavery, plantations, and the exceptionally disastrous gift of fossil fuels, and whose archives (including everything consigned to its name) omit these crimes and their victims, as well as the more-than-capitalist economies already there? Perhaps more than anything, postcapitalist studies should act as an invitation (starting with myself) to locate in its genealogy a call for a ruthless post-, de- and anti-colonial criticism of everything enabled by the indexes of 'post-' and 'capital(ism)' (including, of course, everything said in this thesis). By enduring (or failing to endure) such a criticism, an unlearning, we can hope for a postcapitalist politics worthy of allyship with the movements and thought indexed under postcolonialism.

The problem is quite literally there, in front of our eyes: postcapitalism. This word archives everything that is worth problematising in it. To the extent that we fail to see its problemage, it should invite us to question the (inherited) sensorium that sees and does not, the language that speaks and does not. The rush to claim this or that object as 'postcapitalist', or to link this or that agenda with 'postcapitalism', should perhaps come with a warning: that which is claimed is not simply your, or my, intention. Inheritance is not transparent to my gaze or within my power to choose. Postisms are also a capitalocentric genre. Thus, with each 'postcapitalism' comes a task, an invitation to reread for trouble and to reorganise its promises. In the relation of a postprefixing gaze and the objects it cannot help but recognise as familiar, we may find a glitch that recalls what Édouard Glissant (1997) names 'the right to opacity': the right not to be understood.

5 *Jälkiä*…: Economies of Language in Translation

5.1 Binds of Language

We are bound to language, and bound to each other through it. Language is a heritage that resists its nomination by preforming the conditions that allow any nomination in the first place. As Derrida (2006: 68) underlines, inheritance is not about having this or that, about receiving or enriching; instead, "the *being* of what we are is first of all inheritance". The task is "to bear witness to what we are insofar as we *inherit*, and that – here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude – we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it". (But what are these 'we's, any collective or individual inheritor, if not already *effects* of language?) In other words, what we inherit is never 'merely' language; it is always already also metalanguage, or language about language – which is another way of saying that there is no pure, stable or overarching metalanguage.[65] The circle of language is never far removed from the circulation of what is casually understood as 'economy', the production, exchange, consumption of goods and services. As we have seen in this thesis, we inherit economies too, inescapably, and not only in the restricted economic sense of enrichments and accumulated capitals, not even only as infrastructures, societal metabolisms and diverse economies, but as the general economy of coexistence. Whatever our material heritages are like, their linguisticity must be understood as *impartible*, as Hamacher (2012) puts it, if we are not to reduce language to a petty region or ownable instrument of sovereign thought. This impartible language is what Derrida (2006: 137) calls, adopting and retranslating Marx's term, the 'mother tongue': "the pre-inheritance on the basis of which one inherits".

In this chapter, I explore these constitutive binds between language, economy and space within the postcapitalist fold by discussing capitalocentric inheritances in the context of translation between languages/idioms. As negotiation with/in difference and in-between distinct languages and values, translation is key to any sameness, coherence or scale. But it is also about performing and amplifying differences: "translation is not only a border crossing but also and preliminarily an act of drawing a border, of bordering" (Sakai 2009: 84). I am especially interested in exploring how to understand and negotiate legacies of capitalocentrism within theories and practices of language and translation. This is an effort to sketch how capitalocentric (understandings of) economies of language might restrict our capacities for postcapitalist linguistics or 'philology' (Hamacher 2009) through a restricted and unexamined sense of what translation is about and what happens in it. This is another way of asking what is or might be specifically *post*capitalist about translations, and by implication about language.

Translation is an interesting site for research and intervention, for various reasons. First, it is where differences meet, and where we confront what languages *are* in the first place through what is translatable in and communicable through them. And what about the rest, that which does not translate? To translate is to work with/in difference: "To convert or render (a word, a work, an author, a language, etc.) into another language; to express or convey the meaning of (a word or text) using equivalent words in a different language" (OED Online 2020). It is a site for taking the smooth rides of

65 As Roman Jakobson puts it in an influential essay, "[a] faculty of speaking a given language implies a faculty of talking about this language. Such 'metalinguistic' operation permits revision and redefinition of the vocabulary used" (Jakobson 1959: 234).

communicability and translatability *across* difference (Tymoczko 2010), and for facing the troubles and promises of untranslatability (Apter 2019). In short, it has to do with difference and otherness in the context of language. In and through it, we bear witness to our circular inheritance of "that which is casually called a language" (Young 2016), and we might notice how, in fact, this 'thing' is already another, of an other.

Second, translation is also a familiar trope in critical studies of political economy and economic geography. For Anna Tsing (2015), for instance, translation is what happens between sites or patches of difference to salvage capitalist value: "[t]ranslations across sites of difference *are* capitalism: they make it possible for investors to accumulate wealth" (62). For Jacques Lezra (2017: 7), translation is for humanists the central way to contribute value within "the neo-liberal economic model", because "cultural value across linguistic, historical and geographical borders" has become so central to what he calls "the great value-producing machine of global capitalism". In short, translation is not conceived as only linguistic (whatever that would mean), but as already deeply tied within different spatial-economic logics gathered in critical registers under 'capitalism'. In different ways, they confirm and analyse – with an attention to linguistic-material differences – processes Smith (2008: 202) discusses as the "geographical fixation of use-value and the fluidity of exchange-value [that] translate into tendencies toward differentiation and equalization". Thus, it is a site for reflecting on what happens when economies and languages collide, and on notions of value, difference and sameness.

Third, as a site and practice for working with difference, and within it, translation is profoundly a practice that allows us to work with linguistic, cultural and economic differences (see Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen 2020). Translation is transformation. To translate is also

> "[t]o express (a thing) in a different manner or medium; to interpret or explain the meaning of (a symbol, a person's actions, etc.); to convert or adapt (an idea, an artwork, etc.) from one form, condition, system, or context into another" (OED Online 2020).

This means translation allows us to work with metonymic slides from economies to spaces to languages and back again, but also that as a transformative practice translation might be one key to inheriting futures differently. Therefore, the call by Mélina Germes and Shadia Husseini de Araújo (2016) for a critical-geographical practice of translation needs attending to, as does Tariq Jazeel's (2019: 12) suggestion that *un*translatables offer "immensely productive encounters where incommensurable differences encounter one another". This is what motivates my effort at some anti-capitalocentric strategies of translation in the following pages.

Lastly and most concretely, at question is a very specific and determinate work with translation with and around the present research project. My PhD research has taken place amidst a growing pressure for 'internationalisation' in Finnish academia, which cannot not influence what it means to do work within these institutional and discursive settings. A common sense in the field seems to be that most precious and theoretically powerful work is (to be) done in English, while Finnish offers non-negligible opportunities for the 'popularisation' and 'application' of research and for treating 'regional' issues. As Anssi Paasi (2005, 2015) shows, such academic economies involve important geopolitical and language-specific aspects.

During the years of my PhD research, I have put a considerable amount of time and energy into projects that are of little value for 'international' (i.e. anglophone) debates

because of either their language (see Alhojärvi & Sirviö 2019; Alhojärvi 2019a, 2019b) or their marginality in terms of what Metzger and Kallio (2018) call the (lacking) 'academic prestige' of 'alternative journals' (see Sirviö & Alhojärvi 2018). Another example of my contributions concerns a translation project whose demanding nature and multiple imports I have yet to fully grasp. From 2015 to 2019, I was involved in the project of translating Gibson-Graham *et al.*'s (2013) *Take back the economy* into a Finnish book, *Elävä talous* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2019). This project was led by Eeva Talvikallio, while Pieta Hyvärinen and I formed her relatively engaged support group. This intense project involved practical considerations around linguistic matters that I will draw on here (see also Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen 2020). While indulgent self-references offer some sweet compensation for my inevitable failure according to academic metrics, the more interesting questions on which I wish to reflect relate to the nature of various and differently recognised academic forms of work, and how these ought to be understood vis-à-vis broader political-economic and diverse-economic conditions in the field. It is the contextual, differently capitalocentric valuation of such work, and the role of translation in valuation and as value, that is at stake.

To think through translations in the context of capitalocentric problematics and postcapitalist studies here is also to reflect on these recent engagements, and to attempt to retheorise these practices in terms of this thesis's concerns. This chapter, then, is one way of answering the question why it still and increasingly makes sense to trouble the languages we use – and in what sense this is an economic and spatial question. Much of the inspiration comes from philosophies that take tongues seriously. As Barbara Cassin (2018: 2) puts it: "We have to acknowledge that we philosophise in tongues, just as we speak, with words and not, or not only, with concepts. Philosophising in languages makes all the difference to philosophising tout court". This chapter is an effort to figure out why and how it matters – in 'this age' of presumably global and homogeneous connectivity, communication and exchange – that we geo-graph in tongues, we postscript capitalism in tongues, and we inherit futures in tongues. Why linguistic differences and the work of translation matter, in short, for rethinking "the geographies of geography" (Rose 1997b: 416) within the postcapitalist fold.

5.2 The Troubling Mediacy of Language

In one his most eloquent descriptions of the general structure and responsibility of inheritance, Derrida (2007) muses in his last interview on what it means to inherit language:

> "You don't just go and do anything with language; it preexists us and it survives us. When you introduce something into language, you have to do it in a refined manner, by respecting through disrespect its secret law. That's what we might called unfaithful fidelity" (29–30).

As we have seen, with inheritances such as this, we are in an inescapably asymmetrical position: bound to the language that makes us make sense of itself, to the extent that it does. Any strong and stable distinction between language and supposedly more material, corporeal, affective or experiential concerns is simply without ground, since there is no ground outside of the system that *Of grammatology* (Derrida 1997a) calls *text* and we might here call language. This is not to say there is anything inherently peaceful or harmonious in this inheritance. As we have seen, the history of our sensorium

and cognisance needs to be understood as a continuous but endlessly differentiated economy of violence if we are to remain vigilant about it. In this economy, we cannot do without violence: "[W]hen I do violence to the French language, I do so with the refined respect of what I believe to be an injunction of this language, in its life and in its evolution" (Derrida 2007: 30).

Although accounts of this violence cannot extinguish or escape it, they are necessary, and they may help us evaluate the stakes and strategies of choosing a lesser violence. Indeed, there seems to be no lack of recent critiques of linguistic violences. There is first of all the reality that might warrant the name of 'the Anglocene'. In coining this term as a an alternative name for 'the Anthropocene', Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz (2016) have in mind the uneven historical accumulation of carbon emissions into the planetary atmosphere:

> "The overwhelming share of responsibility for climate change of the two hegemonic powers of the nineteenth (Great Britain) and twentieth (United States) centuries attests to the fundamental link between climate change and projects of world domination" (103).

In their use, the Anglocene thus refers to the geographical origins of global warming in specific national economies and their respective projects of world domination (see also Mitchell 2011; Malm 2016). Thus, the nomination of the Anglocene is principally aimed at rectifying the mislocation of guilt committed by the abstract (and Greek) *anthropos* of the Anthropocene. The numbers for historically accumulated carbon emissions, argue Bonneuil and Frissoz, show that the blame lies with the two anglophone world powers. Therefore, the name of the Anglocene has pertinence alongside or even as a challenge to the multiple names for the epoch conventionally known as the Anthropocene (or Capitalocene, Chthulucene, Oliganthropocene etc.) (see Toivanen *et al.* 2017).

In my view, the Anglocene presents us with a unique problematic to think with that goes way beyond or beside the puzzling and compulsive drive to name 'the present global epoch' 'right'.[66] While Bonneuil and Frissoz make a convincing argument about the specificity of carbon emissions' historical sources, it is in the field of ecolinguistics that we find keys to what it would mean to take the 'Anglo-' seriously. Whatever else language is or can be, it has been and continues to be a force for world domination. This point is made particularly clear by research that addresses the co-implicatedness of ecocides and linguicides (Skutnabb-Kangas & Harmon 2018). As Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) argue, the consolidation of English as *the* global

66 Each of these terms would demand an analysis that is beyond my capacities here. I therefore skip the complexity of what is at stake in the naming of the Anthropocene and this notion's (or any of its alternatives') unproblematised use as a global context of thought and practice, a problematic I began to deal with elsewhere (Alhojärvi 2017). The conversation between Donna Haraway and Cary Wolfe (2016) is an insightful introduction to this problematic, although – symptomatically enough – it misses the Anglocene completely. The annihilation of languages would need to seriously challenge not only 'the Anthropocene' but its critical rejections too. One good place to start might be with Marisol de la Cadena's (2015: 1) notion if 'anthropo-not-seen', "the world-making process through which heterogeneous worlds that do not make themselves through the division between humans and nonhumans – nor do they necessarily conceive the different entities in their assemblages through such a division – are *both* obliged into that distinction *and* exceed it". Rather than accept the shared, undifferentiated human (*anthropos*) or the shared moment (*kainos*) of 'the Anthropocene', de la Cadena underlines political-ecological violences that already were there, in the not-seen (from the perspective of the gazing, universalistic-extractive *anthropos*), resisting and negotiating the very possibility of claiming a shared, undifferentiated, non-situated space-time of the Anthropocene – *in English*.

language of communication and common sense has run alongside modernisation, the domination of certain sciences and technologies, and the historical-geographical development of capitalist relations. If the world's roughly 7,000 languages are undergoing a rapid rarefaction that parallels the unravelling of biodiversity, this is due not to apolitical 'language evolution', but rather to very specific historical-geographical formations whereby some languages proliferate and others perish. While these formations ought to be studied in all of their complexity, which is not reducible to anglophone dominance, I think the (decidedly polemical) notion of the Anglocene orients us usefully to this interplay of languages, power and ecology, especially in contexts where the dynamics of English and its others form a central and disavowed problematic. Say, the academic context with its 'lingua franca' (Fregonese 2017). I will therefore use this undoubtedly problematic term as a keynote to orient us to the problematic of linguistic difference, which is of crucial ecological and diverse-economic importance.

What does the Anglocene mean for the problematic of capitalocentrism – and vice versa?[67] Gibson-Graham and Dombroski (2020a: 17) characterise capitalocentrism as "an overwhelmingly neocolonial approach to thinking about the world, one which erases the diverse epistemological, ontological and even cosmological standpoints of peoples everywhere". Insofar as heterogeneous livelihoods are recognised and aligned within a restricted framework that centres capitalist dynamics and marginalises or omits others, the material and corporeal power relations of economy are indivisibly connected to questions of specific languages and their relations. The diversity of more-than-capitalist economic vocabularies and languages is at issue. Nicole Gombay (2012) illustrates this well in her research on Inuit economies in the settler colonial territory of what is known as Canada. She reflects on naming and recognising economies *in English* in a context where the monetisation of social relations, the capitalocentric equivalence between economy (as such) and (capitalist) money relations, and the importation of an English vocabulary and its use as a foreign language are all connected. Gombay presents the words of 'Jamisie', an Inuit man: "My father was a busy man. He's the guy who told me that 'time is money'. In *English*. Even though he didn't speak English, he learned from the Whites that time is money" (22–23). The neocolonial aspect of capitalocentrism then concerns this very eradication of experiential diversity as it is experienced in and through unique languages, and the paralleling naturalisation and depoliticisation of this eradication in the name of global communication and apolitical linguistics. Here we begin to see how, on this level, questions of linguistic hegemony and difference (for which the Anglocene, Global English, English hegemony and others offer but one axis of analysis) might be connected to the making of the determinations and necessities we have analysed as capitalocentric.

Efforts to counter such capitalocentrism typically proceed through the recognition of and attention to economic-linguistic diversity. For example, in their mapping of place-based community economies in Monsoon Asia, Gibson *et al.* (2018b: 3) make an inventory of non-anglophone concepts for livelihoods in the region "with the aim of producing a radically different 'map' of Monsoon Asia's economic geography". Categorising community-economic practices around the commons, labour, surplus and transactions (as discussed by Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013), the authors review a range of livelihood practices in the region, each time adapted to and fostering specific environmental relations. Each case is unique. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014: 15)

67 My arguments in this and the two following paragraphs are heavily indebted to our discussion in Alhojärvi and Hyvärinen (2020).

has it: "What cannot be said, or said clearly, in one language or culture may be said, and said clearly, in another language or culture". What is interesting from the perspective of anti-capitalocentric thought is not only the visibilisation of these practices and their respective languages, but all that remains unquestioned in such a diverse-economic mapping. These multilingual notions, after all, are cartographed *in English*, according to community-economic coordinates set by Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2013), and communicated in a scholarly article, with its own requirements for linguistic homogeneity and transparency. Importantly, Gibson *et al.* (2018a) identify a range of capitalocentric interpretations that place Monsoon Asian diverse economies "within discourses of the informal economy, patron-client relations and social capital" (135) and thereby marginalise non-capitalist economies by placing them with reference to pre-prioritised capitalist categories. But the fact that diversity is spoken of *in English* escapes their critical consideration.

While in their mapping of linguistic-economic diversity Gibson *et al.* (2018b: 14–15) carefully make explicit their intent "not to pull these words from their localised contexts and launch them into some idealised realm of inter-cultural understanding", we may consider to what extent such an intention remains unachievable within the very act of testifying to these economies *in English*, within inherited forms of anglophone vocabularies and institutions, and within the specific, preformed parameters of community-economic concerns. In short, I wonder to what extent such a cartographing cannot help but reproduce implicit divisions between *the* language of 'theory' or 'synthesis' and those of 'empirics', or between *the* language of 'global communication' and those of 'contextual practices'.[68] Drawing from Gramscian analyses of linguistic power, we might say that consensual (or 'transparent, 'intentional', 'present') relations between languages are never "entirely spontaneous" (Carlucci 2013: 181; see also Ives 2019). What is required is an analysis of these relations in the making, taking into account their institutional settings and infrastructures.

We can recognise here what Emily Apter (2019: 199) calls "the pressure exerted on other languages by global English to submit to laws of equivalency on its terms" (see also Mufti 2010). To be recognised in the sites occupied by English (understood as a hegemonic, territorially exclusive language), such as international 'policy' and its financial institutions, or the academic spaces and metrics dominated by anglophone communication, economic diversity needs to be recognised and translated in(to) English. Thus, to imply that attending to local or regional linguistic-economic diversity is a straightforward strategy to get us 'beyond' or 'outside' what Gibson-Graham (2002) call the "binary frame of global vs. local" would be misplaced, because it reproduces the framework of intelligibility that cannot but treat 'localities' in a globally comparative framework. What I mean to problematise here is the sort of capitalocentrism (as

68 Of course, identifying and recognising such power dynamics presupposes that some degree of untranslatability or opacity between so-called natural languages has been allowed, at least in the sense that something is 'lost in translation' in these linguistic interactions. I take it for granted that there are differences worth studying in saying a thing in English, Finnish, Skolt Sami or Tagalog. To say that such differences are 'worth studying' means that their exact meaning or effects are not settled in advance; rather, a problematic of linguistic difference opens here. I will distinguish below such an *ongelma* from a 'problem'. Allowing such unownable difference between tongues is the methodological presupposition of my discussion. If we disallow such a basic difference and reduce language to a pure communicative medium of prelinguistic meanings, then obviously none of the problematisation of this chapter is valid. But then again, from within which, and what kind of, language and translation theory would we then be thinking? What kind of translational protocol would already be in use for these differences to pass as negligible or trivial?

(pre)translation of economic difference to a singular, hegemonic language) that our language carries, as if in spite of itself. Any mapping of untranslatables, for example, that would seem to create alternative cartographies of "comparison as more dark space than connective constellation" (Apter 2019: 196), is dependent on languages for comparing the incomparables, languages infrastructured and capitalised so as to make their readings legible for others.

Nevertheless, refraining from the trouble of rethinking this inherited ground of linguistic inequality is not an option. The critique of Global English or Globish gives us one example (among others) of a severely violent problematic to negotiate. Insofar as English serves – in a thesis such as this, in diverse-economic research, etc. – as an unsuspicious and unproblematised carrier bag of linguistic-economic diversity, this should alert us to the problematic 'translation zone' (Apter 2006), in which the increased attention to linguistic-economic diversity and the reproduction of capitalocentric renderings of such diversity are not mutually exclusive processes. To further contextualise this effort within the problematic of the Anglocene is to recognise that the very inheritance that allows us any translocal economic comparison and solidarity in English is already simultaneously implicated in the marginalisation and annihilation of the very diversity it seeks to foster (in its own terms).

But the danger here is of associating all too quickly a single language – as if *that* were a known, obvious thing – with 'hegemony', and of associating the latter with a sense of territorial exclusivity and homogeneity (see my chapter three). 'The Anglocene' (and its associates) offers a temptingly easy rendering of 'our' epoch and its linguistic interplays, an ordering of major and minor languages. Thinking linguistic-economic diversity as happening *outside* of (what is recognised as) hegemony risks reproducing the very relations that motivate its critique. As an omission and negation of such diversity, capitalocentrism would be understood as homologous to a single language (in this case, English), as if the homogeneity of 'a language' were an established, unproblematic assumption any more than an analogous post/critical rendering of homogeneous capitalocentrism is. Thus, insofar as the problem of capitalocentrism in the context of linguistic diversity takes us to study the institutional-infrastructural economies of languages, the performative reproduction of homogeneous spaces of language (as of economy) must also be treated as a troubling issue. Understanding capitalocentrism as an inheritance and an inescapable matrix – rather than a thin problem to be solved by the visibilisation and nomination of non-capitalist diversity – may help us to negotiate with/in this problematic space. I will next turn to translation as a site that helps us clarify the stakes and strategies available.

5.3 Translation Spaces

If linguistic difference and the capitalocentrism with/in as well as in-between languages form the key problem space here, its recognition and negotiation demands attention to sites and practices of translation, understood as a meeting place, negotiation and creation of linguistic differences. Let us start with the word 'translation' itself – and with its translations. What is this practice or process called 'translation'? In colloquial terms, we are used to thinking of translation (textual, verbal and/or gestural) as a practice of working to recognise and negotiate differences between (usually) two languages by converting a meaning to another language. 'Another language' is of course a relative term. Roman Jakobson (1959: 233) famously distinguishes between three forms of translation of the verbal sign: "[I]t may be translated into other signs of the same

language, into another language, or into another, nonverbal system of symbols". These three kinds of translation he calls respectively 'intralingual' (or rewording), 'interlingual' (or translation proper) and 'intersemiotic' (or transmutation). The opening of translation thus allows for different conceptions of (a) language and its other(s): rewording signs *within* 'a language'; interpreting signs through *another* language; and interpreting linguistic signs/systems via *non-linguistic* signs/systems.

Now, we may be committed to a view of translational differences of the first and second order (between 'linguistic registers' and 'natural languages' respectively) that reduces them to glitches happening in 'communication' between pre-existing 'meanings' (or 'units', 'entities', understood as prelinguistic phenomena), thereby reducing the problematic beforehand by imposing an ontology of communication upon it. However, the third, intersemiotic translation, profoundly troubles a secure, restricted definition of the translational process. It calls 'translation' the metonymic processes in which 'a tongue' slides from an oral muscle to a verbal phenomenon to the embracing affective womb of a mother tongue to a chunk of flesh sold at the meat counter to the money that is exchanged for it. Importantly, when we speak here of translation, these multiple senses of the term should all be echoing. The trope of translation as transportation *and* transformation has important uses in linguistic-cultural and spatial as well as economic registers – and such 'registers', and the differences that make them recognisable and distinguishable, might equally be seen as *effects* of translation. Thus, it is far from clear what translation *is*.

Consider, for example, probably the most prevalent anglophone (and Indo-European) conception of translation as transfer of meaning from one language to another, which has a long, European history, as Maria Tymoczko (2010) retells it. At the centre of Tymoczko's study are "conceptual metaphors linking translation with 'carrying, leading, or setting across', namely metaphors embodying a limited and controlled type of transfer" (111). This understanding of translation as 'carrying across' (from the Latin *translatio*), as transfer or transportation, is inherited from early Western European imperial projects but continues to be reproduced in "pretheoretical assumptions" about translation today. Tracing meanings of translation from the Roman Empire to medieval times, Tymoczko discusses how "[t]he trajectory is toward translation norms that valorize close reproduction of the words and language of the source text, norms that are diametrically opposed to the Roman value of 'sense for sense'" (124). Close translation becomes particularly prevalent in Western Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries, through societal developments such as the consolidation of Christianity, monarchies and the nation-state, the increase of writing as a form of knowledge and archiving, the spread of literacy among clergy and laity alike, and an increasing need for written documents and literal translations used in legal, institutional and commercial practices.

Interestingly for thinking the geographies at stake, Tymoczko highlights the spatiality of the emergence of this conception of translation:

> "*Translatio* was used originally in the very concrete sense of *moving things through space*, referring particularly to the ceremonial movement and relocation of exalted holy objects rather than normal objects. The term was used for *movement from earth to heaven*, in addition to the transference of (holy) things from one spot to another on earth. Paradigmatically *translation* figures in idioms for the *transfer of the relics of saints* from one church to another or for the *reinterment of saints' bones*, as well as the *relocation of a bishop's see*, the official center of a bishop's authority" (Tymoczko 2010: 126; emphases modified).

Note how Tymoczko describes the movement of translations "through space", but we may want to consider how translations (including the conception of *translatio*) *produce* space as social relationality. How translation spac*es*, that is. According to Tymoczko, this consisted centrally of translating the Bible from Latin to vernacular languages. This linguistic interplay with important power differentials constituted the separation between "a transcendent (and sacred) realm and a realm of the profane" (135) that was performed by prioritising the source text, the source language and the source culture as authoritative. Here we find one root for the still common conception that something is 'lost in translation'.

Through this ethos of translation, the Church maintained its authority throughout societal transformations from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Furthermore, the power of this sort of translation was not lost to secular forms of power, to legal and commercial empires or to European colonialism:

> "These attitudes towards language, culture, and translation have characterized European expansionism from the period of the late Middle Ages to the modern era as concepts and texts were imposed on colonized nations through translation from the colonizers' culture to those of the colonized" (136).

Quite *literally*, then, what Naoki Sakai (2009) calls a 'regime of translation' developed together with the Western European notion of *translation*. Imperial authority grew by carrying the Word across space and cultures, and regulating 'transfers' of meanings between idioms and intralingual registers. As Bassnett and Trivedi (1999: 4) write in the context of postcolonial translation: "The notion of the colony as a copy or translation of the great European Original inevitably involves a value judgement that ranks the translation in a lesser position in the literary hierarchy".

The transfer of a meaning between one language and another, and the oath of fidelity to the original, are of course not the sole conceptions of translation. While Tymoczko is clear to mark Western European versions of translation (including Spanish *traducción*, French *traduction*, German Übersetzung) as often reproducing similar "notions of carrying or leading or setting across […], of transplantation, of text as a holy relic, of the precedence of certain languages and cultures, and of the authoritative word in translation as both grammatical and sacred" (136), she also points to very different conceptual metaphors for translation in other languages. These include: the Nigerian Igbo understanding of the translator as "a narrator, with a narrator's powers and privileges" (117); the Chinese metaphor of translation (*fanyi*) as 'turning over'; the Malay *tersalin*, associated with birth; and the Tagalog *pagsasalin*, referring to pouring liquids from one vessel to another. To recognise and nominate these sites as relatively similar practices of 'translation' is of course to *already* have recognised them through a sameness that the Western European *translatio* affords. Much depends on the terms of *this* relation, which enables comparisons between different, culturally specific and idiomatic practices as moments of 'translation' (or for that matter of *fanyi* etc.). Through such comparability, specific understandings of translation are spaced but also *inherited*: translations (as transformative transfers between languages) will have happened *before* the recognisability of any example of translation.

What translation does is to open a reciprocal back door, as it were, to questions concerning language(s). Young, for instance, cheerfully turns around the conventional wisdom about original languages and derivative translations by asking the following:

> "What if our modern ideas of language were invented expressly so that there could be translation? What if the whole point of translation is to keep languages apart? Not to carry meaning across languages but to confirm the presumption of the division between them? What if translation required the invention of the monolingual (and then the multilingual) for it to come into existence?" (Young 2016: 1217).

By 'our modern ideas of language', Young means specifically European ideas, born alongside the idea of translation as a transport of meaning between distinct, coherent languages. Yasemin Yildiz (2012) recounts this European history as a history of 'the mother tongue' and of monolingualism, born in the late 18th century and still going strong:

> "With the gendered and affectively charged kinship concept of the unique 'mother tongue' at its center, […] monolingualism established the idea that having one language was the natural norm, and that multiple languages constituted a threat to the cohesion of individuals and societies" (Yildiz 2012: 6).

In Johann Gottfried Herder's thought, for instance, languages were linked with nations, each celebrated in its particularity and distinctness – and thus made apart (7). Friedrich Schleiermacher's conception of the *Muttersprache* invested the older Latin term *lingua materna* (referring to vernaculars) with a monolingual affectivity that combined "notions of maternal origins, affective and corporeal intimacy, and natural kinship" (10). This occurred simultaneously with the redefinition of family units through biological kinship and a stricter separation between the public and private spheres.[69] We may add to this German ensemble the *Stammbaum* theory of August Schleicher, introduced in 1853, in which "each language evolves like a species", "reproduc[ing] asexually, not by cross-fertilizing with another language but by dividing [its] own cells" (Young 2016: 1212). The "comparative places in the vertical genealogy of the family" thus assign the relationship of languages, and other kinds relations can be ignored.

We may now begin to see the role of a certain European concept and practice of translation in performing the spatial-economic relations of "that which is casually called a language" (Young 2016). Sakai (2009) argues that at the heart of the conception of translation sits an understanding of language as a unity. Sakai calls this idea a Kantian 'regulative idea', meaning a rule for prescribing empirical data rather than being something empirically verifiable in itself:

> "It is not possible to know whether a particular language as a unity exists or not. It is the other way around: by subscribing to the idea of the unity of language, it becomes possible for us to systematically organize knowledge about languages in a modern, scientific manner" (73).

The operation that allows such a subscription, for Sakai, is translation, since it confirms retrospectively '*a* meaning' *after* it has gone through translation, as well as a conception

69 In her careful analysis of multilingual appropriations of German, Yildiz shows the need for a 'postmonolingual' approach to language, with which she refers to "a field of tension in which the monolingual paradigm continues to assert itself and multilingual practices persist or reemerge" (5). Her 'post-' refers to what comes after the dominant monolingual paradigm, but in a contextual way, each 'post-' being a different case: "[b]ut since the monolingual paradigm has spread only gradually and unevenly across different contexts and not at all to others, 'postmonolingual' constitutes by necessity a situated and flexible periodization, inflected by contextual differences" (4).

of the process itself (the languages involved, the border between them) as it is represented in translation. As Sakai summarises it, the least that needs to be said is that "logically, translation is not derivative or secondary to meaning or language" (83).

What I wish to conclude from this meandering review of some recent interventions into what Douglas Robinson (2017) calls 'critical translation studies' is a general sense in which the active role of translation as *spatialisation* (of empires, of linguistic relations, of definitions of language) comes to the fore. There is a performativity to translation that needs attention, not least because it so conveniently masks itself as a technical labour between pre-existing differences and, as difficulties in translation, as an expression of underlying or pre-translational differences. Also, there is no translation without theories of translation and languages already being implicated. Linguistic relations and exchanges presuppose and practise a metalevel, or theories of language and translation, as if in spite of themselves. This is the case whether or not it is recognised. To practise translation as a transfer and trial of communicable meaning might be a commonsensical act that needs no active theoretical legitimation, yet it comes with and performs specific senses of what the differences negotiated are like (recursively, as it were). Instead, seeing translation as a site where linguistic, spatial and economic differences (including the differences that make them recognisable and separable) are produced turns the tables. But they are not produced out of nothing, but within an inherited mediacy of language. To recognise translation is an effect of translations having already taken place, and it matters how this recognition (and the inherited, other-than-present recognisability) is reflected upon and translated into the phenomena known as translation and language.

Reflecting back on discussions about the 'hegemony' of specific languages – for example academic English – we begin to suspect that the critical practice of translation in geography that Germes and Husseini de Araújo (2016) call for must include a critical attention to how translation (and the understanding of translation) plays into *performing* 'language hegemony'. I mean this in a rather strong sense: if (following Sakai and Young) language as such and linguistic differences are only (re)confirmed in translation, in a process that is usually understood as derivative of them, this profoundly questions any model that portrays a linguistic-spatial-economic 'hegemony' that controls a territory and grows by colonising other languages. As Peter Ives (2019) shows, such accounts can too easily assume a sort of 'linguistic imperialism' whose lamentation is prioritised at the cost of an analysis of how linguistic power is negotiated. Returning from a generic sense of 'hegemony' to Gramsci's formulations, themselves attentive to linguistic differences, Ives argues that the former's "historical-material approach to language" criticises asexual linguistic reproduction ("parthenogenesis") and instead concentrates on "structural power relations among nonstatic and nonsutured 'standard' languages" (69).

Drawing on Gibson-Graham's critique of political economy, we might add another piece to this puzzle of analysing linguistic-spatial-economic power in translation. Yet, as we have discussed in the context of 'hegemony', the structurality of power relations is itself no simple matter, nor does its critical recognition stand on safe, non-complicit terrain as regards the reproduction of such structures and powers. What a (linguistic) hegemony requires, from the perspective of performative complicity with power, would become constant translation that reconfirms its systemicity, its power and/or its values. Placing translation in a derivative position vis-à-vis pre-translational, 'natural', languages fosters such a dynamic by treating as given a very specific conception of translation and language. In other words, the givenness of translation (as derivative, as transfer of meaning, as two-way movement (at the most)) reproduces dimensions that ought to raise our suspicion. Adding in Derrida's economy of violence further highlights that

this problemicity is not solvable in any absolute sense, nor should any relative sense of harmony (non-violence) between and in languages be treated as an outside of violent relations. In this sense, language and translation should be treated as two entries to trouble (whose trouble includes any distinction and dynamic between these 'two'). Let us turn to some more explicit accounts of translation as a spatial-economic site and process in order to explore this further.

5.4 Translation Economises

If translation features importantly in the creation and sustenance of modern senses of language and space, its role is also noteworthy in critical analyses of political economy. Money and language would especially seem to offer a readily available analogy to think with, as two forms of 'universal equivalents'. Yet in a famous (and famously opaque) parenthesis in the *Grundrisse*, Marx dismisses the comparison between money and language as such, and instead opts for an analogy between linguistic translation and monetary transaction:

> "Language does not transform ideas, so that the peculiarity of ideas is dissolved and their social character runs alongside them as a separate entity, like prices alongside commodities. Ideas do not exit separately from language. Ideas which have first to be translated out of their mother tongue into a foreign language in order to circulate, in order to become exchangeable, offer a somewhat better analogy; but the analogy then lies not in language, but in the foreignness of language" (Marx 1993: 162–163).

As Lydia H. Liu (2000: 22) explains this passage, it is this 'foreignness of language' that "describes a shared process of circulation in translation and in economic transaction, which produces meaning as it produces value when a verbal sign or a commodity is exchanged with something foreign to itself".[70] It is this foreign quality and the need for translation-transaction that provide the ground for comparing specific effects of money and language.

> "The process of transformation that causes different things (the linen and the coat) to *look alike* is an abstraction process that eliminates difference or use-value for the commodities to become commensurate as exchange-value and be exchanged on that basis. Exchange-value is to political economy what simile, metaphor, or synecdoche is to the linguistic realm of signification, as both involve the making of equivalents out of nonequivalents through a process of abstraction or translation" (Liu 2000: 24).

It does not take much of a stretch of imagination to think the 'universal equivalents' of money and translation as intimately connected. As Liu puts it, "global translatability has inhabited the same order of universalistic aspirations as the invention of the metric system, modern postal service, international law, the gold standard, telecommunication, and so on" (14).

This means turning a more-than-analogical attention to translation as economy and economy as translation. But crucially, the making of economic geography is there too,

70 Lezra (2017) complicates this explanation by showing that it is far from clear what the foreignness or *Fremdheit* of language means and does in Marx's sentence. See also Robinson's (2017) detailed critique of Liu's reading of Marx.

in translations that mediate and transform linguistic economies as topologies. For many critical theorists, translation provides an important site for theorising language and economy together in the context of 'global capitalism', and as such it also offers sites of resistance (see Heller & McElhinny 2017).

With an eye on the question of capitalocentrism, I turn to take a slightly more detailed look at three relatively recent contributors to critical thinking on translation and political economy: Anna Tsing, Jacques Lezra and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Representatives of different fields of study – anthropology, translation studies and comparative literature, and history respectively – each of the three has noteworthy things to say about translational economies. I will explore the work of these three scholars in some detail in order to review their respective contributions to a critical understanding of translational capitalism, and to ask what kind of capitalocentric inheritances might underlie and be negotiated in those contributions.

5.4.1 Pericapitalism and Supply Chain Translations

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's anthropology explores crucial questions about commodity supply chains, ruinous economies, and non-capitalist livelihoods taking place in conditions of precarity. In *The mushroom at the end of the world*, her book on matsutake mushrooms, Tsing (2015) offers an interesting account of translations in these processes. In this book, translation mostly refers to an economic process that produces value and commensurability out of difference. Tsing follows the global commodity chains of matsutake in their transformation from foraged 'trophies of freedom' to capitalist assets and then on to Japanese gifts. She uses the notion of 'salvage accumulation' to describe accumulation outside of direct capitalist control. Sites of salvage, or what she also calls 'pericapitalist' sites, are "simultaneously inside and outside capitalism" (63). Sites of the diverse economy produce non-capitalist value, and when this value is transformed and amassed by and for the circulation of capital, 'salvage accumulation' takes place. Translation is Tsing's preferred trope for what happens in the "drawing of one world-making project into another": "[t]ranslations across sites of difference *are* capitalism: they make it possible for investors to accumulate wealth" (62). This is a characteristic of "commodity chains that translate value to the benefit of dominant firms; translation between noncapitalist and capitalist value systems is what they do" (63). Tsing sees this as integral to global capitalism: "[n]ow that global supply chains have come to characterize world capitalism, we see this process everywhere" (63). Although 'translation' plays a side role in Tsing's account, it reappears in key passages and has an important role in organising both spatial (transfer) and qualitative (transformation) relations.

Tsing's contribution to thinking translation as a spatial-economic force is manifold. As she traces the transformations of the matsutake through different spatial economies with their different value systems, what emerges is a continuously transformed, retranslated mushroom. This makes possible capitalist value, speculation and control, in ways that make up commodity chains that yield and mean different things to different people, other creatures and their environments. Tsing shows with anthropological acuity how the performance of a commodity chain is not about single values, but nor is it inimical to (economic, cultural, linguistic) difference per se: "[c]apitalism is a translation machine for producing capital from all kinds of livelihoods, human and not human" (118). In an already disturbed world, amidst ruins we inherit (see Tsing *et al.* 2017), to follow differently valued commodity chains and differently translated mushrooms is to notice livelihoods that sustain themselves within, despite and because of the trouble: "[S]upply chains

can offer sites for self-expression that are unavailable in more conventional forms of livelihood. […] Supply chains are not always evil. […] There are possibilities for a more livable world here as well as perils" (Tsing 2009b: 171–172). Noticing these becomes the basis of her notion of 'latent commons', "fugitive moments of entanglement in the midst of institutionalized alienation" (Tsing 2015: 255). These are not exclusively human, and they are non-harmonious, hard to institutionalise and non-redemptive. No progress narrative here, since the anthropology (and aesthetic) Tsing describes is acutely aware of the generalised ruination she associates with capitalism (and therefore global commodity chains):

> "The ruin glares at us with the horror of its abandonment. It's not easy to know how to make a life, much less avert planetary destruction. Luckily there is still company, human and not human. We can still explore the overgrown verges of our blasted landscapes – the edges of capitalist discipline, scalability, and abandoned resource plantations. We can still catch the scent of the latent commons – and the elusive autumn aroma" (Tsing 2015: 282).

What interests me here is the trope of 'translation', which keeps repeating and serves to describe the spatial-temporal movements that both retain and transform the matsutake and what it 'means' in different contexts. As an interface of different and incommensurable value systems, 'translation' serves as the knot tying Tsing's analysis together. In principle, her definition of 'translation' – as drawing from one world-making project into another, as bridging as well as maintaining differences, and as a partial attunement to difference – has plenty of space for negotiation between differences in creative ways. To remember our capitalocentric concerns, it is promising that Tsing's pericapitalist sites seem to work in both ways, to and from capital(ism). In practice, however, inscribing them in the context of 'world capitalism' seems to restrict the possibilities of translations other than towards and for capital(ism).

The examples of translation we get to learn from are mostly the sort of translations that make commensurability out of heterogeneity and capitalist value out of diverse economies: "[t]rading *creates* capitalist value through its work of translation" (112). Translation is capitalist coordination that maintains difference, but in ruinous forms: "[i]n translation the materiality of landscape is transformed, becoming the materiality of money" (Tsing 2009a: 364). Wealth and poverty coexist, entangled:

> "Supply chains dissolve national solidarities to deepen pockets of difference that can be translated along the supply chain into capital accumulation. Difference becomes a resource; gaps widen. Precarious wealth and precarious poverty sit side by side. Heterogeneity thrives" (Tsing 2016: 336).

In other words, the force of translation seems largely reserved for the use of capitalist value produced out of and in movement between difference, itself characterised by its locality: "Amassing wealth is possible without rationalizing labor and raw materials. Instead, it requires acts of translation across varied social and political spaces, which, borrowing from ecologists' usage, I call 'patches'" (Tsing 2015: 62). Difference sits in patches, as it were, to paraphrase Escobar (2001), and the power of coordination, dynamism and scalable intentionality is largely reserved to capitalist actors.

An interesting exception to this directionality takes place when Tsing describes the mushrooms' fate in Japan, where they are bought to be turned into gifts. Matchmaking

between sellers and buyers is a construction of relations: "[t]ranslation from commodity to gift is already happening in making the match" (124). Grocers map out potential buyers, and themselves buy from intermediate wholesalers. Contacting clients and maintaining relationships brings non-alienated relations into the process. Thus, even before the mushroom itself is turned into a gift, it is already becoming one: "[t]here is a gift in the matsutake even before it leaves the commodity sphere" (125). But by clinging to the idea of such distinct spheres (of difference), which are chained together in translation, Tsing portrays pericapitalist practices as primarily tending towards capital(ism):

> "Matsutake is then a capitalist commodity that begins and ends its life as a gift. It spends only a few hours as a fully alienated commodity: the time when it waits as inventory in shipping crates on the tarmac and travels in the belly of a plane. *But these are hours that count*" (128; my emphasis).

That is, these hours count in the sense of "cement[ing]" the "[r]elations between exporters and importers, which dominate and structure the supply chain" (128). As calculable inventory, the matsutake become part of a "commodity chain [it is] worthwhile" organising, in view of capital accumulation. Arguably, there is a sort of geometry at play that separates non-capitalist and capitalist 'spheres' and names the sites in-between 'pericapitalist'. Here translation is a name for transformation in general, but also for rendering difference commensurable ('salvage accumulation'). Within the general frame of 'supply chains' and 'global capitalism', these sites come with their distinct orders of power and risks of co-optation. Tsing's discursive landscape is populated by affects of destruction: "[s]avage and salvage are often twins: Salvage translates violence and pollution into profit" (Tsing 2015: 64).

What does all of this tell us about translations? I would argue that despite the extremely insightful critical analysis and inspiring 'arts of noticing' that Tsing practises, there is a spatiality and a temporality at play that seem to locate translation within a determined framework, thus taming its potential for other economies. This is a site where I think Tsing's account find itself participating in the capitalist economy of translation. Nothing wrong in this, since it might be a precondition for any critical analysis of that economy in the first place, but it does come with differential effects. Rejecting Gibson-Graham's notion of "postcapitalist politics" as "premature", Tsing prefers to look at how capitalist value gets translated from economic diversity. She reserves "'noncapitalist' for forms of value making outside capitalist logics" (296). What these might be is not very clear, because in the book we only get to visit pericapitalist sites where capitalist value is already in the process of becoming translated. While Tsing uses these notions not as a "classificatory hierarchy but rather [as] a way to explore ambiguity", this ambiguity seems to be restricted by its location within a continuum between purely non-capitalist and capitalist sites. But where exactly are these kinds of sites? The only answer Tsing seems to give is the few hours that the mushroom spends as "a fully alienated commodity" in shipping crates and on a plane. These, remember, are the "hours that count" (128). Although "[t]here is a gift in the matsutake even before it leaves the commodity sphere" (125), this haunting giftness does not seem to travel well, beyond the local negotiation of matsutake matchmakers.

All of this reminds me of what Sakai (2009: 73) argues (above) about the Kantian 'regulative idea' of '*a* language', the unity of language: "[i]t organizes knowledge, but it is not empirically verifiable". The process of translation is where "difference is rendered representable" (86). For Sakai, this happens through two distinct dimensions of difference:

> "[R]adical difference of discontinuity that does not render itself to spatialized representation, and measured difference in continuity that is imagined in terms of a border, gap or crevice between two spatially enclosed territories or entities, figuratively projected as a distance between two figures accompanying one another. And the transition from the first to the second we often call 'translation'" (Sakai 2009: 86).

What I take from this is the following. Wherever translation happens – and if it happens 'everywhere', this should not be an excuse to downplay any 'whereness', which is why Tsing's 'arts of noticing' provide crucial methodological insights – at least two forms of difference coexist: radical, strictly unrepresentable difference, which we could with some reservations also call *différance*, or atopological difference; and representable, spatialisable, temporalisable difference that allows the figuration of entities and relations 'in' space and time. *After* translation (understood in this way), we recognise the spatial-temporal differences that were negotiated, as it were, in translation, which was already their figuration. Whether the (very) diverse (an)economy is figured as a 'landscape' of diverse economy (as in Gibson-Graham) or as commodity chains connecting patches of difference (as in Tsing), translation is what has already taken place. This is not to say that everything is possible in translation – this kind of sovereignty would risk assuming an intentional and sovereign translative subject (any 'one', any 'I') and its insulated 'locale' instead of an *already* translated product or after-effect. Nevertheless, Sakai's double difference helps us to see how translation allows, and emerges as a name for, the 'economic' relations projected 'into' space and time.

Read with a critical eye to capitalocentrism, this can help us question the work of Tsing's capitalocentrically tending language, which assigns dynamics to capitalist translation, situates (pericapitalist) sites of difference in patches, and organises its whole conceptual economy within the pre-known existence of 'world capitalism'. There might be an important lesson in Tsing's motives for rejecting Gibson-Graham's 'premature' vocabulary, since "[g]lobal supply chains require a more expanded notion of capitalism than Gibson-Graham allow" (Tsing 2012: 37). But we should take this 'require' in the double sense of 'demanding' – *both* as an injunction for the critical analysis of supply chains, *and* as a precondition for their continuing circulation. This is what complicity in its aporetic form means: an undecidable, unbearable double bind of capitalocentrism. Holding on to "global capitalism as an object, the better to contemplate its crimes" (38) and to "understand capitalism (and not just its alternatives)" (Tsing 2015: 66) is undoubtedly necessary, but the conceptuality we thus reproduce may not be the same as or even reconcilable with one that could give us postcapitalist openings beyond their fugitive, ephemeral marginality as 'latent commons'. Too much is invested in the upkeep of structures that 'require' recognition at the cost of the loss of more-than-capitalist diversity – a loss that has (always) already taken place as a predicate of their cognisability. Crucially, this does not only mean a straightforward injunction to 'translate differently'. This is undoubtedly necessary, but what must accompany it is a critical analysis of how we are already being *translated* to capitalocentric effect. Again, if capitalocentrism cannot be safely distinguished from the possibility of any 'economic' thought or language, it becomes quite possible that we are part of its translational economy. I think we need to ask why a language of postcapitalism appears 'premature' to us, and how this prematurity might itself be an effect of an inherited, capitalocentric sensorium or sense of givens.

5.4.2 Untranslatables and Globality

The second theorist of capitalist translation relevant for our case here is Jacques Lezra, in particular in his book *Untranslating machines: A genealogy for the ends of global thought* (2017). Lezra is a scholar of textual translation, and with his notion of 'translation' we always find ourselves close to specific texts and the work of their translation to and from other languages. His arguments largely pivot on close readings of the glitches and possibilities of translated text passages. With an interest in 'untranslatables', his work is situated within wider efforts to explore translation failures, resistances and ambiguities – and ways their comparative analysis can offer alternatives to the smooth translatability of textual production and circulation in capitalist terms (see also Cassin 2014; Jazeel 2019; Apter 2019). An untranslatable, in a general sense, does not then refer to what is not or cannot be translated, but rather to "what one keeps on (not) translating", as Cassin (2014: xvii) has it. It is a glitch, a resistance, whose elaboration and location within a wider, comparative "geopolitics of reading" (Apter 2019) puts into question much of the smooth normality usually assigned to translation.

For our purposes here, Lezra's work is particularly interesting since it draws heavily on both Marx and Derrida and is committed to analysing untranslatables in the context of and as resistances to capitalism. As his book's subtitle has it, the task is to think of the place of (un)translation within the framework of globalised and globalising thought. Starting off from the demand for capitalist circulation of translated commodities and the commodity of translation work, a demand whose success is evidenced by the intuitiveness of 'global thought' and 'globalisation', Lezra emphasises the institutional-economic infrastructures of our "age of global reproducibility". At the centre of his analysis is the neoliberal university, which reproduces the skills, infrastructures and other commodities necessary for universal translation and consumption:

> "The age of the global reproducibility of the University is the age in which the conception of 'universality' tied to the ancient humanistic notion of the 'University' has become primarily expressible in the lexicon of 'shared passion for accessible, industry-relevant qualifications', that is, in the lexicon of (economic and technological) 'globality'" (Lezra 2017: 4).

Lezra notes the double role that translation has in capitalist value production:

> "[I]t is at the same time one of the instruments that make possible certain of the flows, and it is itself what one might call a second-order commodity practice whose value is established in relation to the flow of capital and of first-order, material commodities" (117).

This means an attention both to translated commodities and to the commodity of the 'metalinguistic' skills and trades needed for their production and circulation – what some would call 'immaterial labour'. Lezra's account, paralleling and building upon autonomist/post-operaist Marxist theory, emphasises the role of financialisation, or what he terms the 'credit-debt system', and how it is tied to the production and circulation of 'information commodities' in translation. Learning foreign languages is increasingly motivated as an investment in one's future, and thus considered worth the debt taken on to learn them; 'widgets' gain informational value by becoming examples and promises of exportable commodities; words written in a specific language gain a transformed sense of speculative or derivative value by being valued as destined to be translated into other languages. In these ways and many others, the value of translation(s) is transformed. And, says Lezra,

> "[t]he humanities are thus instruments of globalization, ancillary to the great value-producing machine of global capitalism, a set of devices and practices for producing and assessing the value of cultural commodities traded on global and local markets" (7).

His crucial invention concerns how traditional commodities are simultaneously informational by also being impartibly linguistic, and because that linguisticity itself attains an increased role in global credit-debt capital. Thus, his is an effort to talk very concretely about how translational economies coexist what and parallel with we traditionally view as material commodities and markets. Like the derivative logic brilliantly analysed by Randy Martin (2015), in financialised 'global capitalism' we encounter a situation in which

> "[t]raditional commodities become information commodities that serve *simultaneously* as the descriptive means for seizing global capital; as the normative way of promoting it; and as a global commodity retailed in business schools, global University networks, and digital classrooms around the world" (Lezra 2017: 14).[71]

Lezra's account is made particularly interesting by his analysis of how a certain sense of *un*translatability is also required by this process. This is what he calls an "untranslatability which is one", in a passage I will cite at length:

> "*This* untranslatability is related to universal translatability as particular indices are to universals in conventional dialectical schemes. *This* untranslatability in no way troubles the analogy between the principle of global exchangeability under credit-debt capital and the principle of universal translatability. *This* untranslatability is another name for what is at hand concretely; it is the domain of culture, of idiom; it passes into, is translated into, the global market system with no seeming loss**,** indeed with gains accruing, as cultural surplus-value, to that new second-order commodity, 'untranslatability' or particularity. If it contradicts the (political-economic) principle of translatability, it is only to affirm it at a different level: this untranslatability which is one, we might say, is translatability's determinate negation. The determinate principle

71 In his analysis of 'objects', Lezra (2018: 19) makes a "banal observation that objects cannot be the same today, under the regime of international credit-capital, as they were at another moment, say in 1852–53 or in 1867, under the regime of European industrial capitalism". This 'banal' observation enables Lezra to make another, rather stunning one, distinguishing between "at least" two processes relevant to understanding the relations between 'mental' and 'material' objects: "one translation happening, as it were, *today*, at this instant: simultaneous translation, instant translation, a translation internal to a single, atomic moment; *and* the translation happening when any other time comes between us and the object, a phrase to be understood only when 'us' is also an object into which any other time intrudes" (20). I read this (second translation) as an observation regarding how *différance* as differing-deferring intervenes, making each relation (between, say, an 'object' and 'us') *already a translation*. This means that a historical object is not the same 'now' as it was 'then', but also that an object 'now' (as a relatable entity) is already different, in translation, already *différant*, as it is translated into a relatable and related object. When we thus read *différance* as translation, any proper object is found to be already heterogeneous, translated, "an object into which any other time intrudes". As yet another implication has it, this time in a discussion about early modern translations: "[w]e are never only talking *about* early modern translation, its practices or systematic articulations – we are also talking *in* translation, that is, performing an act of historico-imaginative reconceptualization of chronologically different cultural practices, amounting to a sort of translation" (2015: 157). This can be compared to Derrida's (2006) numerous discussions and examples of how 'Marx' does not translate back to himself, is not One or simply a calculable-governable multiplicity of voices.

> of universal *untranslatability* holds together the imaginary shape of global culture and brings unity and coherence to the cultural market system" (Lezra 2017: 15).

In other words, Lezra is not satisfied with a simple equation of capitalism with the 'universal equivalent' of translatability, but he also seeks to account for how untranslatable, incommensurable difference is translated into 'cultural surplus-value', 'national flavour', as particulars to universals. Using the examples of Bollywood films and Picasso's *Guernica*, Lezra argues that this type of untranslatability happens *simultaneously* with translatability: "A work of art […] is universal to the extent, if and only if, it is 'filled' by particulars: that potentiality to be filled by particulars exists *simultaneously* with the work; it is inseparable from it; it constitutes the work" (15). Translatability and untranslatability thus also coexist, simultaneously, in what we could term the iterability of the works of art that he analyses.[72]

This simultaneity gives rise to Lezra's concept of "machine translation", the "widget [that] produces the flickering, undecidable movement between statements' […] linguistic and metalinguistic status. […] It is internal to the metalinguistic statement or term, its designation and the object it designates" (126). While he appropriates the word from automated, algorithmic translation, Lezra's argument is that machine translation as an inhuman, machinic force "has always and already inhabited, worked or spidered away at natural languages" (125) within the undecidable space between a linguistic and a metalinguistic status.

> "Markets – systems of production and consumption and systems of distribution, exchange and value-creation – work under particular conditions to particular ends, but they work in relation to an abstract and *total* market, a market system, towards which all exchanges tend, and upon which they all depend in the last instance, a market system which guarantees their 'simultaneity' and their convertibility into one another, a vast and universal translating machine filled, as it were, by whatever particulars pertain to each exchange, to each local market" (Lezra 2017: 12).

At stake for Lezra, then, is this abstract and total market system, a "universal translating machine" that does not shy away from untranslatability but instead translates it eagerly and *simultaneously*, already producing value.

The crack in this machinic framework is where this "simultaneity" fails, and what takes place is a temporal rupture or glitch, a "disfigured translation". The hope that Lezra finds is located in his attempt to enrol translation's *violence*, its disruptive and defective power, against global thought. Here lies his key concept, untranslatability-which-is-not-one:

> "These terrible 'defects' are 'crucial' not only inasmuch as they provide a means of understanding the limits of credit-debt capital but also inasmuch as they furnish grounds, weak but flexible and determinative, for ethical relations based in untranslatabilities" (13).

72 Lezra does not use the word 'iterability' here, but I think his account relies here as elsewhere on such a deconstructive understanding. Like Derrida's (1987) singular tears, which he cannot send in his writing or postcards but also cannot not send, translatability and untranslatability, sendability and non-sendability, singularity and iterability coexist, simultaneously, 'within' the same or the proper. These latter are (im)possible, their property lost in losing what has never taken place as such (see Derrida 1997a).

It is in the failures of "principles of analogy, equivalence, exchange and abstraction" to form a coherent system that we need to confront the limits of translatability and "untranslatability-which-is-not-one" (22). Shifting to an "ethico-political register", Lezra underlines the work "at the moment when we encounter one another, when each of us measure up to what is immeasurable for us in the other and in the other's idiom, when we speak out of measure so as to measure out" (23). Thus the hope, and the opening, is in populating the landscape with translators who do not shy away from the inhuman characteristics of machine translation and their *own* inhuman disfiguration by and in the linguistic indeterminacy they inherit.

Against the smooth, peaceful surface of global-universal translatability (and its necessary untranslatability-which-*is*-one), Lezra posits a violent strategy:

> "That task is to help guard and produce the violence of translation, which is to say, to disfigure translation on the edges of the axiom of an untranslatability-that-is-not-one. On the condition that they serve this disfiguring function, the disciplines of the 'humanities' allow us to imagine, think through and set in place formal, ephemeral and reversible regimes of democratic association. It is in this machine inside the machine of the globally reproducible cultural commodity form, in this machinic, anti-humanist core and on the basis of non-recognition, of the incoherence of the principle of translation, of an untranslatability-which-is-not-one, that democratic regimes can and should be imagined, that is, *produced*, today" (Lezra 2017: 11).

How exactly we are to move from ethico-political sites of disfiguration and deferral – or negotiation – to "untranslating machines" is something that Lezra leaves undeveloped. But I take his as an effort to populate the universally translating machine of capital(ism), with its capitalisation of the machinic properties always already in language – the already-thereness of the 'immateriality' or the 'virtuality' of any object, through and as language – with a counter-cartography of translations and translators democratically associating around and through defective untranslatables. This is akin to Berlant's (2016: 396) "glitchfrastructures for teaching unlearning".

I wonder, though, what its limits might be within a critical framework that is *also* continuously interested in teaching us the presence and epochality of a "world of the market, of the market of markets, of universal translation, of the globe" (Lezra 2017: 159) For example, it is interesting to follow the trope of 'global' through Lezra's text, as it appears in two distinct senses: firstly, there is the 'global' that is a performative *of* capital(ism), a project to be achieved, a language to be consolidated and a paradigm to be reproduced. In this view, we are aware that a shared, global world is a product of translations, and of universal translatability as a project of and for credit-debt capital(ism). But secondly, there is another 'global' of a constative register, a description of prevailing conditions, an adjective inconspicuously characterising how things are *today*. This 'global' and this 'today' are thrown around to guarantee the stability and sharedness of the framework which Lezra uses to analyse the changing role of translation, that is, the framework of credit-debt capital. The two senses are mixed in sentences such as the following:

> "The situation *today* inflects that longer, geocultural picture with the particularities of labour-export manufacturing, a highly articulated *global* transportation and communication system and a system of *global* credit and finance that makes both possible" (117; my emphases).

A geographical frame is conveyed, one whose being is an effect *and* a precondition of generalised capitalist practices of translation. From a Marxist perspective, this is a perfectly honest historicisation, one that acknowledges simultaneously the critic's situatedness within a capitalist, 'global' history and the intellectual capacities it makes available, and then tries to think with and through them for alternatives (see Lezra 2015).

Drawn into the suspecting light of an anti-capitalocentric reading, though, things turn out differently. The periodisation that allows Lezra to frame translational economies 'today' as driven by financialised logics, thereby opening crucial critical discussions about credit-debt relations in translation and the possibilities of glitches and resistances, is at the same time conditioned by the reproduction of the very 'globality' ('today') that is criticised as an effect of capitalist relations. What an anti-capitalocentric reading could do here, then, is to underline a glitch between the two senses of the global – one acting as a project by and for capital, and the other being the canvas set as 'our' context. Lezra proceeds as if these were the 'same thing', *as if* the globe translated back to itself, or at least as if there were no alternative to such globality. Again, the spatial reference point becomes singular and all-encompassing ('global' in all senses of the term), and as a product of capitalist relations it is then treated as largely homological with them. Non-capitalism sits in glitches.

However, we should not rush to position ourselves or our cognition in a context posited by capital(ism) as a world in its image. Not because there is an outside to it, a perspective from without it, nor because we do not need it too, but simply because it is part of a wider reality, a wider context, the more-than-capitalist economy. This does not mean simply reclaiming 'the global' as a *non*-capitalist place, achievement or context – it undoubtedly is that too, but such a proclamation would be methodologically hasty – but rather, it points out that capital's language of 'the globe' carries with it, as if in spite of itself, memories of the more-than-capitalist. To read (only) capitalism in 'the globe' or in 'today' is to reconfirm the validity of *its* translations. Similarly, the University is not One, except as an unglitched translation that confirms itself and situates its alternatives, the "ephemeral and reversible regimes of democratic association" (Lezra 2017: 11), in glitches. Ours might be, and perhaps already *is*, a different kind of association: "The universities to come have their exact places and minimum requirements. They are where people assemble to discuss their problems [*ongelmiaan*] and pose questions" (Salminen *et al.* 2009: 60; my translation).

5.4.3 Translations of Capitalist Modernity

Revisiting historian Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) *Provincializing Europe* allows us to add a third layer of nuance to this translational-economic problematic, drawing attention to the historical processes at stake – and to translation as a historical force and problem. Chakrabarty famously distinguishes between two histories and two modes of translation in an effort to explain the experience of Indian modernity. In introducing his concept of translation, Chakrabarty distinguishes it from historical *transition* understood as a historicist, developmentalist and mimetic narrative "which will always ultimately privilege the modern (that is, 'Europe')" (41). This is particularly clear in debates on transitions to (and from) 'the capitalist mode of production', understood as a succession of total stages linked together by their transition from one to another (as we saw in the previous chapter). The complexity that Chakrabarty sees in this question arises from his own indebtedness to the modern categories originating from Europe. He thus uses his own

work as an example of translation as an acknowledgement of "the positive debt one may owe to Europe and European thought" even (or especially) in critiquing it, and by paying "attention to the translational processes through which concepts and practices are made one's own" (Chakrabarty & Dube 2002: 866). This means attuning oneself critically to inherited concepts and givens, seeking to historicise and provincialise one's 'own' cognition.

The way Chakrabarty deals with this situation is interesting, since he does not simply dismiss 'transitions' but instead places or 'provincialises' them anew. Drawing on Marx's formulation, he calls them "a past posited by capital itself as its precondition – History 1" (63). Drawing on Marx's distinction, Chakrabarty distinguishes this history from what he calls History 2. This history is constituted *also* by what capital encounters as its antecedents, but this time "not as antecedents established by itself, not as forms of its own life-process" (Marx 1989: 464). Elements of History 2 "do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital" (Chakrabarty 2000: 64), and they do not in this sense belong to its 'life process'. Marx picks money and the commodity as his two examples, two elements absolutely central to everything we know of capital's circulation. In doing so, argues Chakrabarty,

> "Marx appears to suggest that entities as close and necessary to the functioning of capital as money and commodity do not necessarily belong to any natural connection to either capital's own life process or to the past posited by capital. […] Marx thus writes into the intimate space of capital an element of deep uncertainty. Capital has to encounter in the reproduction of its own life process relationships that present it with double possibilities. These relations could be central to capital's self-reproduction, and yet it is also possible for them to be oriented to structures that do not contribute to such reproduction. History 2s are thus not pasts separate from capital; they inhere in capital and yet interrupt and punctuate the run of capital's own logic" (Chakrabarty 2000: 64).

Chakrabarty powerfully connects the universalising tendencies of capital's History 1 with the universal categories and themes of "post-Enlightenment rationalism or humanism" that capital "brings into every history" in the circulation that is its "life process" and faces varyingly different elements as antecedents to itself (70). History 1 continuously confronts particular History 2s whose operations are different from its own universal categories.

The difficulty that Chakrabarty works through is the debt of any *critical* history to this history through the universal (European) categories, that is, their entanglement with History 1:

> "Marx's immanent critique of capital was enabled precisely by the universal characteristics he read into the category 'capital' itself. Without that reading, there can only be particular critiques of capital. But a particular critique cannot by definition be a critique of 'capital,' for such a critique could not take 'capital' as its object. Grasping the category 'capital' entails grasping its universal constitution" (Chakrabarty 2000: 70).

Capital *as* capital, then, is part and parcel of the European universals that must be thought with as much as against, *in translation*. This means that recognising capital (as a process, a concept) is already indebted to the history of European modernity – and vice versa – but also that the 'universal' categories of interpretation indebted to this history

must be acknowledged. They "come packaged as though they have transcended the particular histories in which they were born. But being pieces of prose and language, they carry intimations of histories of belonging, which are not everybody's history" (Chakrabarty 2002: 865).

Chakrabarty goes on to distinguish between two forms of translation that correspond to Histories 1 and 2. The interplay between universal categories and particular differences warrants a continuous process of translation. As opposed to 'transition', translation underlines a process that works "in both ways", making "possible the emergence of the universal language of the social sciences" (71). Translation in the key of History 1 "involves the play of three terms, the third term expressing the measure of equivalence that makes generalized exchange possible" (71). The third term referred to here is Marx's 'abstract labour' as a commodity form. This model of translation Chakrabarty (2012: 54) elsewhere calls "sociological", in which a term such as 'capital' or 'labour' "assimilates or sublates all other vernacular terms that may be used in different societies to designate it into itself". In this model, "a third and higher category […] mediates and subsumes other words both similar to and different from itself, thereby rendering all differences neutral".

This sociological model of translation through a third, abstract term is contrasted with the second mode of translation, which is akin to barter rather than to general equivalence. This is how particular realities meet universal categories:

> "In the same way that, as in barter, one article is exchanged for another without the exchange being routed or measured by a third and higher category ('money,' for instance) and with some equivalence between the objects posited, a new and old concept could also swap places through a direct interaction between them, thanks to their linguistic properties – their alliterative, associational, or analogical values – without the intervention of any third, generalizing and supervening terms" (Chakrabarty 2012: 54).

If Chakrabarty's account of 'barter translation' sounds simple, this is because it *is* simple, decidedly and explicitly so. The simplicity is of the order of a 'particular', local and direct exchange of words or alliterations, devoid of complicated third terms, and it is contrasted with the 'universal' characters of European modernity and its sociological translation:

> "The translations here are based on very local, particular, one-for-one exchanges, guided in part, no doubt […] by the poetic requirements of alliterations, meter, rhetorical conventions, and so on. There are surely rules in these exchanges, but the point is that even if I cannot decipher them all – and even if they are not all decipherable, that is to say, even if the processes of translation contain a degree of opacity – it can be safely asserted that these rules cannot and would not claim to have the 'universal' character of the rules that sustain conversations between social scientists working on disparate sites of the world" (Chakrabarty 2000: 85).

What happens here is that Chakrabarty raises 'social scientists' (like himself) into a group whose 'deciphering' and 'conversations' set the metrics and give authority to demands for the 'universal'. The universal, again, is a product of sociological, or capital's, translation. Note Chakrabarty's assertion of "a degree of opacity", and the fact nevertheless that it can be "safely asserted" that no claims are made for the universal character

of these rules. In the face of an opacity of processes of translation, where does this 'safety' come from? What enables one to turn away from this doubt, so instantly, and into the safety of an easy differentiation between universals and particulars, universal equivalents and direct barter? Perhaps it is the homely self-evidence of 'barter', which seems to unite all the well-worn values of 'locality': alliteration and rhetoric, or phonic as opposed to textual resemblance; face-to-face encounters (curiously populated by individualised encounters between 'ones', 'subjects' perhaps); and particularity that sits in places. With these values associated with 'particulars', it should come as no surprise that they indeed make no claims to universality – at least not claims caught by the eyes of "social scientists working on disparate sites of the world".

All of Chakrabarty's argument here revolves around the concept pair of 'universals' and 'particulars'. Thus, when he analyses his own knowledge as being complicit with capitalist modernity, I think the troubling character of this insight is dismissed too quickly. Perhaps returning to Marx helps: both Histories 1 and 2, as Chakrabarty tells them and as Marx describes them, are histories whereby capital meets its others *as* its antecedents. Here is Marx again, describing capital's encounters with its others, in what Chakrabarty calls History 2:

> "It encounters these older forms in the epoch of its formation and development. It encounters them as *antecedents* [*Voraussetzungen*], but not as antecedents established by itself, not as forms of its own life-process. In the same way as it originally finds the commodity already in existence, but not as its own product, and likewise finds money circulation, but not as an element of its own reproduction" (Marx 1989: 464).

The difference that Chakrabarty underlines between his two Histories is between what belongs to the life process of capital and what does not. Yet we should not be blindly trustful of this separation, as again, *both* are capital's histories, its perspectives, its 'encounters' – in this case making their way through Chakrabarty's argument.[73] History 2, from the perspective of capital, is a history of the not-yet, against which it can posit

73 Much depends of course on the status of these 'encounters' in Marx's phrasing. Is it a manner of pre-existing economic forms, on a linear timeline independent of capital(ism), within which the latter then emerges to have these 'encounters'? Or are these 'encounters' about meetings where the 'antecedency' or the 'not-yet' character of some forms is established as an *effect* of their encounter with capital? The first would be an account of transition, the second of translation. I think the latter interpretation testifies to the importance of the turn from transition to translation in Chakrabarty's account, as it also underlines the easiness of reading such translations as transactions between pre-existing (spatial-temporal) elements – as if translations were secondary, derivative to 'epochs'. Were we to take this translation seriously as a performative force, I think we would need to think spaces-times as the effect of the encounters-translations described here. Marx's (1968: 460, 482) term for 'antecedent' is *Voraussetzung*, meaning (also) a 'requirement', 'prerequisite', 'precondition', 'premise', 'presupposition'). Marx is clear that these forms are not prerequisites established by capital itself, but instead something other "to its own life-process". This is what allows us to distinguish between Histories 1 and 2. Then again, if Chakrabarty *also* teaches us that there can be no critical concept of capital without adopting a certain provincial European universalism from and with it, then why should we trust Marx's distinction between what belongs to capital's life-process and what does not? What makes us think his, or Chakrabarty's, two histories designate an interplay of (universal) capital and its (particular) others as if looked from the outside, as if untainted by the enabling and restricting transmogrifications that may deserve to be called capitalocentric? As if potentially disastrous translational protocols were not *already implicated*, as a prerequisite to the distinction between capital and its others. We encounter here one corner in Marx's work that exemplifies the need to read him (in all available languages) not only as the grandfather of the emancipatory and critical potential of identifying capitalocentrism, but as an arch-capitalocentric himself.

itself as *telos* and a universal.[74] But again, History 2 is not a temporality independent of capital(ism) but something the latter *encounters* as its antecedent, as "not yet" (65) capitalist, as Chakrabarty has it.

When Chakrabarty says that History 2 "as a category [is] charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalizing thrust of History 1" (66), we should read this 'interrupting' in the way that a particular poses an interruption to a framework convinced of its own universality – as a minor glitch, perhaps, or as an antecedent, a not-yet.75[75] Then, in discussing History 1 and 2 and their respective modes of translation – the one with universalising claims and third terms, and the other barter-like, particular and local – Chakrabarty is not describing capital(ism) and its outside as if *from without* (any more than Marx is). If it is undoubtedly true, then, that "History 2 allows us to make room, in Marx's own analytic of capital, for the politics of human belonging and diversity" (67), with its crucial benefits, we should also remember that we are nevertheless on the inside of capital's perception, as it were – not necessarily its 'life process', but with the objects/times *it* encounters as a subject of history. Everything written about History 2, including its mode of barter translation, the particularities encountered, should thus be read as a description of capital(ism)'s perspective. And thus, the complicities with capital(ism) that Chakrabarty brilliantly emphasises through the indebtedness of his own thought should be read in his – or is it capital's? – encounters with particularity, and his – or is it capital's? – rush for sociological third terms *and* for homely, barter-like and simplistic particulars.

None of this is to dismiss Chakrabarty's important contributions. He provides an honest, well-situated and self-critical perspective that seeks to take seriously its own indebtedness to capital's histories. For understanding capitalocentrism as a combination of material and intellectual history, his contribution offers remarkable resources (which are far from exhausted here). I do not think we should dismiss this accomplishment and the challenges it poses by simply rushing to yet another History, this time one outside or indifferent to capital's two Histories. A History of more-than-capitalist economies written *on their own terms*, that is. It is precisely in Chakrabarty's identification of capital(ism) historicising itself through his accounts that we find a crucial commitment to analysing complicity, or transfiguration. This problem should not simply be dismissed by rushing to solve it through writing 'other' histories – for how do we recognise a history without capital's categories, as if from the outside of capitalocentrism? Instead, staying within the intimacy to capital(ism) that Chakrabarty describes through his 'own' historical consciousness, I want to leave a cleft of study between the capitalocentric implications of this insight and any apparent solution in other histories.[76]

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74 I am drawing here on Tero Toivanen's (2018: 81–82) helpful discussion of Chakrabarty.

75 As my term 'glitch' implies here, we could draw a connection between Chakrabarty's History 1 and History 2 and Lezra's translatability and untranslatability-which-is-One.

76 My suspicion here, of course, is for methodological reasons, so as to keep on reading for capitalocentric trouble. This does not mean such other histories could not or should not be done, far from it. If we loosen Chakrabarty's exigency to think through a binary of (capitalist, modern) universalism and (non-capitalist, non-modern) particularity binary, and perhaps especially the Oneness of the former category, all kinds of necessary, *relatively* non-capitalocentric histories can be written. And they have been and are being written. Staying within the discipline of history, I think Sho Konishi's (2013) *Anarchist modernity* offers a magnificent example of how and why to study histories of other universalisms and translations. With his commitment to and uncovering of an anarchist Japanese-Russian conception of progress and the complex translational economies involved in creating a vision of cooperatist anarchism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Konishi's book provides crucial methodological insights and challenges. It also provides a wide array of reasons why such histories

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A short recap before moving on. What Tsing, Lezra and Chakrabarty allow us think with are three crucial interventions within their respective fields (anthropology, comparative literature and translation studies, and history) and specific problematics that tackle the question of translation and economies. Each of the three assigns a different but accentuated place to translation as a trope, a practice, a site and a process to help to think wider, acutely pressing problematics: global supply chains of salvage accumulation and livelihoods springing from their ruinous imprints (Tsing); the work of the humanities and translational value in the context of financialised neoliberal capitalism (Lezra); the interplay of universals and particulars as a postcolonial problematic and the need to provincialise European modernity-capitalism (Chakrabarty). If I have picked these three thinkers for critical examination, it is above all because of the singularity and originality of their respective contributions. Here my attention has centred on how they help us explore translation as value production through negotiation across sites of difference (Tsing), as driven by continuous negotiation of translatabilities and untranslatabilities (Lezra), and as a promising a two-way alternative to 'transition' narratives concerning capital(ism) and its 'antecedent' others (Chakrabarty). These three thinkers of translation have many dissimilarities, but one of the things they share is a commitment to a critique of translation as it operates in and for capital(ism). If there is to be any sense to anti-capitalocentric criticism, then, it must operate with an attentiveness to and close involvement with such critical thought. This is not only because these accounts give us the chance to identify and name capitalocentric tendencies in different contexts – that is the easy part – but because thinking with these sites and practices of critique helps us to understand *determinate* workings (closures *and* openings) of capitalocentrism, following the meandering of a critical practice or theory as closely as possible. Again, we should not posit overly simple outsides or solutions to these problematics, if we want to stay with the task of postcapitalist studies.

Nevertheless, to pick these critical openings as our problem space here is to try to read for how their respective openings for thinking translation critically, and with one eye to emancipatory transformations, are (also) foreclosed by capitalocentric dynamics. On a general level, it is easy – but nonetheless important – to pinpoint how specific kinds of capitalocentric frames and contextualisations restrict these openings by inscribing them into overarching and singular capitalist objects that cannot be overcome: global capitalism (Tsing), neoliberal credit-debt capitalism (Lezra), capitalist modernity (Chakrabarty). But the critical openings are not *reducible* to these frames. This is because each of the three practices is heterogeneous in itself, consisting *also* of negotiations with capitalocentrism (*avant la lettre*) as well as capitalocentric tendencies that also produce other-than-capitalocentric effects. After all, what are 'latent commons', 'untranslatability-which-is-not-one' and 'History 2' other than determinate ways of negotiating this collective, endlessly differentiated heritage that keeps us tied to (and through) capitalocentric sensoria? If the study of capitalocentrism is to be something other than a continuous reconfirmation of objects we already knew, it must attend to and move with these specific *responses* to a legacy that has *already* been affirmed: "Deconstruction simply enacts the most vigilant response that is possible to the demand, whether ethical,

and their translations have been erased from much of history writing, thus producing the givenness of universal-particular binaries as reiterations of 'the West' (universal) and its (particular) others.

political or critical, that already *has* been or *is* being affirmed" (Gaon 2019: 247). But let us now turn the tables, and the strategy, to examine such responses in translation practices I have claimed as my own.

5.5 Returns: Taking Back Translational Economies

Once, when a Finnish friend read my text written in English using the trope 'take back the economy' (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013), his response was: "'take back'… *where*?" By missing the phrasal verb meaning of 'taking back' as 'reclaiming' – in my mind alluding to the feminist 'take back the night' rallies referenced in Gibson-Graham (2006b: 80–81; see also Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2000: 17) – he instead read in it a reference to a literal spatial-temporal movement of 'returning' something to somewhere. Understood in this sense, the trope is rid of much of its emancipatory force, but it gains something else by raising questions about the spatiality and temporality of what it means to 'take back the economy'. A certain uncomfortable attention to locational specificity is caused by the insistent question "where?" – uncomfortable insofar as it makes a glitch in the seemingly free circulation of the trope. We are asked to *position* our 'taking back', and to make clear its directionality and the destination to which we seek to return 'the economy'. But why would we care for such 'failures' in translation? And what is this backwarding movement in the first place: why would we want to *return* the economy anywhere? Are these questions not turning the meaning of this postcapitalist trope on its head, leading us to inevitable discussions about which *pre*capitalist state of economy we seek to return to ("so would you prefer feudalism, child labour or state-capitalist 'Communism' instead?")?

This translation glitch is of course just a small example of how "the performative always opens the question and risk of authority" (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 249). In interlinguistic translation, such questions and risks are to the fore, although they are surely not absent from other registers of translation (e.g. from Jakobson's 'intralingual' and 'intersemiotic' translations). Referential crises are always hovering close to – if not constitutive of – the possibility of translating from one language to another, or from one linguistic register to another. In this section, I would like to archive some problematics I have recently encountered in the crisis (of untranslatability) that risks translations. At the same time, I will attempt to ask with Antti Salminen (2015) what it would mean to understand the crisis *in* theory and not (only) the theory in crisis: "For in order for a theory to serve in a crisis it must first itself be driven into crisis, become part of the crisis, while not submitting to the terms of the crisis but openly facing them and evaluating them" (11; translation by Eeva Talvikallio). Only through the passage of *krisis*, in the space opening between old conventions and the formation of new ones, can a theory arrive that helps to confront the crisis.[77] What happens to theory in the referential crisis of translation?

77 Derrida (2002a: 69–73) highlights how deeply 'crisis'– starting from the word itself – is of European heritage. He alerts us to consider how what appears as crisis (*krisis*) is already implicated in a critical calculation (*krinein*): "[t]he 'representation' of crisis and the rhetoric it organizes always have at least this purpose: to determine, so as to limit it, a more serious and more formless threat, one which is, in fact, faceless and normless. A monstrous threat but one that holds some desire in suspense: a threat to desire. By determining it as crisis, one tames it, domesticates it, neutralizes it – in short, one *economizes* it. One appropriates the Thing, the unthinkable becomes the unknown to be known, one begins to give it form, one begins to inform, master, calculate, program. One cancels out a future." (71). Perhaps, perhaps. But then again, this interpretation seems contingent on the fact that in saying 'crisis' and 'theory' we speak the same language of philosophy, of European heritage. Is this my language, my problem?

Whereas 'translation' in English usually concerns carrying or bringing over, across and beyond, thus retaining the Latin sense of *translatio* (see Tymoczko 2010) – as we saw towards the beginning of this chapter – the connotations of the Finnish notions *kääntää* (to translate) and *kääntäminen* (translation, translating) do not carry around such (trans)missionary motives (from place to place, across contexts). Instead, in addition to linguistic translation, *kääntää* means to 'turn', 'turn over', 'turn away' or 'turn around'; to 'convert', 'divert' or 'deflect'; to 'upend'; 'flip', 'bend', 'twist' or 'rotate'. Not only do we have here a metaphor for translation archived in the concept itself, but in a sense *kääntää* provides us with the very figure of a trope (meaning 'to turn'). In urban slang, *kääntää* can also mean, quite appropriately, 'to steal' something.

With these flips in mind, I want to turn to three determinate instances of interlinguistic translation as I have encountered and practised them during the gestation of this research project. They are all preoccupied with linguistic encounters of English and Finnish, especially in the context of the Anglocene. These correspond roughly to the themes discussed in relation to the three critical theorists above, namely translation and supply chains (Tsing), (un)translatabilities (Lezra) and spatial-temporal transition/translation (Chakrabarty). Firstly, I introduce the translation project of *Take back the economy* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2013) into *Elävä talous* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2019), a multiyear process in which I had the chance to be involved. This part describes our working group's ethical negotiations in and necessary complications of the process of the book's translation, thus also discussing various issues pertaining to the conceptualisation and reclaiming of translational economies. Secondly, I discuss (un)translatabilities in the context of both Anglo-Eurocentrism and capitalocentrism. The specific case is my translation of *ongelma* or 'problem' and the stakes that different translation strategies can help us consider. Here I end up discussing Glissant's notion of *opacité* in the context of the problematic (*ongelmainen*) terrain of (anti-)capitalocentric and interlinguistic translation. Thirdly, we shall make one more return (*käännös*) to postcapitalism, but this time as *jälkikapitalismi*. This Finnish notion, in addition to being a relatively straightforward translation of 'postcapitalism', introduces us to a strange translational topos characterised by backwardness, ambiguity, vestiges, traces, and a plurality of problematic tracks to think with/in. By asking what it means to think postcapitalism as *jälkikapitalismi*, I discuss the singularity of languages and words, as well as the topological twists haunting postcapitalist studies. Rather than perfected works of final argument, the following three sections read as openings towards thinking capitalocentrism and its others in the process of translation. Their form is explicitly oriented towards questioning, written in the form of a personal, situated reflection, and they treat translation as a site for such openings towards negotiations to come.

5.5.1 Elävä Talous*: Translating* Take Back the Economy

At the end of May 2015, translator Eeva Talvikallio sent out an excited email to a small group of Finland-based diverse economy enthusiasts, proposing a translation project to create a Finnish-language version of *Take back the economy* by Gibson-Graham *et al.* (2013). Our mutual friend Pieta Hyvärinen and I met the idea with the most excitement and possibilities for cooperation, and together with Eeva we soon formed a three-person working group to produce a translation of the book. With Eeva acting as the translator, Pieta and I formed her support group. We met face to face in July 2015 in Tampere to discuss the process, and soon Eeva sent an email to the authors of the original book, asking if they would be interested in supporting an "ambitious

pedagogical project", which we were planning to set up in Finland as a succession to the translation (Talvikallio, 20 July 2015, personal communication). Our plan at the time was not only to translate the book, but also to modify and contextualise it by adding real-life examples of Finnish organisations and other actors practising community economy, to have this Finnish adaptation published by summer 2016, and to then set off on a nationwide tour of workshops where the Finnish book would be used. How unaware we were of how exceedingly ambitious our plan would turn out to be! With numerous rounds of writing and sending funding applications (most of which proved unsuccessful), hours and hours of negotiations with the Finnish publisher, the original book's authors and plenty of other actors, and repeated sessions of painstaking analysis, debate and discussion within the working group (not to mention the uncountable hours of only partly funded translation work performed by Eeva), it proved to be quite an ordeal to merely produce the Finnish book. In June 2019, however, after some four years of partially funded part-time work, *Elävä talous: Yhteisen tulevaisuuden toimintaopas* (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2019) was finally published.

What was clear from the start was that translating *Take back the economy* into Finnish could not be done in a 'straightforward' fashion, namely as a practice of 'transferring meanings from one language to another'. The task we gave ourselves was to actually *rewrite* the book, by recontextualising its examples and modifying its style and expression so that it would speak more clearly to the Finnish-speaking audience and better serve its purpose of enabling action in the Finnish context. This aim of ours was motivated by our understanding that describing examples of community economy practices that have taken place in geographically, culturally and temporally distant contexts, no matter how interesting and inspiring they may otherwise be, might not be the most efficient way to contribute to action in the context of today's Finland, which has its own specificities. Indeed, our fear was that such examples might at worst lead to *dis*couragement, as readers might compare all the inspiring things happening elsewhere with the seemingly deafening lack of comparable Finnish movements and organisations. Laying out such a saddening political canvas was out of the question. This meant that a sort of exercise of reading for difference needed to be practised by our working group, alongside the translation. With a little help from Pieta and me, Eeva went on to map and interview a number of organisations and individuals that could be included in the book as new, local examples. What followed was a process of lengthy deliberations between Eeva and approximately 30 'consultants' – including people engaged in community economy practices in Finland, as well as other individuals that specialised in one way or another in the themes treated in the book – about which examples should be included and how they should be written about. As Eeva describes it in the preface to the Finnish edition:

> "[A]ll the facts concerning the real-life examples preserved from the original book have been checked and, as far as possible, updated; fictive examples have been domesticated where applicable; and the style and expression of the original work have been made more outspoken. The tones in sections dealing with climate change have been steepened and gender presumptions dispelled in ways that correspond to our working group's understanding of what can be considered merely appropriate in today's Finland" (Talvikallio 2019: 14; my translation).

While this might still sound a relatively straightforward process, opening up the details may clarify the type of process at stake. For example, when Eeva writes of checking and updating the examples, this meant examining every single one of the dozens of case

stories included in *Take back the economy*, as well as their adjoining 173 endnotes (spanning 15 pages); opening each hyperlink, and tracking down each quotation; seeking and studying old and new sources of information on all the examples, and comparing their accounts with the original book's greatly abbreviated and simplified stories; writing in the updated information, when this was possible, while at the same time striving to keep all modifications to the original book's stories and messages to a minimum; complementing the modifications with translator's notes, where need be; *and* making sure to have not only Pieta's and my but also the original authors' approval for every single one of the changes made. The writing in of the new Finnish examples was no less of an endeavour, to which Eeva devoted herself with at least as much meticulousness. While *Take back the economy* has 264 pages, *Elävä talous* ended up with an impressive 451, with altogether 359 endnotes running over 46 pages (the more than 30-page index that Eeva also compiled had to be left out, at the publisher's request). The level of Eeva's detailed attention confirms Derrida's (1985: 184) point: "[n]othing is more serious than a translation".[78]

Here I would like to consider some of the ways in which our translation project is mapped vis-à-vis questions of linguistic differences and capitalocentrism, continuing an effort to analyse and amplify some of the strategies of translation thus practised (see also Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen 2020). One interesting topos opens from the Finnish book's title, *Elävä talous*, which translates roughly as 'a living/lively economy' or 'an economy that is alive'. This title was originally Pieta's suggestion as a solution to the twin problematic of firstly, the lack of idiomatic Finnish phrases to translate 'taking back' something, and secondly, our need to find a suitable translation for 'community economy'. How to translate 'community economy' into Finnish? The straightforward option would be *yhteisötalous*, literally 'community economy'. But both *yhteisö* and *talous* already carry their specific loads of linguistic problematics. As Gibson-Graham (2006a: 86) recount, 'community' (in English) is fraught with dangers, often associated with "normative ideals of the community as a fullness and a positivity". Rather than proposing a calculable and knowable 'community', the task is to attend to processes of "economic *being-in-common*", consisting of a process of "negotiating and exploring interdependence, rather than attempting to realize an ideal" (86). But it is debatable to what extent the 'community' in 'community economy' enables – and *is read as* – such a resignification, from clearly demarcated organisations and collectives to a process. Our choice of *elävä* was a way to negotiate this burden.

But *talous* and its variously prefixed forms are no less problematic. In recent years, Finnish economic debates have seen the importation of, for example, *jakamistalous* (sharing economy), *vertaistalous* (peer-to-peer economy), *solidaarisuustalous* (solidarity economy), *alustatalous* (platform economy) and *kiertotalous* (circular economy). In each case, the translation of an English term is quite literal and straightforward, making it easy to imagine economies in Finnish to be translatable to and from English without residue. More importantly perhaps, each of these direct translations also marks the importation of an already existing, mostly anglophone debate into the Finnish language. To translate 'community economy' as *yhteisötalous* would have made us participate in this economy of thought with no hint of a glitch. *Elävä talous* differs from such a strategy,

78 I asked Eeva for an estimate of her total working hours spent on this process. She declined to give any precise figures, saying that for this project she had not kept records, although usually her bookkeeping is quite pedantic. Instead, she offered me a statement to use: "Estimate of Eeva's total working hours: an utterly brainless load that I do not wish to specify further" (Talvikallio 2020, personal communication). The 'brainlessness' might be a relative question, but it does highlight the exigency and the toll of the process.

not only because *elävä* is not a noun but an adjective, thereby implying that the economy at stake is 'alive', in the process of its remaking, but also because not choosing the most straightforward translation strategy means that the strategy therefore warrants explanation, recorded in this case in Eeva's preface (Talvikallio 2019: 15–18). The reader is therefore invited, however minimally, to consider the political geography of knowledge production at stake in the translation a book. A task opens to read all-too-easily translatable concepts as translation problems, if not untranslatables.

Our negotiation with this conceptual issue is tied together with questions concerning the political-economic geographies of knowledge production. Another such issue concerns the authorship of the translated text and the relationship between *the* original text and *its* translation. Derrida (1985: 184) writes that "the structure of the original is marked by the requirement to be translated", thus "indebting itself *as well* with regard to the translator" (not only vice versa). The 'requirement' of an oeuvre to be translated means its necessity to be negotiated within a double logic of fidelity and infidelity, as an iterable and translatable work (read and translated in(to) a context that is always already inevitably different) that nonetheless has a singular, untranslatable characteristic to it. As *Limited inc* (Derrida 1988) demonstrates with the greatest efficacity, such a problematic unleashed by iterability is impartibly bound to questions concerning the economies and institutions of textual production. One central coordinate in debating translational economies is the question of copyright and intellectual property more generally, questions deeply rooted in liberal (Lockean) conceptions of property, in romantic understandings of originally and individually creative authorship, and in investment strategies of mediating capital (see Aoki 1996). As Mark Rose argues,

> "No institutional embodiment of the author-work relation […] is more fundamental than copyright, which not only makes possible the profitable manufacture and distribution of books, films, and other commodities but also, by endowing it with legal reality, helps to produce and affirm the very identity of the author as author" (Rose 1993: 1–2).

In such a process, the 'identity of the author as author' is produced as a "gravitational centre of meaning making" (Gibson-Graham *et al.* 2016: 194) which anchors the publishing and translational economy, producing a territory of property. As Jessica Litman (1990: 1007) puts it, "the concept of originality must have enough symbolic power to subdue its vaporous reality". This symbolic power is of course backed by the very real and very material infrastructures of the law.

What is the role of the translator in all of this? As Lawrence Venuti (1995) describes it, the translation is in a contradictory position as both derivative *and* originary:

> "On the one hand, the author is distinguished from, and privileged over, the translator. Copyright is reserved for the author, the producer who originates the form of the underlying work, and it covers only that form, the medium of expression as opposed to the idea or information expressed" (4).

In this legal practice, the author's copyright encompasses translations and other derivative works, as well as reproductions and printed copies of the work. "On the other hand, however, copyright in a derivative work can be reserved for its producer, although without excluding the right of the author who produced the underlying work" (4). In this case, the translator's authorship is recognised: "[A] translator can be said to author

a translation because translating originates a new medium of expression, a form for the foreign text in a different language and literature" (4). This authorship, however, is not considered original enough to threaten the original author's copyright. As a derivative *and* original work, the translation's copyright is usually with the translator, while the copyright on the original remains with the original authors. According to Venuti, this arrangement serves "an individualistic concept of ownership" instead of protecting derivative works such as translations. This creates an unfavourable economic situation, meaning a lesser incentive for translators to be able to invest their time and energy in the work of translation.

An alternative conception, according to Venuti, would be collective authorship, meaning the inclusion of the translator(s) as co-authors of the translated work. Interestingly, this is what happened with *Elävä talous*. Due to Eeva's commitment to rewriting and recontextualising the book and her capacities for negotiation with the original authors, her contribution was recognised in a formal way through and as collective authorship. Her name now appears alongside the authors of the original on the cover of the book, while the title page specifies her role to consist of translation and of the research, rewriting and editing conducted for the Finnish edition. While this undoubtedly does not remunerate Eeva's largely unpaid work on the translation – as mentioned earlier, the funding we received remained rather meagre, to say the least, and I understand that there are few royalties from the book's modest sales either – it proposes an interesting ethical negotiation to consider. Eeva's inclusion as a co-author took account of the vast amount of work she invested in rerooting the text, grafting it anew in the context of the Finnish language and readership. Many of the book's examples were rewritten with a seriousness and commitment not usually expected from translators or translated works. How is such seriousness negotiated? How is it decided what counts as a more-than-typical amount of 'original contribution' on the part of the translator? And perhaps more importantly for a translator's economy, what kind of economies of recognition and compensation would need to be in place for such questions to matter enough to sustain a livelihood?

Perhaps what this translation project teaches us is not how to translate a book into Finnish – I, for one, still have no idea about that – but how to translate in the face of it, *devant* its heritage. To translate *Take back the economy* without taking back its economy would not do. But again, what is to 'take back'? If it is simply to *return* towards the original in as amenable a manner as possible, and if this fidelity does not include infidelity in the sense of reciprocal affliction and the original's *reclaiming*, then not much will have happened. What Gibson-Graham teach us (as Derrida also does) is that the economy of a book is not insulated within its covers or by the usual 'circulation' of a translational economy that guarantees the import-export model of translation, the copyright on originals, and the derivativeness of translated works. All of this needs to be rethought, translated in the sense of returning as much as stealing (*kääntää*). I would propose that we have *barely begun* to translate *Take back the economy*. *Elävä talous* is a good report on work in process.

As Tsing (2005) puts it in *Friction* – a book with a much more expansive sense and use of 'translation' than *The mushroom* – regarding the task of translation: "To show contingencies, gaps, and slippages interrupts claims of the easy unity of the market as it also illustrates the creative possibilities of social mobilization" (211). We might think of the project around *Elävä talous* as a different geometry that opens from translation. Not so much as a two-way negotiation (authors to translator; original to translation; English to Finnish), but as the making and negotiation of linguistic-material differences that do not sit in patches but reach out and connect in various, unthought directions.

This might give us a chance to think of translation as a site to work with towards collaborations, negotiations and more-than-capitalist supply chains of thought and practice. Simultaneously, amidst these openings lies the possibility to negotiate how capital(ism) translates, often through us, and how diverse-economic rethinking might loosen the seeming necessities of its requirements. As much as translation is an opening, it is also an encounter with the material substrate, the matrix, that we inherit, and the troubles that come with it: language.

What remains to be worked with, with or without these two books involved in our translation project, is the textual materiality we so carelessly gather under the name of 'economy', 'space' or 'language'. If translation is in a sense a crisis of the original (as much as it is its condition of possibility), it might very well be treated as a site and task for rewriting against the intuitive givenness of the physical object – the book – and the (capitalocentric) value systems its taken-for-grantedness is already inscribed in and read from within. It is perhaps in this sense that the "taskography" (Apter 2007) that concerns openings in and around the concrete labour of translating demands and effectuates "the destruction of the book, […] denud[ing] the surface of the text" (Derrida 1997a: 18).[79] As Colebrook (2011: 18) explains: "[W]e are compelled – from the traces that remain, from the radical separation of the text as material object [e.g. the diacritics in a book] – to posit complex webs of prior processes *after the event*". One name for such a process is translation. The capitalocentrism of textual materiality requires work.

5.5.2 Ongelma*:The Problem of Opacity*

As we saw with Jacques Lezra's work above, the topos of untranslatability has recently taken centre stage in critical theorists' conceptual repertory. Lezra's crucial contribution is firstly to distinguish a mode of untranslatability (which is one) that offers only necessary, temporary and calculable impediments to global translatability as its "determinate negation" (Lezra 2017: 15), operating simultaneously with translatability to produce (capitalist value). This is contrasted with another untranslatability (which is not one) that also emerges in translation, through defects in translation that produce glitches

> "where the general principles of analogy, equivalence, exchange and abstraction […] become the *work of thought* inasmuch as those general principles fail to form a coherent system that could, in principle, become the conceptual principle grounding a market of markets in global capitalism" (22).

In his detailed examples and discussions of specific translation problematics, Lezra perfectly demonstrates the patience of the work he has in mind and the non-capitalist (or not-so-easily-capitalisable and rarely capitalised) investments it requires and produces. Yet by situating his whole problematic within 'global capitalism', thus taking

79 Of course, Derrida locates one central logocentric problem in the 'idea of the book' as it guarantees the proximity of just the kind of values we have engaged with here: originality, authorship, homogeneity, authority etc. 'Writing' (in his sense) is what breaks through 'the book', or perhaps makes it lose the very solidity it never had in the first place: "[t]he idea of the book, which always refers to a natural totality, is profoundly alien to the sense of writing. It is the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentrism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy, and […] against difference in general. If I distinguish the text from the book, I shall say that the destruction of the book, as it is now under way in all domains, denudes the surface of the text. That necessary violence responds to a violence that was no less necessary" (Derrida 1997a: 18).

a specific Marxist totalised spatiality at its word, he cannot but position his alternatives as a reactive *Gegengift*. This gift against gift, or poison against poison, works to counter

> "the poison of global alienation: the genealogy of its general crisis; the defective critique of the logic of its thought; the ephemeral, democratic alternatives to its institutions; a drama of partial personifications against the tragedy of the late human animal" (159).

Lezra's work can be read as one among many efforts to take untranslatability seriously and think through its potentials for what Apter (2019: 195–196) calls "an effort to devise comparative pedagogies that highlighted areas of linguistic difficulty, translation failure, and forms of nonnegotiable singularity that are negotiated nonetheless". Wanting to contribute to such a project of "thinking language opacity as philosophically, spatially, and temporally everywhere" (196), I will raise questions from the (un)translation zone most pertinent to my project, namely that between English and Finnish. To do so, I take the example of *ongelma* and/or 'problem', a small word, easily translated and rarely treated as untranslatable, but whose 'reproblematisation' might offer unexpected opportunities. With this detailed case, a minor issue, I wish to draw an affinity with what Apter (2018) calls 'unexceptional politics'. Simple words (may) matter, she argues:

> "Rather than the assumption of a predetermination of what does or does not count as a political concept, there is in such lexical experiments an effort to expand the scope of what demands political accounting or is considered politically significant" (11).

Let us start again with the problem. What *is* the problem? Derrida emphasises the Greek etymology of 'problem' as a protective shield, in order to highlight its precalculated nature (as a protection from the elements of the incalculable):

> "Problematization itself is careful to disavow and thus to conjure away (we repeat, *problema* is a shield, an armor, a rampart as much as it is a task for the inquiry to come). Critical problematization continues to do battle against ghosts. It fears them as it does itself" (Derrida 2006: 207).

He juxtaposes this 'problem' with 'aporia' as an experience of the impossible, a negotiation between non-negotiables, a decision between equally demanding undecidables. What interests me here is Derrida's concern to position himself within a *determinate* textual and political site, and as an inheritor of a *specific* (albeit always heterogeneous) intellectual legacy. For example, his self-positioning as an "old European" (1992c: 69) and an inheritor of "another Europe but with the same memory" (2007: 34), which includes the Enlightenment but also the various catastrophes of the 20th century, is clear. His is an 'old European's' effort to radicalise-cum-self-critique the legacy that unites Indo-European languages and stays together, and remains 'philosophical', through recurring references to its Greek origins and etymology. For him, a problem is a restricted calculative economy – to be opposed to an incalculable, and in this sense general-economic, aporia – or a *problema* (Greek), *problemata* (Latin, Latvian), *problème* (French), *Problem* (German), *problem* (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish), *problema* (Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan), *проблема* (Russian) and so on.

My simple question would be: is this *my* problem? It depends on the language of the ask. The most common Finnish word for problem is *ongelma*. While falling outside

the family resemblance of European 'problems', *ongelma* is nonetheless mostly used in a way that captures the English (and Indo-European) notion's negativity, solution-orientedness and object-likeness. Its shield-like qualities, already committed to making it into a temporary exception and a memory of the solved. When we thus say that something is 'problematic' or *ongelmallinen*, an unsurprising problematic as a surpassable, solvable and moralisable situation is named. In Alhojärvi (2017), however, I sought to reclaim the notion for another use, less oriented towards solutions and more invested in *ongelma*'s Finnish etymology referring to a cavity (*onkalo*), branched trees and other cranked shapes, as well as to the old dialectal verb *ongitella*, meaning 'snooping' and 'finding out' (see Häkkinen 2016: 828–829). Doing so, shifting from problem towards *ongelma*, I drew an affinity with Haraway's (2016) 'trouble' (which is to be stayed with, rather than solved and overcome) and sought to provide a vocabulary for treating knowledge – and what I termed 'epistemic burdens' – about 'the Anthropocene' as an *ongelmainen* ('problemic', as distinguished from *ongelmallinen* or 'problematic') inheritance worthy of negotiation and opening its own grounds for questioning. I therefore contrasted or retranslated one *ongelma* against another, positing a Finnish problem against an Indo-European one, turning around the conventional sense of an ownable and protective *problema*.

Now, we may legitimately ask, why this self-indulgence – and who cares? 'No one' is one equally legitimate answer. A small conceptual strategy made in a Finnish-language essay currently cited exactly four times (according to Google Scholar) is hardly a tremendous achievement or worthy of grandiose claims. As a minor thing even compared with the main arguments of my modest essay, the translation strategy around *ongelma* provides no complex case for untranslatability, any more than it produces capitalist value. It is, quite simply, indifferent and unexceptional. Yet I cannot help but indulge myself in treating this problem once more, since it may provide us with some interesting opportunities to discuss the translation zone of English–Finnish, and through it, a specific *Gegengift*. Consider what Nicholas Royle writes about deconstruction at the Finnish–English borderline and the potentials of deconstructive questions and strategies in Finnish:

> "What is deconstruction? Mitä on dekonstruktio? No longer figuring the self-identity of a national language, 'Finnish' would be the opening onto the other, the 'mitä' of what is unspeakable, untranslatable, unpresentable within a work of deconstruction that would divide, overrun, contaminate and transform not only Finnish but also those Indo-European languages which supposedly constitute its linguistic other" (Royle 1992: 29).

As a deconstructive strategy, translation would then have to "tamper with language", he says, drawing on Derrida's "Border lines", a strategy that would constitute a

> "politico-institutional problem of the University: it, like all teaching in its traditional form, and perhaps all teaching whatever, has as its ideal, with exhaustive translatability, the effacement of language [*la langue*]. […] What the institution cannot bear, is for anyone to tamper with [*toucher à*; also 'touch,' 'change,' 'concern himself with'] language, meaning *both* the *national* language *and*, paradoxically, an ideal of translatability that neutralizes this national language. Nationalism and universalism. What this institution cannot bear is a transformation that leaves intact neither of these two complementary poles" (Derrida 1979: 93–94).

But such tampering, as long as it remains particular or exceptional compared with the general givenness of language, is in no way a threat to the metaphysics of language or the political-institutional settings ('the *Uni*versity') built around it. It offers merely a glitch in the machine of translatability, an untranslatability-which-is-one. But even as a more jarring *Gegengift* of untranslatability-which-is-*not*-one, its challenge may remain an ephemeral, peripheral achievement.

The problem I would like to pose, then, is one that tampers, or has already tampered, with language 'as such'. As I said, the interesting thing about *ongelma* is that it records at least two senses of 'problem', the Finnish and the Indo-European version (to use, for now, these problematic shorthands and an assumption of their distinguishability as properties of two (asexual) 'language families').[80] This is true of the word in Finnish, and it is true of its translation into English (at least my English). The contrarian philosopher Pauli Pylkkö helps us clarify this distinction. Pylkkö's work provides us with one of the most sustained efforts to think the conditions of thought *in Finnish* in a context profoundly shaped by centuries of (Indo-)European dominance. As he describes the experience of Finnish language and experience in/through that language:

> "[W]e live in a disappearing language, in which the heat of havoc glows in each word. The Finnish language is losing its game because we do not hear its meanings anymore. They are becoming covered by the noise of foreign, that is Western and techno-logised meanings. However, our situation is interesting in the sense that we have an ongelma, that is, the problem of hearing disappearing meanings. Europeans and Americans do not even have an ongelma" (Pylkkö 1998a: 4; my translation).

Pylkkö's strategy is quite distinctive in its rejection, polemical at its core, of the Indo-European legacy within the Finnish language (e.g. the Europeanisation of grammatical structures through Swedish institutional influence), culture (e.g. the dependency and subordinacy created in thinking of Finnish culture(s) as a peripheral part of Europe) and politics (e.g. the modelling of national policies and the nation-state's institutions based on European models, and the equation of 'Finnishness' with such European inheritances), his temporal perspective being that of the last few centuries. Pylkkö's thought springs from within the planetary annihilation of linguistic, cultural and ecological diversity, and it is heavily invested in thinking this toll at the Finnish–Indo-European borderland – as a loser rather than a winner of modernity (see Bull 2011).[81]

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80 These 'two' are of course themselves highly questionable categories. In particular, I would be interested in thinking the Finnish *ongelma* with regard to other non-Indo-European languages, starting with other Finno-Ugric languages. If we are to trust Google Translate, it seems that the Indo-European *problema* is highly prevalent in the biggest Finno-Ugric languages, e.g. the Estonian *probleem* and the Hungarian *probléma*. We also need to note the Finnish word *problematisoida*, which serves as an equivalent to *ongelmallistaa* ('to problematise'). The Finnish dictionary also recognises *probleema* as well as *probleemi*, but their use is limited to mathematical vocabulary. Northern Sami, by contrast, with its *váttisvuohta* and *buncarakkis*, might provide a very different ground for comparison with *ongelma*.

81 To be sure, Pylkkö's assumptions and arguments would warrant very close, and critical, readership. I suppose many comparative philologists, for example, would find some of his arguments simply untenable. The insistence on Finnish exceptionality as a language with its unique properties, or his insistence on the (relative) homogeneity of languages, for instance, would undoubtedly be disturbed by a comparative approach, at least one less invested in the Indo-European–Finnish borderland. That said, what Pylkkö pivots on is the *experience* of a language – his language – and the originality of his challenge for thinking (in) Finnish is undeniable.

Pylkkö would undoubtedly agree with Cassin that 'untranslatables' propose a kind of work that is inescapably tied to specific languages and linguistic differences: "[p]hilosophising in languages makes all the difference to philosophising tout court" (Cassin 2018: 2). Pylkkö is well versed in the European, especially German, philosophical and literary registers. But his difference, his *ongelma*, is that Finnish does not belong to this family:

> "Philosophy is a European tradition and is based on the structure of Indo-European languages and their underlying metaphysics. Philosophy is the contemplation of being and experience as being and experiencing appear in Indo-European languages" (Pylkkö 2006: 7; my translation).

To put it briefly, then: "[t]here is no Finnish philosophy" (7). Importantly, this is nonetheless not to disavow European philosophy, which forms an impartible part of the heritage that Pylkkö affirms by examining its collateral damage. Rather, his point is simply to accentuate, explore and polemicise the difference that remains largely unthought: the possibility that the specific case of the Finnish language offers 'resources' that are distinct from Indo-European (or any other) languages, and that thinking with/in these differences might be a project worth pursuing. Some of Pylkkö's most insightful and polemical cases are critiques of attempts to write original works of (European) literature or philosophy in Finnish, projects that for him are bound to produce clumsy imitations that consistently miss the Finnish language's demands and challenges.[82]

We can see in Pylkkö's work an investment in Finnish untranslatables as they contrast with European languages and philosophy. But it is an investment that, through its commitment to the specificity of this case, casts an interesting light on the comparative project of a European philosophy of untranslatability. Compare with Cassin (2018: 1) again, explaining her edited project *Le Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: dictionnaire des intraduisibles*:

> "An Untranslatable is not what one does not translate but what one does not stop (not) translating; so, nothing sacralised, of Heideggerian type, but rather an open and always ongoing process. After Babel with happiness! In such a dictionary, the desperate footnotes of translators become the basis for full text. It capitalises on the translator's trials" (Cassin 2018: 1).

In this view, then, untranslatables are not untranslatables in the absolute sense, but rather as challenges for translation, trials to 'capitalise' in language-aware lexicons such as *Le Vocabulaire*. They are untranslatables as translators encounter them: invitations and provocations to careful translation, and to compare incomparables. Pylkkö's work, by contrast, is decidedly of a 'Heideggerian type' and deeply *un*happy. As is made clear by Vesa Kyllönen (2014) and Heikki Sirviö (2019), Pylkkö's method is quarrel and polemical, aggressive disagreement. His work cultivates a rich range of grudges mixed with an analytical approach. It is hardly very promising material for international business – say, one engaged in comparative untranslatability. But his seriously infelicitous

82 My recourse to Pylkkö here is unforgivably hasty, but only to mark a project for thought still largely undone: that of thinking and translating Pylkkö's work into English. Taking this task seriously would undoubtedly mean taking *translation* more seriously than I have done here. Pylkkö's writings in English (Pylkkö 1998b, 1999) provide important starting points for further enquiries.

approach may help us remark the universalising tendencies in treating untranslatables as translatables, or treating linguistic-cultural opacities through the lens of a relatable transparency.

Compare this, for instance, with Apter's (2019) call for "critical practices that did not just substitute difference for cross-cultural equivalencies but also generated *a way of thinking language opacity as philosophically, spatially, and temporally everywhere*" (195–196; my emphasis). There is perhaps in here – in the act of speaking for, thinking of, or being able to utter 'everywhere' – a guiding comparative spirit whose claimed allyship to specific opacities should not be taken without a grain of salt. What is it to think opacity as being 'everywhere'? What is this 'everywhere' other than what Glissant (1997) calls a 'transparency', already on its way to understanding (*comprendre*) opacity?[83] How to know the difference? What is (the possibility of thinking) 'everywhere' if not an index of languages and cultures that *already* find themselves in a position of institutional-linguistic domination? How do we distinguish between opacities that are readable enough to fit within comparative projects and those that are not? Is opacity not precisely what should pierce any sense of an 'everywhereness'? Is it not precisely what *resists* its capitalisation as "immensely productive encounters where incommensurable differences encounter one another" (Jazeel 2019: 12) or the "ethical relations based in untranslatabilities" (Lezra 2017: 13), and happily relating in "democratic association" (11)? My point is not that these are bad terms, or avoidable ones, but that we should be sure to question the givenness of the 'goods' that any comparative perspective of untranslatability relies on and reproduces as givens, as its 'alternatives'. There might be an *ongelma* even if – or especially when – there appears to be no problem.[84] Is there any way, within the Indo-European institutions and economies known as 'university', that we can avoid what Glissant calls understanding (*comprendre*) differences, in order to resist turning "unruly groupings of texts into manageable, relatable entities" (Apter 2019: 197)? Is there, within this enlightened discussion of well-behaving Indo-Europeans, any chance to treat non-conforming differences as anything other than peripheral exceptions or retarded chauvinisms?[85]

83 The kind of understanding Glissant (1997: 190) has in mind is a Western notion with a "requirement for transparency" at its basis: "[i]n order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgments. I have to reduce". Against this reduction and ideal scale of comparison, Glissant posits the "right to opacity that is not enclosure within an impenetrable autarchy but subsistence within an irreducible singularity". At the centre is a hope: "[w]idespread consent to specific opacities is the most straightforward equivalent of nonbarbarism" (194). Kara Keeling (2019: 31) calls the 'right to opacity' a "politicized cultural strategy" whose purpose is "to challenge the processes of commensuration built into the demand for that group to become perceptible according to existing conceptions of the world".

84 I pick these terms because in my view they index some of the most unquestioned values (of 'encounter', 'ethics', 'democracy') that should be held in suspicion if we are to think of untranslatability in terms not already settled with a specific, European legacy. Pylkkö's *The aconceptual mind* (1998b) and *Luopumisen dialektiikka* (2004) contain crucial challenges for thinking ethics and democracy. Encounters between irresolvably, violently different modes of being are a major theme in Tere Vadén's (2000) *Ajo ja jälki*. From this perspective, for instance, the possible limitations (or collateral damage) of diverse economists' widespread use of an 'ethical' vocabulary would demand attention.

85 I am thinking here for instance of Young's equation of anti-colonial linguistic resistance that takes seriously *institutions* of language definition and structuring with "national resistance" that "will always constitute in turn more nationalisms" (Young 2016: 1210). *Always*? Even if decidedly energised by a critique of the nation-state's institutions – a European invention if there ever was one – as in the case of Pylkkö? What does it say about our sense of institutions if we associate *all* of them with 'the nation-state'?

While these questions will need to be left open, I now want to come back to capitalocentrism, and to relate this meandering argument back to Lezra's account of (un)translatability and/as/against capitalism. As we saw, his is a globalised version of restricted capitalist economy and its glitchy other that is found in untranslatability-which-is-not-one. We can see a dialectical heritage reproducing itself here, in the terms that make (un)translatability an issue vis-à-vis 'global capitalism'. But Lezra's argument is not quite that simple, nor can his capitalocentrism be collapsed into uses and mentions of a 'global capitalism' that set the tone of the argument. If translatability and a calculable, capitalisable untranslatability are preconditions of capitalist relations, and their other is found in the form of *Gegengift*, we need to analyse carefully how this framework of (un)translatability works as a capitalocentric operation. Lezra's (2020: 156–157; my emphasis) argument is that "the theory of value proper to global capital is the theory of the *genre* of the relation between translatability and untranslatability", meaning that the interplay between "tendential universal translatability and tendential universal singularity" generates "the genre or type that serves as a norm for the structural capture and flight that makes global capitalism endless and endlessly subject to crisis and contingency". Lezra finds its alternatives in the "violent, eroticized, and irreducible" encounter between that theory and the scene where it gets challenged in terms that erase the types and genres of its capitalisation. I am prone to read Pylkkö's aggressivity as one such scene. It would undoubtedly refuse to be included in a European vocabulary of untranslatables, vigilantly so, and instead opt for an outsider's position away from such a family reunion – and away from universities.[86]

Capitalocentrism again turns capitalism into a thing, an agent and a subject – a linguistic object whose self-evidence omits the necessity and contingency of its material-infrastructural reproduction and its situation within more-than-capitalist economies. The metaphysics of Indo-European languages is inscribed in this operation insofar as capitalisation presumes and demands infrastructures of sensibility that make institutions such as property law, global exchangeability or maximal individualised surplus accumulation possible. It helps this business of the proper(ty) to have the world neatly divided into objects and subjects, as in 'natural languages' that tend to do so anyway. The force of *ongelma*, then, would be seen as a glitch or defect within this framework of circulation, an untranslatable forcing us to lessen the pace and cut, however momentarily, the production of value. To take an *ongelmainen* relationship to the objects known as capital's, be they 'discursive' or 'material', would amount to an oddness and a shamefulness – say, fetishism – and it would certainly feel problematic, incomprehensible and retarted from the perspective of Enlightened European thought. It would exercise its 'right not to be understood' (Glissant 1997) as a form of resistance. But this solution is bound to be temporary and fixated on the marginals of a framework of (un)translatability that always works to capitalise on the translator's trials, as Cassin (2018: 1) has it.

What capitalocentrism *also* teaches us is that the machine of universal (un)translatability that Lezra describes is indeed tendential; it is partial, and it is full of holes. These holes or opacities do not only belong to the order of untranslatability, however understood; rather, they rupture translatability itself by inscribing it within a much wider, prismatic, more-than-capitalist economy. This economy should not be understood only as another type of 'the economy', but rather as ruptured by unnameable,

86 This can be compared with Vadén's (2000, 2006, 2010) important discussions of the possibility of rejecting enlightened European narratives, and the shameful position reserved for such rejectors, as retards (*jälkeenjääneet*) (see my next section).

incomprehensible 'economies' of all sorts. This is another possibility emanating from Glissant's (1997: 190) *opacité*: "[o]pacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics". Perhaps they already do, like Glissant's creole, as Celia Britton (1999: 25) has it, "a subversive language whose purpose from the start was not simply to communicate but also to conceal its meanings, thereby turning the master's language against him". Perhaps such problems converge and coexist in language, already there as *ongelmas* where (un)translatability only has problems. They may weave, but they should not be too readily understandable or transparent for any comparison, for we do not know whether it is capital or something else that is reading through us, making comparabilities.

Ongelmas may be archived, shared, taught and remembered in archives and media inaccessible to comparative languages or a specific language – for example, ours. Each time an Indo-European problem-cum-shield is in use, consider it a translation that seeks to omit its *ongelmas*. For now, we may perhaps have to stick with the idea that there is already a problem (*ongelma*) in there, here, where a problem is. *Es spukt*: "What follows from the idea of 'hauntology' is, first of all, that language does not belong to the system of capital, nor to that of labor, that language does not define itself as commodity-language" (Hamacher 1999: 192). The problem (*ongelma*) thus leads us to consider how translations will have already taken place, here, but also to suspect that whatever is comprehended (*comprendre*) here is biased: an encounter with its other *as* its antecedents. The interesting thing is that problems will have already been issued, and foreclosed, all along – for example, in all the 'problems' mentioned in this thesis. How would they ask to be reread, and retranslated, with linguistic troubles in mind? How does their calculability, their shield-likeness, reveal assumptions concerning the homogeneity of this language here – the property of its problems? What if each problem is trailed by an *ongelma*, but not necessarily one available to our readership as either translatable or untranslatable? How will we have been able to distinguish a *problema* from an *ongelma*, if the language enabling such distinctions is *already* the problem?

5.5.3 Jälkiä*: Tracing the Olfactory of Capital(ism)*

In a lecture given at an architecture conference in Japan in 1992, Derrida makes in curious passing remark on the names of capitalism. Discussing Los Angeles, he calls the city "a remarkable example of decentralization in a pre-capitalist, capitalist, and neo-capitalist human agglomeration (I want at all costs to avoid the expression post- or late-capitalism) [*je veux à tout prix éviter l'expression de post- ou de late-capitalism*]" (Derrida 1992a: 28). What is happening here? Why all these capitalisms, but not post- or late capitalism, whatever the cost? On the one hand, we would seem to have a clear expression of an *obviously* capitalocentric turn of phrase legitimising the continuing presence of capitalism as *the* contemporary context. Thus, Los Angeles is an agglomeration, or accumulation, of forms of human existence that predate the historical system or epoch known as capitalism and that are more integral to this period, its newest forms included. This capitalist context, with all the ethical and political vigilance that it requires of urban analysts, is affirmed by Derrida. The parenthesis, from this perspective, makes clear a rejection of terms that would dodge the problem and its urgent call for critical appraisal. In my reading, this means rejecting 'postcapitalism' because its confidence in being a postscripture would imply "the cultural strategem [sic] as an inevitable by-product of the oldest of historicisms" (Derrida 1990: 68) (a risk we encountered in the previous chapter), and 'late capitalism' because it would come with a Marxist discourse of historicism that cannot not interpret what is 'new' other than within a pre-solidified

discourse.[87] In the affirmation instead of what seems a rather old-fashioned (and deeply capitalocentric) linearity that locates Los Angeles within, before or as a revived form of capitalism, we may hear the imperative to keep on thinking with 'capitalism' as opposed to overcoming its problem through a new framework of calculation.[88] We might thus read this as just another of those moments when Derrida invokes an undeconstructed capitalism as a blackboard picture of reality in order to contextualise his thinking (see Derrida 2006; Gibson-Graham 2006a: 238–250). A capitalocentric gesture, surely, but also one that has its uses. Capitalism in this sense recalls a problem (*problema*) to think with and a trouble to read for.

On the other hand, something uncanny (or *ongelmainen*) is already being translated in this sentence of Derrida's. Let us try to translate his English/French sentence into Finnish. 'Pre-capitalist', 'capitalist' and 'neo-capitalist' attributes are easy: *esikapitalistinen*, *kapitalistinen* and *uuskapitalistinen* respectively. What about the parenthesis? One option: "*([h]aluan hinnalla millä hyvänsä välttää ilmaisuja myöhäis- ja postkapitalismi)*". *Myöhäis-*, derived from *myöhäinen*, is something coming or happening late, or something occurring far on in the course of the day or night. No problems here, it seems, *myöhäis-* being an equivalent of 'late', and *myöhäiskapitalismi* is indeed widely (though not exclusively) used as a translation of 'late capitalism'. What about the 'post-'? First option: *postkapitalismi*, a word that seems to announce no trouble whatsoever. Without a glitch, it works as the pragmatic translator's first choice and allows us to proceed to the contents of the postscripture itself. Yet on another level, precisely in this lack of glitch we can read a sign of a hasty translation. Or, *reading* attentively enough, a 'foreignising' translation (Venuti 1993) can be noticed as *having already taken place*, insofar as *postkapitalismi* leaves *both* 'post-' and 'capitalism' so little transformed by the translation.[89]

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87 I am thinking here with Derrida's (1990) text that problematises 'posts' of various sorts, especially with regard to 'poststructuralism' (and reading deconstruction as 'poststructuralism', meaning as 'deconstructionist'). Additionally, I read this rejection of "post- or late-capitalism" with reference to a comment Derrida makes at the beginning of this little text, commenting on his need to speak English while giving his lecture in Japan and the context of the conference and its publication, called *Anywhere* (in English): "to remark on the imperial authority of this idiom that came long ago from a small island in northwestern Europe and is becoming hegemonic on all surfaces of the earth, to the point that here on this little island on the other side of the world, in another empire, we must still subject ourselves to it" (1992a: 21). When Derrida, further on in his lecture, then rejects "post- and late-capitalism", he writes in the French original: "(je veux à tout prix éviter l'expression de *post-* ou de *late-capitalism*)" (10; my emphases) The English words are not here by accident.

88 I read 'neo-capitalism' with reference to a comment made in *Specters*, the only other instance I have seen of Derrida using this notion: "[a]t a time when a new world disorder is attempting to install its neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism, no disavowal has managed to rid itself of all of Marx's ghosts" (2006: 45–46). In differentiating his use of 'neo-capitalism' from what others (Mandel, Jameson) would call 'late capitalism', I think Derrida is alluding to how *little* the latter concept changes the inherited wisdom of Marxism in its analysis of 'the present moment' (compare with my previous chapter). As Plotnitsky (1993: 272) puts it in his apt critique of Jameson: "[a]ll economic parameters of postmodernism as the cultural, or political, logic of late capitalism in Jameson's 'late Marxism' are in fact derived from and are announced to be those of, or consistent with, old Marxism, and specifically Lenin and Marx, and, in addition, against the intervening usages". From this perspective, the problem with 'post- and late-capitalism' would *not* be that they announce a totally new logic of analysis and of economy, but that precisely in doing so, in claiming a rupture and a new perspective, they fail to (make us) do the hard work of inheritance.

89 Venuti (1993) makes a much-used and debated distinction between domesticating and foreignising translations in interlinguistic work. This is a translator's choice "between a domesticating method, an ethnographic reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (210). In our translation of *Take*

This would leave us longing for another option, to introduce a domesticating operation into 'post-', even while leaving *kapitalismi* unmodified for now: *jälkikapitalismi*. Derrida's sentence, after this operation, would read "*([h]aluan hinnalla millä hyvänsä välttää ilmaisua jälkikapitalismi)*". What is this strangeness? What happened to 'late capitalism'? As Royle (1992: 3) notes, commenting on the translation of 'afterwords' as *jälkisanat*, *jälki* "means not only 'after' but also 'track', 'trace', 'imprint', 'stain'". Some uses of this prefix can be seen in *jälkiruoka* ('dessert', or 'after-meal'), *jälki-istunto* ('detention', or 'after-sitting') and *jälkinäytös* ('sequel', or 'after-show'). Royle notes connotations of *jälkisanat* that recall Freud's *Nachträglichkeit*, 'afterwardness'. The prefix *jälki-* derives from *jälkeen*, itself an illative case of *jälki*: *jälkeen* meaning 'towards' or 'into' (a/the) track, trace, vestige etc. So quite literally, if you want to say in Finnish that something happens 'after' another thing, you will need to say that it happens 'into' or 'towards' the trace, the track, the vestige of its precedent. 'Economies after capitalism' becomes *taloudet kapitalismin jälkeen*, or 'economies towards (a/the) trace of capitalism'.

What does this 'towards' or 'into (a/the) trace of capitalism' mean? Or rather, how and where, on which tracks, does it lure us? The first lead: as I explained above, *jälkikapitalismi* is used as a translation for both 'late capitalism' and 'postcapitalism'. In a very solid sense, this repeats Kocourek's (1996) observation about the English 'post-' prefix as both denoting X and non-X, as we saw in the previous chapter. So there are two seemingly separate lines of argumentation that make use of *jälkikapitalismi*, the first relating it to post-Fordist late capitalism (e.g. Salminen 2015: 21), and the second referring to a postcapitalist world beyond capitalism (e.g. Tammilehto 2005). Thus, with *jälkikapitalismi* we find ourselves *either* within the latest modification of global capitalism *or* in reference to a postcapitalist future world. As such, neither of these options is particularly demanding with regard to the capitalocentric legacy living on in capitalism's postscriptures (as we saw in the previous chapter). What is noteworthy is that no one seems to have reflected on these two seemingly contradictory meanings archived *in the same word*. That the same situation, relation or entity, characterised as *jälkikapitalistinen*, can mean two seemingly opposite things has been left unanalysed (as far as I know).

Then again, with capitalocentric values in place and serving as an unacknowledged matrix of thought, the apparent ambiguity can always be resolved in favour of an underlying pact: the hegemony of capitalism as 'the present' that we find ourselves 'under'. Insofar as capitalocentric realism is in place, the coexistence of two contradictory *jälkikapitalismis* is no problem, since a shared reality is already in place, more solid than any possible discursive play. Moreover, we can always go back to rehearsing the *intentions* behind the word's use, and reconstruct the periperformative hints around it so as to establish its proper meaning in a specific context. We confront a calculable choice between two distinguishable meanings of the term, and any troubling shadows of undecidability are illuminated in advance by the knowns about the context and intention of the utterance. Just as the 'post-' of postcapitalism usually announces very few complications or troubles for its thinking – many fewer than its ambiguous grammatical characteristics would suggest – the *jälki-* of *kapitalismi* can be *read* as just another postprefixation along the line. Like Tsing's (2015) 'pericapitalism', *jälkikapitalismi* can work simply to retrace the knowns of capitalism and its others.

What about other possible readings? Tere Vadén provides the second lead:

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back the economy to *Elävä talous*, we chose an intensely domesticating method. The foreignising method remains to be experimented with.

> "Unlike an object reached by the eye, a theory, the trace and smell followed by a thinking scent can always disappear, fade away, go missing. Trace is death. It speaks of absence, disappearance, loss and ruin as much as it does of presence and being. A trace is always both present and absent as an interface between fullness and crevice, meaning and emptiness" (Vadén 2000: 183; my translation).

A *jälki*, for Vadén, is what drives (*ajaa*) thinking, a process that is thought from within the peculiarities of the Finnish language. This 'drive' is not so in a subjective-objective sense, since *jälki* is asubjective, indifferent to an (Indo-European) prioritisation or metaphysics of subjects and objects. What the olfactory of *jälki* leads towards is not a pre-known object, nor is the process driven by a governable subject. Rather, at stake is a process whereby the metaphysics of subjects and objects is irrelevant or a nuisance to the process itself. *Ajetaan* says the passive form of the verb, a passive "in which there is no subject, surrogate or otherwise. Crucially, the passive voice has no gender, no number, no subject and no object" (Vadén 2011: 255). This is an example of asubjective language, or as Pylkkö (1998b) would have it, ontological nihilism, which is hard, perhaps impossible to put into English because of the exigency of subject-object distinctions in that language. The lead then guides us (pun intended) through scent, which is demanding to the extent that subjects and objects prove to be unnecessary obstacles – what is at stake is not subjects choosing otherwise or objects being revealed, but simply a lead that tests its thinking. However reliant on examples and an 'agrammatism' taken from the Finnish language, Vadén (2011: 255) underlines that what is at stake is not solely a process pertaining to "languages on the fringes of Western colonisation and globalisation". There is always the possibility of missing the scent by mistaking structures such as subjects and objects for transcendental phenomena rather than Indo-European provincialisms, thus treating asubjective language within a framework of intelligibility that already explains it away. But as Derrida also shows, this has very little to do with the seriousness demanded by the trace.

The third lead is a sentence for translation that imposes itself on me, connecting the first two leads and bringing us back to the metalepsis of 'capitalism' and 'capitalocentrism' (discussed in chapter two). A sentence – whose traces may be found here and there in this thesis – exposes itself for translation: *kapitalismi peittää jälkensä* – or, capitalism covers its tracks, traces, vestiges and imprints. What does the covered-up *jälki* tell us? At least three different things, three *jälkis* covered: firstly, capitalism covers its imprints and its vestiges. If there is a truism in critical analyses of capitalism, it is that it perpetuates a seeming state of peace and harmony, a naturalisation of hierarchies and victims, the impartibility of its distribution of misery and sustenance. It simultaneously covers its vestiges, which would interrupt, in "letters of blood and fire" as Marx (1976: 875) famously insisted, the amnesia that apologises for its violences.[90] With the critique of capitalocentrism, these truisms are updated through the relocation of the violences of apology and amnesia: capitalism as such becomes a memory of already instituted and infrastructured amnesia – the signifier of violences always already committed in and through capitalocentric violences towards the more-than-capitalist. *Any* recognition

90 As one of the most brilliantly violent formulations in *Capital* has it, a "great deal of capital, which appears today in the United States without any birth-certificate, was yesterday, in England, the capitalized blood of children" (Marx 1976: 920). Without a birth certificate, and with apologists all over to participate in forgetting capital's tracks, a sense of systemic non-violence may prevail (to the limited extent that it does). It is the "naturalistic ideology of the peacefulness of origins and of the equality to come" (Malabou 2002: 193) that Marx deems unacceptable.

of capital(ism) is an imprint of these violences already committed. Underneath the façade of capital(ism): capitalocentrism.

This leads us to the second *jälki* omitted and covered, in our textual materiality: the *trace* of capitalism. Insofar as 'capitalism' comes to serve as the subject of seemingly constative sentences such as *kapitalismi peittää jälkensä*, or indeed as any object whatsoever, what has been covered? 'Capitalism' comes to occupy the role of a *subject* that determines; 'it' has agency ('covers') and specific characteristics ('its tracks'), and – perhaps most importantly – 'it' comes to denote a naturalised referentiality of assertions such as these. From the perspective of capitalocentrism, this is a crucial trajectory, in which the object/subject of capitalism is reconfirmed through the givenness of the referentiality and constativity of such a sentence, as well as through a certain restricted sense of performativity, one in which 'capitalism' is still understood as a pre-constituted subject. Capitalism acts *as if* it were not only doing this and that but also, and perhaps more importantly, *being* in the first place (here the question is of its 'ismicity', but more importantly of its 'itness'). Only *after* the tracks have been covered can this sentence make sense: capitalism covers its tracks. Meaning: capitalism 'exists' as and insofar as it functions as a capitalocentric cover-up. An afterwardness (*jälkikäteisyys*, 'after-handness') is thus written into the name of capitalism. The amnesia of this cover-up is something that postcapitalism, without *jälki*, *re*confirms. The troubling aspect of this is that a political-economic critique concentrating on the covered imprints of capitalism (*jälki* 1) *cannot avoid* reproducing the amnesia that misses the trace (*jälki* 2). This is because of the capitalocentric amnesias and violences already written into the (re-cognisability) of the name capitalism, a name that its critique will have needed.

What is the third *jälki* covered? It crosses our fourth lead: as mentioned, the word *jälkeen*, meaning 'after', is an illative case of *jälki*, thus meaning something like 'into/towards the trace of'. Here is Vadén (2010: 4) again, providing us with another sentence that demands translation: "*[m]ummosi tai ainakin isomummosi tietää, miten eletään kapitalismin jälkeen!*", translatable roughly as "your grandmother or at least your great-grandmother knows how to live after capitalism!" As far as the sentence's periperformative context is to be trusted, we could see this as confirming the importance of intergenerational knowledge of precapitalist livelihoods and social formations, a knowledge that will be of use for thinking and practising towards the end of capitalism. Capitalism, understood within the framework of capitalocentric periodisation, has a before and an after, which are not necessarily inseparable insofar as teaching, memory and archives can fold them together. From an intergenerational perspective, many capitalist institutions, currently seen as prevailing and ageless in different territories, are relatively new and precarious achievements. Thus, Vadén says, listen to your grandmother, follow the leads that still remember the scent of postcapitalism.

What else is said here? Let us retranslate the sentence. Literally, the grandmothers' wisdom could also consist of knowing "how to live into/towards the trace of capitalism" ("*kapitalismin jälkeen*"). There are three interesting propositions here. First, life without or otherwise than capitalism is something that can be known experientially, something one – or at least a grandmother, yours or mine perhaps – can have lived through and learned from. Capitalocentric realism might be a question of who you ask, and how. Second, knowing non-capitalism might be an issue of positionality, of *where* you know in and from, and it might be a gendered practice. Capitalocentric realism might be a matter of standpoint in the more-than-capitalist economy. Third, and perhaps most crucially, this non-capitalist knowing is about not (only) the past but contemporaneous living. *Tietää* ('know(s)') and *eletään* ('is lived') are both present

tenses. If such knowledge is available, now, to grandmothers, and if it is so in a form and language available for Vadén's testimony, then perhaps this means it can be much more generally shared, taught, learned, archived and practised together. Capitalocentric realism might be a matter of archives and teachings. These grandmothers, lagging behind by being remnants of precapitalist times, are retarded from the perspective of the usual postcapitalist avant-gardism-cum-chauvinism. Retarded as in *jälkeenjääneet* – literally, left in the trace.

What, from this grandmotherly perspective, are the third kind *jälki*, traces or tracks, that are covered when "*kapitalismi peittää jälkensä*"? The retarded, those "older forms" whom capital "encounters […] as *antecedents*, but not as antecedents established by itself, not as forms of its own life-process" (Marx 1989: 464). But remember, whatever 'it' encounters 'as antecedents' is not a description of a non-capitalocentric space, but is precisely the encounter recounted from the perspective of capital. That it encounters these as "older forms", as Marx puts it without giving much explicit reason to suspect this linearity, "in the epoch of its formation and development" (464) should not blind us into believing we are approaching this encounter from the outside of capital's perspective, as if without capitalocentrism. Such a reading would miss Marx's "self-deconstructive presentational strategy", as Nicole Pepperell (2012) puts it, its satires and ironies, its performative re-enaction of capital's lifeworld. It would miss not the reality behind a textual façade, but the rhetoricity of the material (Keenan 1997; Colebrook 2011). This is what capitalocentrism and the axiomatic assumption of diverse economies reminds us, in the words of Madra and Özselçuk (2015: 147): "Rather than an external optimistic attitude toward a given configuration, the diverse economies approach offers a partial relation internal to the given configuration that at the same time reconstitutes it". At stake, they say, is a "'partial' and 'partisan stance' of looking *from within* an irreducible antagonism" that we may identify here as an antagonism already written in the recognisability of capitalism's name. Against histories of capital, Chakrabarty Histories 1 and 2, we might then want to attend to the grandmothers' histories and their omission and coverage in the making of a given cognisability of capitalism. Or to turn the tables: to attend to how the grandmothers' material textuality ruptures capitalism.

The fifth and perhaps final lead: the figure of the grandmother leads us back to the capitalocentric matrix introduced in chapter two. This matrix was a way of positioning hypothetically the phallogocentric tendencies of 'global capitalism' as *effects* of a more originary process, capitalocentrism. If capitalist forms and relations are a form of paternal heritage, perhaps *the* form of paternalism in and patriarchy through heritage, its transmission requires an uninterrupted flow of common sense that can only derive from and find its legitimacy in a language that enables its sensibility. This is the language of capitalocentrism, our maternal heritage, 'the mother tongue'. As Hamacher (1999: 184) writes, "She is an indispensable prerequisite for the assumption of the paternal inheritance, but it is equally indispensable that she be forgotten". This is the maternal heritage whose forgetting *allows* a revolutionary heritage, writes Derrida (drawing on Marx's passage in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*):

> "This revolutionary inheritance supposes, to be sure, that one end up forgetting the specter, that of the primitive or mother tongue. In order to forget not what one inherits but the pre-inheritance on the basis of which one inherits. This forgetting is only a forgetting. For what one must forget will have been indispensable. One must pass through the pre-inheritance, even if it is to parody it, in order to appropriate the life of a new language or make the revolution" (Derrida 2006: 137).

What Derrida rehearses here is that language, 'mother tongue', is an inheritance that is beyond its ownability, an asymmetrical inheritance or pre-inheritance that allows subsequent affirmations of inheritance. If and to the extent that there is an ownability to inheritance, it is only through 'forgetting the spectre' of language understood in a hauntological or deconstructive sense. A 'revolutionary inheritance' or project emerges through a certain closure: the forgetting of language through its repetition as an ownable and knowable instrument. Beyond the family drama, this might be a very accurate way of describing the matrix of capitalocentrism: the pre-inheritance whose forgetting (and parody) assigns sensibility to capitalist categories. Capitalocentrism, in this sense, would be our mother tongue, at least one of them. But also, mother tongue is never *fully* met by its inheritor; it is never negotiated in a symmetrical relation by a sovereign speaker, and it cannot be unlearned as such. Similarly, wherever we locate an empirically verifiable form of capitalocentrism (e.g. an evitable omission of more-than-capitalist diversity), we may be faced with a trace of a matricial, originary, other-than-fully-evitable substrate. The thing about mother tongue is that it is already 'there', before an active act of inheritance or a *re*cognised identity takes place. It is originary. But the question becomes: is there just *one* of them? For what is the monolingualism of a singular mother tongue other than a European invention? '*The* mother' serving as an "affective knot at the center of the monolingual paradigm […] supplying it with notions of maternal origin, affective and corporeal intimacy, and natural kinship" (Yildiz 2012: 10).

When and where did translation begin? If capitalocentrism is a mode of translatability that solidifies and centralises capitalist realities and omits their wider diverse-economic context as well as their general-economic 'context', this also requires continuous translation to keep the language of capital(ism) convincing and unavoidable. If capitalism covers its tracks, these are also the vestiges leading us to practices of translation. These it encounters *as its antecedents*, as Marx has it, meaning as its problems in the Indo-European sense of the notion – as a shield, or a precalculated space. But these sentences that objectify capital(ism) and recount its reality are already implicated in calculable and incalculable capitalocentric violences, and they teem with possibilities of reinscribing, retranslating otherwise. Perhaps this should not proceed only by underlining the possibilities of other translations here and now, or in the future, insofar as these reproduce a sense of a homogeneous language space to start with, and this homogeneity is inscribed within what Derrida (1997a) calls linear writing. By contrast, recognising translations as always already in there, wherever capital(ism) takes place, in critical-emancipatory analyses as well as its apologists' dreamscapes, would then demand another dimensionality: that of an unfinished, an ungridded – something burrowing well 'underneath' the grid of legibility.

As we begin to lose the lead, a methodological proposal for future readings of capital(ism): whenever capitalist categories or modes of production are summoned, whether with critical-emancipatory intentions or not, read for their *jälki*. That is, the vestiges covered, the imprints omitted, the ruins forgotten, but also the futures foreclosed as the very condition of capital(ism) and its uninterrupted sensibility. Look for what may be omitted in distinguishing 'late capitalism' from 'postcapitalism', and how both are coordinated within a framework of capitalocentric intelligibility. Listen to, and smell, languages other than that which is recorded in the topo-nomological peace of capitalocentric presence and time-space.

Start, for instance, with each mention of 'capital(ism)' or 'postcapitalism' in this thesis. Where is its *jälki*? What kind of translations does it presuppose and propose? What kind of language work does it demand, *now*? Or start with 'pericapitalism'.

As we remember, Tsing (2015) uses this notion to organise translations to and from capital(ism). It is a word for "sites that are both in and out" of "capitalist logics", its aim being "not a classificatory hierarchy but rather a way to explore ambiguity" (296, n4). Nevertheless, as we saw, the ambiguity is largely already resolved by Tsing's investment in studying capitalist salvage in global supply chains and her distinction of it from Gibson-Graham's "hopeful" and "optimistic" choice of a postcapitalist vocabulary, its "premature" step (65). Rather than simply questioning "the authority of capitalism", as Tsing proposes, the notion thus *also* works to reconfirm it.

Now, off to translate: 'pericapitalism' becomes *perikapitalismi* in two recent works, Anna Tuomikoski's translation of *The mushroom* into Finnish (Tsing 2020) and Pieta Hyvärinen's (2020) article on mushroom-foraging and 'plantationocentrism'. This translation pivots on the transportability of the originally Greek *peri-* prefix and its grafting onto the (apparently) Finnish stem *-kapitalismi*. Tuomikoski underlines the Greekness of her *peri-* in a translator's note (Tsing 2020: 353 n4), clarifying that the prefix refers to nearness and encircling. This clarification is necessary, since in Finnish the *peri-* prefix also (or principally) refers to the bottom or end of something, to 'arch-'X. To have 'arrived' is to be *perillä*, to deal with 'ultimate truths' is to deal with *perimmäiset totuudet* (i.e. the most *peri*), and to do something 'root and branch' is to do it *perinjuurin* (i.e. with 'ends-roots'). To inherit is *periä*. So, were we to miss Tuomikoski's translator's note, we might read *perikapitalismi* as 'arch-capitalism' rather than as something surrounding or encircling it, something peripheric to it. As Tsing (2015: 65) has it: "Pericapitalist [*perikapitalistiset*, as Tuomikoski translates it] forms can be sites for rethinking the unquestioned authority of capitalism in our lives. At the very least, diversity offers a chance for multiple ways forward – not just one". Now, how are we to know which one is Tsing's language? Capitalism as such, 'arch-capitalism' with its peripheric others, is a safe ground and starting point for translations as long as the linguistic space is governed by the calculable causals of origins and derivatives, of space and time.

If structuralism without poststructuralism is the latter but "without the postage – without, that is, the letter", as Young (1982: 5) writes, then perhaps capitalism is similarly 'just' postcapitalism without the post, and without the *jälki*. With the intelligibility, sensibility and experienceability of capital(ism) being an effect of capitalocentrism, we begin to see the challenge that the trace poses to us. The missing *jälki* is 'in there', in each capitalist moment (be they 'textual', 'theoretical' or 'material'), erased and yet symptomatically returning to haunt the solidity and presence of capitalist categories. Why erased, and erased by whom? If I am right concerning capitalocentric archives, as explored in chapter three, we should not rush to assume that this erasure consists of either an intentional or an unintentional process, evitable or not. The space that opens in their undecidability will have been necessary. Both will need to have been thought with, in their oscillation, in order to think about processes (e.g. inherited sensoria) before the so-called subjects populating them.[91] "*Jälki* poses a question", writes Vadén (2000: 9; my translation).

91 As Derrida writes in *The animal that therefore I am* concerning Lacan's distinction between leaving and erasing traces: "[i]s it necessary to recall that every erased trace, in consciousness, can leave a trace of its erasure whose symptom (individual or social, historical, political, etc.) will always be capable of ensuring its return? And is it necessary, above all, to remind a psychoanalyst of that? And to recall that every reference to the capacity to erase the trace still speaks the language of the conscious, even imaginary ego? […] In this regard the human no more has the *power* to cover its tracks than does the so-called 'animal.' *Radically* to erase its traces, that is to say, by the same token *radically* to destroy, deny, put to death, even put itself to death" (Derrida 2008: 136). As Derrida consistently argues, it is not up to subjects to erase traces, and their erasure cannot mean absolute erasure ("radically", in this sense).

Perhaps the chief lesson of *jälki* is that translations will have been there, in making capitalisms without postages, without the letter, and in making them without *jälki*. Translations only *recursively* reveal (and perform) what they will have been transferring meanings between, giving sense to distinctions between one language and another only *afterwards*. Perhaps, then, the machine translations responsible for the sensibility of capital(ism) and *its* various languages should be studied as productive and transformative moments, necessary preconditions for the experience of language of capital(ism) whose necessary and machinic work is simultaneously erased. A deconstructive strategy would read here for traces of capitalocentrism. But has it been (only) trace and not (also) *jälki* that has been translated and erased into the clarity of our capitalocentric common sense? What if there is an *ongelma* already in there, in the space of wherever we located a problem? How will we have known whether it is trace and not *jälki* that is missing? What if each point, period or mark (*piste* in Finnish) is always already a track, a trace, a scent (*piste* in French and/or English)? Perhaps only new translations will tell, but translations not tied to the linearity of already insulated and enchained 'texts' and the security of 'a language' as their spatial-economic arbitrator. Translations in reading. Translations that will have to demand (further) reading. Reading before (*devant*) translation. Like each erased *jälki* that makes capitalism possible. Each end of track, *piste*.

6 Conclusion: Raising the Stakes

In this thesis, I have sought to take as seriously as possible the problematic of capitalocentrism understood as an inheritance. Each chapter has mobilised its respective resources for an intervention in a determinate disciplinary, discursive, intellectual and political context. This brief conclusion is composed of two parts: first, I go through some of the central lessons of what has been said so far, dividing these among the three research questions introduced in the introduction. To return to these questions is to try to tease out some general lessons that would add to rather than fully summarise the respective 'results' of the previous chapters. Second, I will sketch some possibilities for further study. Obviously, these are preliminary leads, drawn out amidst the overriding temptation to finish the present study, but they may provide some additional material for raising the empirical, theoretical and political stakes of studying capitalocentrism and inheritance.

QI: What kind of capitalocentric inheritances can be identified in postcapitalist praxis?

The thesis began with a drive to work with the (at least) two legacies of JK Gibson-Graham and Jacques Derrida in order to study postcapitalist problematics that are pressingly present in the fold that is ours. What is the fold? It is a time-space and an economic-geographical context that allows the imagination of postcapitalist futures but simultaneously seems to pit (capitalist) reality itself against these imaginaries. It is the urgency of a rapidly unravelling biosphere, an omnicidally burning planet, and the ubiquitous systematisation of exploitation and annihilation of humans and non-humans for the profit and sustenance of others, a systemicity that will have demanded the nomination of capitalism. It is in this sense that 'capitalism' is the first inheritance re-affirmed by this thesis, in the form of a 'postcapitalist' problem space. These urgencies associated with capitalism demand all of our critical attention and analysis, the whole of our emancipatory spirit, yet their language might have lured us from the beginning into a complicity that makes it harder rather than easier to practise and imagine actually existing, alternative realities worthy of the critical-emancipatory spirit. This is Gibson-Graham's brilliant intervention in naming capitalocentrism, and my argument is fully indebted to this invention.

But, as I argued my chapter two, this invention is also all too easy to tame through tendencies that I called post/critical. In order to identify capitalocentrism as an inheritance, as opposed to a problem already solved or just about to be solved, I argued for the reintroduction and re-exploration of Gibson-Graham's affinities with deconstruction. Therefore, Gibson-Graham's work was juxtaposed with Derrida. Not any Derrida, to be sure, not a 'poststructuralist' Derrida (supposedly) offering us an already available 'method' and endlessly recurring free plays of language, but one working with inheritances in a situatedly parasitical, quasi-transcendental manner. All in all, then, chapter two introduced the notion and task of capitalocentrism *as* inheritance (instead of a post/critical step towards its solutions). We came to suspect that the 'identification' of my research object (recorded in the straightforwardness of this first research question) might demand some problematisation. I proceeded by differentiating between two senses: identifying a problem in capitalocentrism, and identifying capitalocentrism with a specific sort of problemicity. This chapter made the point that capitalocentrism will need to have troubled us.

This proposition was further substantialised in chapter three. There, the 'identification' of the object at stake received further attention and problematisation, as my main concern

became the exploration of what it could mean, historically speaking, to consider our collective, other-than-present (in the sense of being inherited) sensorium as profoundly shaped by capitalocentrism. Thus, the objective became to think through not the objects identified as capitalocentric but the inherited conditions that enable and shape such identifications in the first place. I identified a problem in Gibson-Graham's identification of the problem as a 'hegemonic' form of 'discursive violence' already destined for a dislocative-cum-deconstructive reading. Instead, I turned to violence, the archival, and historical responsibility in Derrida's work to help think another deconstructive strategy vis-à-vis capitalocentric legacies. In this sense, any identification of capitalocentrism became a site for at least two modes of questioning: a situated reflection on an immediate problematic of capitalocentric tendencies of omission and marginalisation, *and* an enquiry into this reflection's predicates, the sensoria *already* inherited in the identification of the problem, sensoria themselves not unshaped by capitalocentric histories.

To take another living capitalocentric inheritance, chapter four turned to analyse the capitalocentric legacies reproduced in the analytical-political genre of postcapitalism. With a critical strategy derived from Gibson-Graham's *The end of capitalism*, and in contrast to some of the pressures for political convergence, I argued for a critical reading of materials indexed under postcapitalism. This was to understand how capitalocentrism keeps on enabling and burdening visions of capitalism's desirable others, even as the 'politics of postponement' are less clear than in more classically capitalocentric forms of critical political economy (the objects of Gibson-Graham's original critique). Five central coordinates were identified as demanding analysis: 1) capitalocentric realism, or the solid epistemic foundation of postcapitalism; 2) a symmetry of isms (capitalism–postcapitalism), with its spatially homogenising rendering of *the* present; 3) a temporal rupture, a presentist-linear rendering of breaking points; 4) a scalar hierarchy, or a vertical ordering of theoretical-political openings and closures; 5) the capitalisation of the 'post-' performative, or a horizontal hierarchisation of change-making. Instead of being final words on the topic, I suggested these coordinates as starting points for further analysis and critical reinterpretation. And in a further twist of the argument, I found Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics to be complicit with these inheritances. This meant the need to double the initially identified five capitalocentrisms so as to insist on their continuing problemicity instead of associating the problems *fully* (or post/critically) with specific manifestations and their respective solutions in a postcapitalist politics.

The fifth chapter introduced a further problematic to help better position my own work as well as to problematise some of its guiding assumptions in the previous chapters. I turned to study the problematic of linguistic differences and translation, as they form key coordinates but also underanalysed problematics in view of spatial-economic difference as well as the inheritance of capitalocentrism. A most ubiquitous and often inconspicuous phenomenon, both banally self-evident and absolutely decisive, language is not just one problem among others. Its mediacy demands the sort of anti-capitalocentric analyses we have yet to imagine, since the power relations of language, as of capitalocentrism, cannot be simply associated with hegemonic formations and their others. My initial identification of English and its others ('the Anglocene') as a problematic homological to capitalocentrism and its others thus demanded a more deconstructive attention. To do so, I turned to translation as a site and task for thought, especially as it helps to organise assumptions and ideologies of language as an economic-geographical force and medium. Wherever translation is as a practical task and situated concern, the 'metalevel' questions of language, topology and economy are also already impartibly

involved. Thus, this chapter worked its way towards identifying in different sites of translation a capitalocentric problematic, with potential implications for more general issues (as far as anything more 'general' than translation exists). To work through specific capitalocentric inheritances, I slowed down to study the specific place of translation in the works of Anna Tsing, Jacques Lezra and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Their critical insights into translation within capitalism provided substantiation for the claim that capitalocentric tendencies work as both closures and openings, with enabling and restricting effects. These demand a complex, nuanced and parasitically critical-deconstructive attention that moves *with* the object of its critique in addition to moving *against* it.

Q2: How are capitalocentric inheritances (to be) negotiated to differently performative effects?

In the introduction, I described the sense of negotiation that is central to both Gibson-Graham and Derrida, with important differences. While Gibson-Graham's ethical negotiation posits a decidedly immediate moment of intentional agency, however compromised and haunted by its burdens and reluctances, Derrida's negotiation is more attuned to the undecidables or aporias he identifies and amplifies in various contexts, thus raising the stakes of responsibility and burdening it with an irreducible sense of lack. An interplay of these two negotiations (and the vast heterogeneities omitted from my all-too-hasty account) point towards various strategies for negotiating capitalocentric inheritances. These need not be, and in some sense cannot be, singular or stable strategies, but are (in both Gibson-Graham and Derrida) marked by a sense of situatedness and vigilance. If nothing else, I hope my account in this study has proved that a negotiation between Gibson-Graham's and Derrida's respective heritages – a negotiation that comes with its own sets of non-negotiables too – may be productive for taking on postcapitalist problems.

In chapter two, we encountered a doubled negotiation of capitalocentrism, first as a post/critical problematic and second as a Derridean inheritance. The crux of the argument was not so much to posit the latter as a resolution of the limitations of the former (it has very little to do with resolution whatsoever), but rather to show how *both* of these approaches might yield interesting negotiations, but differently so. Drawing on Eve Sedgwick's 'ecology of knowing', I argued that the problem is not with the specific post/critical way capitalocentrism has been understood – this I remain profoundly indebted to. Rather, the post/critical thrust comes with its temptation to overcome critical impulses as such, and thus it is prone to produce a recurring disavowal of critical and negative impulses within the framework. Thus, it was against the *prevalence* of such a framing or strategy, and against its equation with diverse-economic relations to critical thought more broadly, that I argued. Thus, the chapter provided a conceptual and motivational starting point for rethinking relations of critique and affirmation in relation to the negotiability of capitalocentrism. The inheritedness of capitalocentrism, and the heterogeneous, quasi-transcendental problematics it unleashes, demands more than one strategy or style of negotiation.

The asymmetricity introduced by Derrida's notion and practice of inheritance then became my central site of analysis, to be continued in the third chapter. Here I sought to think through the conditions of (im)possibility of any 'thinking through', or the inheritance of our capitalocentric sensorium, and how to negotiate (through) it. The negotiations that I sketched had to do with various forms of violence as history and historical violence explored by Derrida. In particular, I identified three topoi worthy of analysis and negotiation: first, the irreducible economy of violence giving rise to

an unending demand for vigilance. In light of capitalocentric historicity, this became marked by the distinction between originary, unavoidable capitalocentrism and the capitalocentrism productive of capitalist value and hierarchy. Second, I underlined (via Fritsch, Benjamin and Derrida) the oscillation between unnameable and nameable victims of history and found a similar problematic to negotiate with regard to the victims of capitalocentrism. In particular, this had to do with the vastly more diverse economies (with their nameable and unnameable participants) than can be or will have been remembered. Third, underlining Derrida's responsibility vis-à-vis the evils of history, I sketched some beginnings for an effort to come to terms with the promise of postcapitalist memory. In particular, this means negotiating the doubled inheritance of an emancipatory heritage that is *simultaneously* (partly) responsible for the ruination of non-capitalist possibility. In each of the three cases, I outlined an aporetic or undecidable negotiation between determinate capitalocentric crimes and the criminality of originary capitalocentrism that will have been inherited, no matter what. Just as it is necessary to study and specify the differences between these crimes, it will have been crucial not to assume their transparency to decision.

These negotiations took us then to the oscillation between various postcapitalisms and Gibson-Graham's postcapitalist politics, in chapter four. The negotiations proposed had to do with the five topoi regarding the identification of capitalocentrism (summarised above). The negotiation here was staged again as a twofold strategy. Firstly, by exploring the differences between Gibson-Graham's 'postcapitalist politics' and diverse 'postcapitalisms', I underlined how the former's distantiation from the latter is allowed for by an analysis of capitalocentrism, and what kind of political, empirical and theoretical distinctions this entails. However, and secondly, I found this strategy lacking in some respects, which I related back to the thinness of Gibson-Graham's post/critical concept of capitalocentrism and the subsequently reproduced capitalocentric heritages in *their* version of postcapitalist politics. Here the crux of the negotiation was not in a post/critical owning of the problem, but rather in a critical-deconstructive practice attuned simultaneously to the (emancipatory) negotiations and their troubled inheritances. This second form of negotiation, working more in a critical-deconstructive register of enquiry and self-critique, I termed postcapitalist studies. I concluded the chapter by hinting at a further negotiation to come, one negotiating capitalocentrism's legacies (both its burdens and its nominations) together with post*colonial* questions and anti- and decolonial movements.

In the fifth and final chapter, then, the negotiations that took centre stage had to do with the specific translation problems I have encountered and worked with, understood as sites for making sense of and negotiating the capitalocentric legacy in language and linguistic differences, themselves understood as impartibly spatial-economic. By taking translation as a site of negotiation, I explored what are simultaneously some of the most concrete and the most abstract questions, present (and absent) in the mediacy of language broadly understood. The three specific sites I discussed were the project to translate *Take back the economy* into *Elävä talous*, the Finnish problem of *ongelma* and its importance for the problemisation of capitalocentric (un)translatability, and the notion of *jälkikapitalismi*, hauntingly disruptive of our inherited wisdom about the space-time of language and economy (including the space-time of this thesis). Again, rather than offering reports on finished businesses, these negotiations described translation as a site of more-than-capitalist work. Precisely in the name of such work and the mundane construction of 'other' languages of economy, and still bearing in mind the inheritedness of capitalocentrism as a 'mother tongue' (i.e. a linguistic (pre-)heritage that active,

conscious inheriting is predicated on but cannot transparently survey), I suggested we need to take seriously the unexceptional questions of language as they live on and in translation, in the thick of things.

Q3: How is postcapitalist futurity infrastructured in spatial-economic terms in such negotiations?

In the introduction, I proposed that the theoretical, empirical and political possibilities of postcapitalist thought and practice might not best be thought in inherited temporal and spatial terms, at least not without insisting on rethinking them through the resources of Gibson-Graham's and Derrida's singular, indispensable interventions. Thinking 'post-capitalist' futures without first or simultaneously thinking everything that the concept of 'future' comes with might get us only far enough to reproduce what Laurent Berlant calls 'cruel optimism' and what Gibson-Graham call a 'politics of postponement'. Not necessarily, of course; but I believe there are good reasons to suspect such futurities that avoid the task and demand of inheritance, especially as it intersects with the problem of capitalocentrism. In this sense, following Elizabeth Rottenberg's idea of 'inheriting the future', I proposed to look for 'futures' in the legacies we find ourselves within. This proposition I elaborated and tested out in the following chapters.

In chapter two, this took the form of retroubling capitalocentrism as an inheritance. This means a problematic that comes before and survives any apparent overcomings, including its nomination and post/critical solutions or alternatives. Thus, I proposed to reverse some conventional wisdoms: the idea that diverse or community economies follow the recognition of a normative and repressive capitalocentrism. This order of things leaves us stuck with the recurring need to visibilise and make sensible those more-than-capitalist economies that could also be the *starting point* of enquiry and politics. Simultaneously, what delimits them (ie. capitalocentrism) is reduced to a normative, exclusive and present problematic that is both too undifferentiated and too easy to overcome. Instead, I proposed a task of *assuming* diverse and community economies and working from there on to explore capitalocentrism as an inheritance that produces capitalist realisms out of more-than-capitalist realities. Collateral damage from my rephrasing of Gibson-Graham's critical praxis was also the redistribution of the friends and foes that usually characterise diverse economy's relations to (its, and capitalism's) critics. If capitalocentrism is thought as a shared inheritance, it has no outside. There is no way of *not* being complicit with capital's languages. But these are just linguistic regions in a much vaster, more heterogeneous, prismatic sea of more-than-capitalist economies. To think from there on, I believe, changes the prospects for the critical enterprise of reading for capitalocentric inheritances. It proposes as a task for thought the matrix – or infra-structure – of capitalocentrism.

In chapter three, the requirement to think (in) the postcapitalist fold 'futurally' was loosened in favour of a historical problematisation of our future-making capacities and the infrastructures of our collective sensorium. This turn echoes some recent developments in diverse-economic research that take on the challenge of historical thinking and archival methods to uncover 'other pasts' as a precondition for 'other futures'. The strategy I chose was to think history through the challenges that Derrida poses to it as he resists conventions of linear history – not in view of an ahistoricity or historical reversibility, but so as to raise the demanding stakes of memory work. The key to another 'future', if this is what we still want to call it, would then be located in working with what and how we inherit. I suggested the need to think capitalocentrism as such an inheritance, chiefly in the register of violence. To work with capitalocentric, inherited

violences is to work with not only what could be possible or could have been possible, but also what *was* possible: memories of postcapitalists promises. That we inherit, in our language and our sensorium, the incapacity, perhaps the unwillingness, to respond to these promises is the mark of a tragedy we will need to think through. This loss may perhaps also teach us something about how liveable futures might be inherited.

In the fourth chapter, the attention then turned back to 'the future'. Here, the chief conclusion was what I tentatively call postcapitalist studies, as an effort towards taking our capitalocentric inheritances seriously, trying to negotiate them even as they enable our abilities of negotiation in the first place. This proposition is a call to infrastructure postcapitalist negotiation to come. Again, postcapitalist studies differs from the prediction business of most postprefixed economies in that its strategy is reactive, or reinterpretative, as it comes to the stage *after* futures have been written, and it studies how these remain capitalocentric. This alternative business model is one that takes Gibson-Graham's capitalocentric propositions more seriously – or more critically, more deconstructively – than they sometimes do themselves, while acknowledging that this criticality rests on the groundedness opened by the groundbreaking work of diverse economies. These openings are not compromised by their critique, nor is the critique compromised by any emancipatory openings. To come back to Sedgwick's insights, postcapitalist futures will have demanded multiple strategies. To call *for* them, instead of pretending to have practised them, is the point here.

Finally, in chapter five, I turned to study these futurities as they speak through our always more-than-intentional language, which is also always more-than-one. Here, as in the other chapters, what emerged into view was not so much pre-existing infrastructures that empower language, but the impartibility of language and our spatial-economic, or material, inheritances. More simply, the task of translation presented itself as a task of interrupting, and analysing, the language of and about capital(ism) as an effect of capitalocentric translations of more-than-capitalist languages. This in my view involves taking translation seriously as an ethical-political site, but one in no way tied to its place within pre-existing economies of publishing and circulation, themselves operating as vectors of continuous spatialisation and economisation. Thinking within them, we remain locked into capitalocentric narratives. But thinking without them is not an option either, because language does not fall from the sky – the factories of its fabrication are no less unavoidable. A concrete task remains: to keep on translating, and thus to keep on facing the untranslatables, and the limitations that make a restricted task out of a general machinic economy of translation. This language work is where we negotiate the infra-structures of our capitalocentric mother tongue, to the extent that it may be negotiable. Translation – what a lively (*elävä*) postcapitalist (*jälkikapitalistinen*) problem (*ongelma*)!

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To move to specifying paths for 'further research' is, in a sense, always premature. It is particularly so if we take seriously the task of reading or study. If, in the chapters above, I have had a recurring – perhaps annoyingly so – tendency to open up what might otherwise seem perfectly legitimate conclusions, it has been so as to insist on the necessity of posing capitalocentric inheritances as questions, or *ongelmas*, that will need to have required further attention, in a situation inevitably different from this one here, wherever that is. It is up to readings to come. To be sure, and to sound slightly less pretentious, the plural of 'readings' is not to entertain high hopes about the

extensiveness of this thesis's readership. Even if, 'in the end', I write these words only to myself, their readability will have already ruptured the dream of a proper self (see Derrida 1988). Wherever study takes place and reading happens, the postcapitalist fold and its problematic will have been different. To rethink, and unthink, capitalocentric inheritances *then and there* is up to what Thomas Keenan (1997) calls "no one": "[T]ime will tell many different stories. Politics is the name we give to this endlessness, to the irresolution of differences, to the happy and traumatic impossibility of totality". It is towards such an impossibility that I have written: *for* postcapitalist studies.

The effects of Gibson-Graham's prismatic economy remain to be seen. Its potential is momentous, but it requires that we do not solely submit to a methodological contagiousness of post/critical reading but instead affirm the critical and deconstructive power of the framework. As we have seen, rather than providing a plurivocal framework with enhanced powers of explanation, this emphasis gives us an entry point into Gibson-Graham's contribution as a self-deconstructive work. Its affirmative-experimental and critical-deconstructive voices both demand more of us than a single framework can give. The situation is aporetic. The paths that I have followed here have been trying to delineate a critical-deconstructive path and amplify some of its promises. While this has brought us especially into the vicinity of variously Marxist strands of critical theory, including the practice of deconstruction as seen through its Marxist legacy, the problem of capitalocentrism should in no way be seen as reducible to this legacy, however expansively it is understood. As both Gibson-Graham and Derrida make clear, and their meeting point makes particularly clear, any place is a good place to begin. If we are to question the inheritedness of capitalocentrism seriously, meaning *vigilantly*, any 'intuitive' beginnings for such enquiries – the primary or original sites of the problem, its *arkhes* – and any self-evident 'we's attending to them must call for our deepest suspicion. Not in order to tear them down, but each time to enquire into what specific violences and closures have been effectuated by particular capitalocentric tendencies and assumptions.

The mediacy that capitalocentrism refers us to consider is not solely a question of how a loosely grouped ensemble of capitalist entities and relations, the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg' (see Figure 1 in the introduction), gets the most attention and energy, and how this centring is coupled with multiple forms of violence. Also, and more fundamentally, this mediacy concerns the capitalocentric matrix in the sense of our complicit sensorium. The problem is not present and available to our senses, because it is historical and partly responsible for the production of 'our' sensibility. It looks at us, and through us, but we cannot return its gaze so as to ensure an ownable legacy or a transparently knowable relation to the trouble (see Derrida 2006). In contrast to a post/critical diverse-economic perspective that needs to insist on the ownability of this problem in order to uncover (always anew) the opportunities it masks and omits, my troubled reading here has insisted on the need to keep on thinking how such opportunities remain inscribed in capitalocentric dynamics. It remains to be seen whether this approach will prove to be worth pursuing any further. But I suspect that for the concerns of our postcapitalist fold, such work with inheritances can provide necessary negotiations with the closures that will have reproduced themselves. Some of them unnecessarily, some inevitably. The task is to try to distinguish between the two, which is a task as impossible (in an absolute sense) as it is necessary and urgent.

If my concern here has largely remained within a critical register, it is because such a register remains far from done away with. With the ruins within and around postcapitalist praxis that capitalism indexes, there will have been continuing demand for

frameworks acutely attuned to its exploitation and domination. The diverse-economic framework is also a critical framework, and the iconoclasm of anti-capitalocentrism is an interruption of capitalist homogeneity and peace – the façades covering, apologising for and forgetting our disastrously exploitative economic organisation. A diverse, prismatic landscape of economy opens, and its job is to keep us acutely attuned to violences far more diverse than capitalist apologists or capitalocentric critics would allow. Then again, a horizontal 'economic landscape' is one critical imaginary among others, and its tendency to substitute 'capitalism' for capitalist 'practices' or 'sites' has its benefits and limitations. Some of the latter include a distance that gets too easily drawn between the (supposedly concrete) diverse-economic praxis and a (supposedly theoretical) critical praxis still centred on 'capitalism'. Because of the inevitable reality of abstraction, the end of capitalism does not come with the avoidance of 'capitalism', the word. Plural frameworks of critique will have been needed. That said, the critique of capitalocentrism can only resist reproducing its object by always situating its amnesias anew within a wider, and more heterogeneous, economy – a prismatic economy.

Postcapitalist studies, as I have imagined it here, is an invitation to stay as close as possible to the critical imperatives that have questioned, resisted and negotiated the ruinous systemicity of capitalism. It attempts a radicalisation – in the specific sense of (self-)critique (see Derrida 2006) – of critical thought by taking it more seriously than it is able to take itself, mired as it is in capitalocentric givens. Precisely because capital(ism) is *not* representable on a horizontal surface of a tableau, not without residue, the reduction of capitalist power to situated struggles is not enough. We will have needed a richer sense of dimensions and skills for negotiation and struggle. This is partly why critique, its most paranoid forms included, remains vital. It diagnoses precisely a generalisation of exploitation, the organisation of its classist dynamics, that is more-than-situated. Therefore, what postcapitalist studies does with this kind of critique is not to dismiss it or come after it. Rather, with the intimacy of a parasite, it must ride and read *with* critique, borrowing its movements, reproducing it performatives. But the difference is that with diverse and community economies *assumed*, axiomatically guiding and motivating this enquiry, critique is revealed as a form of complicity in capital's self-representations. In other words, whatever political-economic critique achieves must be recognised, but recognised precisely as an inheritance of capital(ism) – as a re-cognition that answers its call. Such capitalocentrism is how critique is able to make a crucial difference with countless emancipatory merits, starting with the whole history of social movements with an analysis of capital(ism). Simultaneously, this difference, insofar as it cannot not reproduce capitalocentric dynamics, must also invite a doubling or refolding of critical scrutiny, so as to reintroduce a self-critique of the anti-capitalocentric kind, in view of prismatic economies. To raise the stakes, as it were.

The question then becomes: how to differ from capital(ism) cognising through us? Nothing is guaranteed here. But one possibility is to start from the recognition of *another* problematic that is more originary, more haunting because less well understood: the problem of capitalocentrism. Its matrix is the mother tongue that critique inherits before it intentionally inherits anything. To begin to wrap our faculties around *this* problem means staying as intimate as possible with the movements of critique while simultaneously presupposing diverse and community economies. This means acknowledging there is indeed a beach under the (capitalist) pavement, but we do not have any direct access to it. Its legibility, sensibility and experienceability are entangled within the capitalocentric matrix, so that all of the most unquestioned ways of representing the reality of diverse and community economies must also be suspected of capitalocentrism.

The conventional critical-theoretical armature concerning, for example, 'ideology' and 'metaphysics' is not a solution here, but rather a problem space to work with(in). Insofar as critical thought has failed to live up to the needs, topologies and abstractions of more-than-capitalist economies that will have existed but not necessarily been capitalised or archived (at least not in an archive readily available to any 'us'), it will need to be held in suspicion. Postcapitalist studies is a vigilant exploration of this reality of capitalocentrism, but not without assuming its own non-complicity. Assuming that we are sleepwalking for now is the key to trying to keep awake (no sleep, *neg-otium*) within the nightmares of our postcapitalist fold.

Of the intentions announced in the introduction to this work, at least one has failed quite consistently. As I wrote, the problematic encounter between Gibson-Graham and Derrida should not mean a one-sided challenge whereby Derrida's inheritance 'radicalises' or 'philosophises' Gibson-Graham's hypothesis of capitalocentrism. Although this might be an appropriately passing theoretical manoeuvre, and typical in the field of geography by importing 'theory' to level up our critical faculties (not to mention the gender dynamics of such a one-sided challenge), the problemicity thus introduced would be seriously hampered by an inability to explore how the challenge goes both ways: radicalising 'inheritance' and deconstruction more broadly, through the hypothesis of capitalocentrism and the singularity of Gibson-Graham's contribution. However, in the course of the argument, this intention has yielded all-too-marginal results, simple asides to deconstruction. Derrida, for one, still remains relatively unchanged by *this* inheritance, ours: capitalocentrism as "an abyssal thought of inheritance" (Derrida 2001: 163). Here, rather than attempt a hasty correction, I wish to mark this inadequacy and missed challenge, and to mark it for future investigation. Let us propose, hyperbolically, that at least the Indo-European and Eurocentric heritage of philosophy *and* its deconstructions should not remain the same if we are to take capitalocentrism seriously. This is one of the promises of our language, this mother tongue, our capitalocentric matrix – "a landscape of fury and longing for all that is absent" (Hamacher 1999: 209).

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