J.K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*

**Notes**

1. good overlap with some of the debates we’ve been having in the reading group: relates back to alienation debate (degrees of alienation, the risk that Marxism engenders a view of a ‘closed’ totality, the scope for alternatives, and so on).

2. Some interesting concepts:
   - the Economy
   - anti-capitalocentric
   - avoiding left melancholia (‘in which attachment to a past political analysis or identity is stronger than the interest in present possibilities for mobilization, alliance, or transformation’) and left moralism (‘investments in injury, failure, and victimhood’). “If our goal as thinkers is the proliferation of different economies, what we most need is an open and hospitable orientation toward the objects of our thought. ... Our repertory of tactics might include seducing, cajoling, enrolling, inviting. There could be a greater role in our thinking for invention and playfulness, enchantment and exuberance. And we could start to develop an interest in unpredictability, contingency, experimentation, or even an attachment to the limits of understanding and the possibilities of escape.” (pp.6-7).
   - Weak theory (experimentation, hope, unfixed to an analysis of defeat); in contrast to strong theory (which asserts the hopelessness of the world we know).

3. Gibson-Graham on Marx:
   - Avoid a repetition of the doomed-to-failure analysis that Marx (and the Fabians) made of Owenite communities (and trade unions)
   - Marx (in part, as read by Nancy) as seeking to reverse the tendency to see community as a potential appendage to development of a society of individuals: “Marx’s project of exposing the social nature of capitalist economic relations, especially the way in which exchange masked the social origins of surplus value, is central to our understanding of economic relations and thus to the task of resocializing the economy.” (p.88). This can be seen, for instance, in the discussion of value (the socially constructed nature of value/surplus value, necessary/surplus labour, and consumption needs, etc.). Labour therefore has an “inessential commonality” - which gives rise to an approach that focuses on the multiple possibilities through which we can seek to co-exist and (re)produce our existence.

**SUM:** This approach therefore gives rise (for Gibson-Graham) to an economic geography that focuses on (and celebrates) diversity/plurality, that views obstacles as something to be overcome (and in which experiments of overcoming are welcomed and studied), and a rejection of the foreclosure of possibility. Put differently, social experimentation with social obstacles is seen as a source of hope, on the basis of the existence of experimentation (rather than a source of depression, on the basis of the existence of obstacles).