CYNTHIA KAUFMAN

THOUGHTS ON ANTICAPITALIST ACTIVISM

imagining a way beyond revolution or reform

In the fall of 1992, I was involved in the fight against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Doing that work, I felt a deep sense of frustration with my own understanding of what it was we in the anti-NAFTA movement were trying to accomplish. The direct objective was clear: we were trying to build a movement to defeat NAFTA. But for those of us in the left wing of that very heterogeneous movement, the broader objective was not so clear. NAFTA needed to be defeated because it gave corporations increased rights to cross North American borders without systems of accountability. NAFTA is a corporate bill of rights that protects corporations from the controls and limitations imposed by nation-states. Environmental laws enacted in one country can be challenged by other nations as unfair trade barriers. It provides a forum for US automakers to challenge the Canadian health care system as an unfair trade practice. Overall, there are considerable direct negative implications for working people and the environment.[1] I felt comfortable with the narrow objective we had before us. But I was constantly nagged by the inadequacy of the form of practice I was engaged in. Would the

Cynthia Kaufman, of the SR editorial collective, teaches philosophy and women's studies at De Anza College in Cupertino, California. She is currently working against the anti-affirmative action California Civil Rights Initiative.

defeat of NAFTA have added up to anything significant? Defeating NAFTA would not have defeated capitalism, so what would we have actually accomplished?

I have come to believe that this sense of inadequacy is partially a result of the way that I and others have approached the question of the meaning of our work. Why do so few people I know even talk about doing anticapitalist work any more? Why does it seem almost embarrassing to say that one is interested in getting rid of capitalism? Surely part of the answer lies in the fact that we are living in a time when we are losing many battles, both small and large.

But the problem is not a necessary result of the reality we are dealing with. In trying to understand the meaning of anticapitalist work taking place in the present moment, I feel myself falling into an abyss that separates the different worlds I inhabit. On the one hand, I have been very influenced by poststructuralist and feminist theory. The theory I have read has had an enormous influence on how I think about power, the relationship between ideas and the rest of reality, and the contingent nature of the social world. Yet in the theoretical literature there is surprisingly little helpful attention paid to capitalism. It is often either completely ignored as a significant category, or the analysis of capitalism is not undertaken. Instead, capitalism is taken as a force that structures much of our reality, without the benefits of a poststructuralist interrogation of what it is and how it works.[2] Rather, capitalism and the notion of a capitalist economy are often taken as givens.

Why do so few people I know even talk about doing anticapitalist work any more?

Another set of worlds I inhabit are those of radical activism. In these worlds, capitalism is often taken to be one of the great problems of our times, but the notion that we might be able to do something in the present moment to challenge it is usually seen as naive. People who still see themselves as anticapitalist rarely identify any of the work they do as anticapitalist. I have a sense that the inability to identify concrete work done in the present as anticapitalist has to do with some unquestioned assumptions buried deep in the culture of the US Left. Many of the ideas that inform anticapitalist activism are laced with a kind of macho triumphalism that poses our activities as

either being of world historical importance, or completely insignificant. While most people in the US who see themselves as anticapitalist are currently in deep despair about the possibility of overthrowing capitalism any time soon, they seem to be holding on firmly to the notion that capitalism is something to be overthrown all at once or not at all. Sneering at reformism, they often hold on to the dream of an anticapitalist revolution, even as that goal becomes increasingly elusive. The problem with this for anticapitalist activism is that, measured against the yardstick of an unattainable revolution, all of our work seems completely insignificant.

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Fifteen years ago this problem was not so serious for me nor for many of us on the US Left. Working at that time with the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), I believed that I was participating in a global struggle to overthrow the capitalist system through the accumulated force of a collection of national revolutions. At the time, the ideas of global revolution and the overthrow of capitalism helped to sustain the anticapitalist activities of thousands of activists. The hopeful story we told ourselves about the connection between our concrete day-to-day activities and the picture of a dramatic global struggle was enormously inspirational. By offering a sense of meaning to our everyday activities, they allowed for the development of an oppositional consciousness. But with the defeat of the FMLN in El Salvador and the FSLN in Nicaragua, as well as the fall of the Soviet block, this whole dream, which sustained and nurtured the oppositional imagination of much of the anticapitalist US Left, collapsed.[3] Without it, anticapitalist work has been hard to sustain. Indeed, it is even difficult to say what we mean by anticapitalist work anymore.

The anticapitalist oppositional consciousness I am describing is not the only form of oppositional consciousness operating on the US Left. I have noticed how different the question of the meaning of activism looks in other movements, having recently participated in a variety of struggles, from an effort to establish a women's studies program at the community college where I teach to the fights to defeat California's anti-immigrant ballot initiative Proposition 187 and the move-

ment to save affirmative action. In these efforts I have a sense of my goals and of how my work can be a small piece in a broader movement for social change. What people in the antiracist, feminist, queer, environmental, and immigrant rights movements have, that the anticapitalist activists do not, is a sense of the meaning of their everyday activities. Many of my friends in these movements are also interested in challenging capitalism, but we almost never talk about it. The idea that some of the work we do could be part of a fight against capitalism seems presumptuous. What I am looking for is a way out of this inability to see the anticapitalist meaning in our work. I am looking for a way of thinking about the work that I do to fight capitalism that is analogous to the understandings that operate in the work I do to challenge sexism and racism. I would like to be able to see capitalism as yet another serious social problem that can be challenged in the here and now.

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What I would like to investigate is the possibility that the lack of a sense of meaning among anticapitalist activists is related to the theoretical tools we have been using to guide our understandings of capitalism. In a very provocative piece, J.K. Gibson-Graham argues that the fight against capitalism has been hampered by a conception of its target that is too totalizing. The capitalism that we see ourselves fighting is conceptualized as something having unity, singularity, and totality. She argues, "Marxism has produced a discourse of Capitalism that ostensibly identifies and defines an object of transformative class politics, but that operates more powerfully to discourage and marginalize projects of class transformation."[4] Asking, "Why can feminists have revolution now, while marxists have to wait?" she encourages us to imagine the fight against capitalism in ways analogous to the fight against sexism, as something "always being renegotiated, that vision of the space of social transformation as existing at the interpersonal level as well as existing at the level of society as a whole."[5] She writes,

> What if we undertook a simple thought experiment and theorized capitalism not as something large and embracing but as something

> partial, as one social constituent among many? What if we expelled those conditions of existence—for example, property law—that have become absorbed within the conception of Capitalism and allowed them their contradictory autonomy, to become conditions of existence not only of capitalism but of noncapitalism, to become conditions of capitalism's nonexistence? [6]

In this essay I would like to explore Gibson-Graham's questions in light of my own questions about current organizational possibilities. It is my belief that there is much exciting anticapitalist work going on in a variety of social movements today. Because the analysis of capitalism that most of us on the Left operate with has the totalistic quality that Gibson-Graham describes, it has been very hard for people, both in and outside of these movements, to understand the significance of contemporary forms of activism. I believe that if we are able to rethink some of the rhetorical traps in our current modes of conceptualizing capitalism, those of us who fight against it will be more inspired and focused in the work that we do. My hope is to encourage forms of thought which will allow us to more readily give meaning to the victories we have. What I crave in my own anticapitalist activism is a sense of hope and accomplishment. I want to feel like what I do matters in some way. Without a sense of a meaningful project, high levels of social activism are hard to sustain.

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In an attempt to reconstitute the utopian vision which allows us to see the significance of our daily activities and develop strategies that are effective, I would like to look at three core aspects of the vision around which much contemporary anticapitalist thinking in the US is organized. I will explore issues related to the definition of capitalism, the notion of an independent economy, and the notion that an economy can be overthrown through revolution. After exploring these three aspects of the dominant image of the overthrow of capitalism operating on the US Left, I will explore the implications that a less reified approach to capitalism would have for our understanding of the political significance of work being done at the present moment.

1. WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED CAPITALISM THAT MUST BE OVERTHROWN?

When I think about capitalism I think about women going blind in factories in Malaysia, the expropriation of land from peasants in Mexico, and oppressive political structures that do not allow for unionization. I think about my lack of time and the ways that my time is structured, the lack of a locally controlled public sphere, and students' boring jobs. I also think about the absence of powerful social mechanisms to control ecologically destructive practices.

When we ask ourselves how all of these unethical and destructive practices are possible, we find many answers. Some have to do with the legal structures of states. Some have to do with cultural practices that embed as normative certain kinds of behavior. Some have to do with the brute power of guns and the ability to use them to evict others from land. For each of us anticapitalist thinkers, there are a variety of negative social processes that we associate with the label *capitalism.* In thinking of capitalism as a thing, we hope to unify these negative aspects of our lives into a single enemy to be fought. But it might be helpful, as J.K. Gibson-Graham suggests, to step back and allow our theoretical imaginations to look at how these problems are complexly interrelated, without supposing from the outset that they are related systematically. If we take this approach, we can see that there are many other social forces operating to cause these problems besides capitalism. These other forces can sometimes be better understood as results of sexism, racism, colonialism, as well as noncapitalist class components, such as household and feudal class processes. If we stop thinking of capitalism as a system with an internal causal motor, we might be able to look more productively at the different aspects of the problems we are faced with and at the value of a wider variety of oppositional practices. By looking at the way that the problems we are faced with are constituted by a multiplicity of discourses, we come to see capitalism as a part of what must be addressed rather than as an all-encompassing and all-creating monster.

In her efforts to challenge the hegemony of the notion of capitalism as all-encompassing, Gibson-Graham gives this analytic definition of capitalism: "When individuals labor beyond what is necessary for their own reproduction and the 'surplus' fruits of their labor are appropriated by others (or themselves), and when that surplus is distributed to its social destinations, then we may recognize the processes of class." A capitalist class process is characterized by "wage labor and the appropriation of surplus value in the value form."[7]

There is something inherently viruslike the status of a capitalist economy.

This strategy opens up the possibility of seeing capitalism in less all-encompassing terms than we have tended to. And yet, I wonder why it is that capitalism has a tendency to appear so ubiquitous. At least a partial answer lies in the problems inherent in the concept of an economy. There is something inherently viruslike about the status of a capitalist economy. Because we are unable to see how the economy is related to other aspects of the social world, we see economic practices as simultaneously everywhere and nowhere.

2. IN FIGHTING CAPITALISM, ARE WE FIGHTING A CAPITALIST ECONOMY?

In *The Mirror of Production,* Jean Baudrillard argues that Marx himself got tripped up in his understanding of the nature of the economy by not challenging thoroughly enough the categories presented to us by capitalism.[8] Much of Marx's critique, especially in *Capital,* is intended to demonstrate how foolish the claims of political economists are with respect to the nature of the economy. Where political economists such as Adam Smith write as if market relations grow naturally out of free human interaction, Marx argued that there are specific political operations, such as the disempowerment of those without capital, that make a capitalist market economy function.

Yet, Baudrillard argues, Marx himself became ensnared in the myth he was trying to unveil when he argued that the basis of human existence was labor. "The system of political economy does not produce only the individual as labor power that is sold and exchanged: it produces the very conception of labor power as the fundamental human

potential."[9] Marx mistakenly took this artifact of a world constituted as capitalist and accepted it as part of the human essence. Baudrillard writes, "Man is not only quantitatively exploited as a productive force by the *system* of capitalist political economy, but is also metaphysically overdetermined as a producer by the *code* of political economy." This has led Marxist political theorists to a critique of capitalism that is incomplete. "Failing to conceive of a mode of social wealth other than that founded on labor and production, Marxism no longer furnishes in the long run a real alternative to capitalism."[10]

The idea of the person as a worker is an artifact of a capitalist world that separates some part of our existence and calls it economic. As feminist anthropologists have been keen to point out, when we look cross culturally, there is no clear set of practices which we can say constitute the economic part of our realities. Once the economy becomes constituted as an object, many people then call economic those practices which have to do with production for a market. But is the making of things at home for use any less economic than the making of those same things for the market? Once we decide that we will also label as economic activity other actions not geared toward producing for a market we have opened a can of worms. Is playing with children economic activity? Is praying? Once the limitations imposed by defining economic activity as production for the market are lifted, we are left with the problem of needing to include all human activity, or none, in our definition. The notion that there is a separate part of reality called the economy, and sets of activities definable as economic, originates, both materially and ideologically, with capitalism.

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In a book very much influenced by the Marxist tradition, Karl Polanyi explained the emergence of capitalism in a way that makes it clear why critics of capitalism have had a difficult time with the question of the nature of the economy. In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi argues that at the time of the rise of capitalism, markets in land and labor developed for the first time in European history.[11] These transformations were not the result of any inexorable movement of history; rather, they arose out of contingent historical transformations.[12] With these changes came the development of a sphere of life, later called "the economy," that was constituted out of the fabric of social life. Capitalism can be seen as the name given to a society in which a set of market relations, covering some very important facets of life, are given relative autonomy.

Thus, "the economy" as a separate part of life is a creation of capitalism, and while it is important in understanding the operations of capitalism to examine economic operations such as processes of capital accumulation, the circuits through which capital moves, and the different forms of capitalism that exist in the contemporary world, it also seems helpful to investigate the place in our world of the very notion of an economy. Because the notion of an autonomous economy developed in a world constituted as capitalist, we should be very cautious in taking transformation of the economy as our task. Rather, at least part of our goal should be to free society from economics and to challenge the autonomy of economic practices.

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The following description of multinational mining giant Freeport McMoRan illustrates the sort of structure those of us wanting to fight capitalism must confront:

> Freeport is the picture of modern corporatism, heedless of country or flag, ruthless in pursuit of profit. Across the globe its trail is marked by despoiled lands, poisoned water, ruined lives—its progress assured by a powerful nexus of forces. In Irian Jaya [the name given West Papua by the Indonesian dictatorship], it is the Indonesian military that guarantees Freeport's ability to do what it wants. In America, where all the regulations on the books don't threaten its standing as the nation's number one polluter, it is a clutch of compliant politicians, zealous PR agents and hired academics. In Congress, where Freeport joins the assault on the Endangered Species Act and wetlands protections, it is a multipronged lobbying effort and a PAC that in the past decade has disbursed money to three-fourths of the Senate and a quarter of the House.[13]

How do we understand the existence of such a beast? How does it come to structure so much of the current social reality? How can it be challenged? None of these questions seems helpfully addressed by looking at the economy as if it were a separate part of our lives.

If we want to challenge formations such as Freeport it is helpful to think of them as hybrids, as entities neither simply political nor economic. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, Bruno Latour argues that contemporary European society is built according to a constitution that splits the world into nature and human society and uses different strategies for understanding each.[14] While Latour's critique is intended to specifically address problems around understanding science in a modern context, his analysis can be appropriated here to help develop an understanding of the vortex of confusion that exists in radical attempts to critique and challenge the practices attributed to capitalism. Writing about the split between nature and society, Latour argues that central to the self-conception of modern society is the idea that these realms are separate. And yet this separation is a misrepresentation of our reality. Latour delights in pointing out all of the hybrids that proliferate in our world. He shows that much modern thought is structured by our first purifying the object of analysis into one of the two realms, then applying different methodologies to members of each realm. He suggests that the understanding of many things would be helped by allowing for the analysis of hybrids as such. This is useful for the present discussion if we think of economics as one pole of a split forged by the modern constitution.

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If we follow Latour's insight, the first step would be to refrain from supposing that the true reality of the corporation exists exclusively in the economic realm. Its existence cuts across our systemic categories. The orthodox Marxist strategy of overthrowing capitalism could be described as first purifying capitalism into the category "economic," then attempting to kill it with an opposed purified beast: the political system. Perhaps the field of strategic possibilities would be opened by a reconceptualization of the problems before us as hybrids.

3. SHOULD REVOLUTION BE OUR GOAL?

The orthodox Marxist notion of political revolution, followed by an economic revolution, begins to look very problematic in this context. Latour writes,

> By means of the critical spirit, the moderns have invented at one and the same time the total system, the total revolution to put an end to the system, and the equally total failure to carry out that revolution—a failure that leaves them in total postmodern despair! Isn't this the cause of many of the crimes with which we reproach ourselves? . . . the critics have imagined that we were incapable of tinkering, reshuffling, crossbreeding and sorting. On the basis of the fragile heterogeneous networks that collectives have always formed, the critics have elaborated homogeneous totalities that could not be touched unless they were totally revolutionized.[15]

When we develop a simplistic notion of a system then we are left with a theory of revolution that is also simplistic. The thing that we are trying to change is not a structure that can be removed from the social fabric. The practices that we feel compelled to criticize are embedded complexly and heterogeneously in the totalities of our lives. The problem with the concept of revolution as overthrow is that it supposes that the problem is separable from other parts of our lives. This leads us in two contradictory directions. On the one hand, we often make the task of getting rid of capitalism seem easier than it is. We see it as an autonomous part of reality that is separable and therefore easily removed. On the other hand we often overestimate the task. Capitalism is a system which underlies and generates so much of our reality that it can never be beaten. Capitalism becomes, in our oppositional consciousness, a monster that is the causal center for everything, including efforts to oppose it.

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The idea of the economy as a separable part of our lives developed in the modern period of European history. The economy was created as a set of practices distinct from other aspects of our lives. Yet this aspect of reality maintains its separateness, to the limited extent that it really is separate, through noneconomic practices. Although capitalism's organic quality exists it is important to challenge its constitution as an organism. Part of the challenge is to make explicit the ways in which the economy really is connected to other aspects of life (for example, the ways that military force and legal systems are constantly needed to allow for the so-called autonomy of the economy). We can challenge destructive practices through pushing on these links. Per-

haps we would be better off if we did not see the goal of anticapitalist struggle as overthrowing the economy in its independence, if we did not try to replace a capitalist economy with a socialist economy, but rather, if we tried to free human life from economics. As long as we see control over the economy as the goal of anticapitalist struggle, we remain stuck in the capitalist paradigm.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In suggesting that we abandon the concept of overthrowing the capitalist system through revolution, I am not suggesting that capitalism is not a useful analytic category. Nor am I suggesting that the practices which govern how our resources are transformed and distributed should not be radically transformed. Nor, finally, am I arguing that practices which lead to transformation are easy or safe. What I am suggesting is that our understanding of these relationships has been seriously obstructed by reification in our conceptualization of capitalism.

In "A Different Concept of the Private Sector, a Different Concept of the Public Sector," Anibal Quijano argues that most attempts at economic transformation in recent years, especially in Latin America, have been based on an understanding of the world built upon the categories that capitalism offers us.[16] On the one hand there are the neoliberals who argue that we should allow for the free development of the private sector. On the other hand are the statists who argue for state control over the economy. Both traditional capitalist and traditional socialist approaches to the economy take off from the constitution of the world as capitalist:

> Basically, both sides work on the basis of the same assumptions and the same categories: for both, "private" refers to the private sector as it has been shaped by capitalist interests, and "state" or "public" refers to the State-public facet of the private sector as defined in those terms and is perhaps its rival, but not its opponent. For both sides, the instrumental rationale turns back upon itself, creating a vicious circle.[17]

In the current setup, we have a public sphere that sometimes challenges the private sphere, but in which both are permeated by the

logics of instrumental rationality arising from a world influenced by capitalism. Quijano then goes on to argue that we need to develop a concept of the public that is not based on Lockean liberal principles. Instead we need to develop an understanding of "socially oriented private activity." We must foster forms of action which challenge the constitution of our world according to the logic of instrumental rationality.

Efforts to transform material prac must be grou in the complexities of the social totality

In recent years, progressive state-level economic development schemes have largely failed in Latin America and Africa. It seems to be the case that within the current reality, it is not possible, even if you have "good people" running the state, to transform an economy in a way that improves most people's lives. Part of the reason for this failure is that much of our approach to change has been based on a naive idea of the autonomy of the economy. The economy cannot be transformed without taking into account the whole socio-economic-cultural-psychological reality that constitutes the economy.

Commenting on the failure of the schemes of the most well-intentioned economists, José Távara writes,

> We are thus left in the uncomfortable position, pretty familiar in academic circles, of allegedly knowing what strategic industrial policies are required to improve the situation of the impoverished population but lacking the environment that would make them viable and the political will to carry them out. As this position does not lead us anywhere, it is necessary to look elsewhere for inspiration and direction.[18]

He argues that a development strategy cannot be developed by economic experts proposing reforms to the economy—even left-wing economic experts. It would be more fruitful to look at the development initiatives that have emerged from democratic processes. Efforts to transform material practices must be grounded in the complexities of the social totality. Rather than focusing on the economy as an object of transformation, Távara is interested in practices and forms of organization that are socioeconomic. He encourages us to shift our attention from the level of macroeconomic policy to the grassroots level.

In discussing this, Távara draws on the example of the community of El Salvador in Lima, Peru, in which local organizing efforts led to the development of a diversity of interlinked initiatives such as

> communal kitchens, church groups, health-care workshops, women's groups, producers' associations, an industrial park, and an active democratically elected, local government. . . . The achievements of El Salvador cannot be overemphasized. It now has 250,000 inhabitants, living in relatively neat, self-constructed housing units. Almost two hundred nursery, elementary, and secondary schools have been built, mostly by community volunteers, and the rate of illiteracy has been substantially reduced.[19]

Admitting that within this community, individualist profit-making enterprises are still a part of the reality, Távara argues that the logic of capital is interacting with logics of reciprocity and solidarity in ways that are transformative. Because, he argues, capitalism cannot be simply eliminated, plucked from society as if it were external to it, our best hope is to do work to encourage the development of institutions and practices that make good, humane lives possible, building on the links between these institutions whenever possible.[20]

In *Sustainability and Justice*, the environmental justice organization Urban Habitat describes contemporary struggles in which people are fighting the ability of those with capital to negatively affect people's lives.[21] In one example, residents of Kettleman City, California, organized and fought the placement of a toxic waste incinerator in their community. Under the notion of an idealized, autonomous market economy, it has been supposed that the owners of the toxic facility could act as they pleased in the community. By rejecting the incinerator, the local residents are fighting the autonomy of those with capital.

People in movements such as those described by Urban Habitat tend to be proud of their successes but circumspect in the claims they make about the significance of their work. Rarely does one hear of such a fight conceptualized as part of the struggle against capitalism. I would like to suggest that these examples, and thousands more like them, are the ways that capitalism is being fought at the present moment. These practices are anticapitalist because they have the effect of undercutting the ability of those with capital to act in ways that are destructive to our lives and the life of the planet.

Many people on the Left have been very cautious to present a vision based on the positive effects of the small things we are doing. Part of this caution is related to a very legitimate fear of the pernicious effects of liberalism on our thinking. My own understanding of the distinction between a left analysis and a liberal one is that liberals often do not operate with a clear understanding of power relations. Many liberals, following in the footsteps of social-democratic theorist Edward Bernstein, believe that power will devolve from the capitalist class without a struggle.[22] But in fighting this specter of liberalism, we have gone too far in the other direction, seeing any claims to victory as naive. Indeed, our caution has led to a sense of failure and despair that is so overwhelming it is paralyzing us.

In saying that we should claim as anticapitalist victories any successes we have in fighting the autonomy of the economy, I do not mean to imply that I think the fight against capitalism is an easy one or that fights over control of resources and the transformation of social practices will not likely be at times bloody. In fact, it seems to me that the old Marxist model of class struggle is perfectly appropriate here.

If we focus our analysis of social change on the split between economics and the rest of our lives, we can see the significance of a variety of initiatives that oppose robbery and human misery on a global scale.[23] Through challenging these processes, we transform our world. These local activities, combined with global fights against the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the US military hegemony can change our realities considerably. More work needs to be done to institutionalize the changes being fought for and to develop the linkages between environmentally and culturally sustainable practices. If we could replace the image of capitalism as a system to be overthrown with the image of a world shot through with a variety of practices and processes which are destructive to our lives, perhaps we could see the ways in which much of the work that we are doing right now challenges capitalism.

These practices are anticapitalist because they undercut the ability of those with capital to act in ways that are destructive to our lives and the life of the planet.

Looking back at the work I did in the movement to defeat NAFTA, I recognize that I was engaged in an important (albeit failed) struggle against capitalism. I also believe that the intellectual tools I was working with helped in many ways and hindered in others. The central way that they interfered was by undermining my sense of the work's significance. I am not suggesting that thinking about capitalism in a different way will eliminate it but rather that we need to do more of what we have been doing and do it better. The clearer we are about what we are doing and why, the more effective we will be. And if we have a vision of how the small practices we are engaged in add up to a broader strategy for transformation, we can be more sustained and inspired by our work.

While I was working on this piece, the AFL-CIO announced a new initiative to dedicate millions of dollars to grassroots organizing. I think back on the fight against NAFTA and imagine what a difference it would have made if we had been working with a labor movement full of grassroots organizers, well trained and rooted in their communities. We probably would have won that battle. A world full of these struggles might not lead to a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist economy, but with victories in enough of them, the social fabric will be radically enough transformed that we will no longer be in the same world facing the same problems.

NOTES

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1 For a discussion of the expected effects of NAFTA from before it was implemented, see Jeff Faux and Thea Lee, *The Road to the North American Free Trade Agreement: Laissez-Faire or Ladder Up?* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, November 1991). For a similar discussion of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) see *GATT Action Packet* (San Francisco: Rainforest Action Network, 1992).

2 *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is an important exception here. See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (New York: Verso, 1985).

3 I take the term *oppositional imagination* from Joan Cocks, *The Oppositional Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

4 J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 252.

5 Ibid., p. 251.

6 Ibid., p. 260.

7 Ibid. pp. 17, 18. I worry that the notion of surplus value arises out of the economism that I will explore later in this essay. For an excellent discussion of the problem of economism in Marxian value theory see "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value," in Gayarti Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 154–175.

8 Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1975).

9 Ibid., p. 31.

10 Ibid., p. 29.

11 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944).

12 I suspect that the transformation is closely related to a wide variety of historical factors, including the rise of the slave trade, the enclosure movement in England, and the rise of Protestantism.

13 Eyal Press, "Freeport-McMoRan at Home and Abroad," *The Nation*, July 31, 1995, p. 125.

14 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). The term *hybrid* is a bit problematic as it implies two separate entities mixed together. This is clearly not what Latour intends. What he is pointing to are aspects of reality that are forcibly turned into separate entities by certain compulsions in our cultural systems.

15 Ibid., p. 126.

16 Anibal Quijano, "A Different Concept of the Private Sector, a Different Concept of the Public Sector: Notes for a Latin American Debate," *CEPAL Review* 35 (1988): pp. 105–120.

17 Ibid., p. 110.

18 José Távara, "Development Strategies in Latin America: Which Way Now?" in *Creating a New World Economy: Forces of Change and Plans for Action*, ed. Gerald Epstein, Julie Graham, and Jessica Nembhard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 396.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 400.

21 Urban Habitat, *Sustainability and Justice: A Message to the President's Council on Sustainable Development* (San Francisco: Urban Habitat/Earth Island Institute, 1995).

22 Edward Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, trans. Edith Harvey (New York: Shocken Books, 1975).

23 This notion of capitalism as a system of robbery is borrowed from Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. In *Devil on the Cross*, he does a wonderful job demystifying capitalism by having his characters refer to capitalists as robbers and thieves and debate the value of thievery for society (Suffolk, UK: Heinemann, 1988).