

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

DEDICATED TO MARGARET McBRIDE

YOU FOUGHT FOR SO LONG, AND NOW YOU
CAN REST. I KNOW JESSIE WAS WAITING FOR YOU.

I MISS YOU EVERY DAY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT

**LONG-TERM MACROECONOMIC GLOBAL-NETWORK
STRATEGIES FOR CHANGING THE WORLD**

MONICA BUCHAN-NG

2014

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters in Fine Arts
Endorsed in Design

at Massey University
Wellington, New Zealand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In abstract:

Welcome to the modal economy, where the diversity and fluidity of human nature is supported. We'd like to introduce a new economic system that encourages ethical, equitable behaviour through a series of improvements to the mechanisms of ownership, value, and trade. Capitalism has been with us for over 200 years, and it's time to upgrade.

The modal economy will be implemented by supporting organisation The Department of Economic Adjustment. We look forward to engaging you through digital media, supplementary pamphlets, instructional videos, and a series of product development focus sessions. We are looking to make a dynamic and responsive economic structure in collaboration with you.

Your feedback is important to us.

What would you change about your economy?

HEATHER GALBRAITH AND REBECCA SINCLAIR;
Supervisors of the highest order and shiniest garb

JOY ROXAS;
Indispensible to soul and to type

THE MFA COHORT;
For sanity and insanity in equally necessary doses

THE COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS;
Maddie Leach, Julieanna Preston,
Keir Husson, and David Cross

THE RESERVE BANK MUSEUM;
Mark Holland, and the MONIAC for water

and of course

MY FAMILY;
Peter for silliness, Mum for support.
Uncle Mike for being pro-capitalism.
Dad, I'm not doing a PhD anytime soon.

The way you relate to your economy is about to undergo a series of improvements. We're here to link you back into your system, to activate you as an autonomous node in a structure that is conscientious and responsive to our needs as a collective world. We simultaneously make you independent, and part of a network. You are the beginnings of change.

Welcome to the economic upgrade. We're delighted to have you, and your contribution is critical to us.

The following are the long-term macro-network strategies for changing the world:

Firstly, the Department of Economic Adjustment, the arbiters of the upgrade, will alert the population of developed nations that their behaviour is the product of our capitalist environment; i.e. its creation of competition and hierarchies makes us selfish and greedy. The destructive impulses of humans within capitalism are caused by the behaviour it rewards.

Secondly, the modal economy and the Department of Economic Adjustment will disengage capitalism from human nature, and reveal that our current

understanding of what is natural is an artifice created to encourage jealous, avaricious, and individualistic behaviour. We are becoming the misshapen *homo œconomicus*ⁱ; a human created by economics to generate predictable behaviour, insatiable desire, and limitless growth.

Thirdly, the modal economy will be introduced as a viable alternative to the current system, fulfilling a gap in the market between capitalism and the future; i.e. capitalism is not indispensable, nor the only economic system available to us. If we instigate a responsive system that rewards community, diversity and reciprocity, those behaviours will become 'natural'.

The Department uses the modal economy to engineer a more ethical, equitable, and balanced version of humanity (according to our institutional definitions, alongside those of philosophers Peter Singer, Franco Berardi and Bruno Latour). You are necessary for the successful implementation of these three strategies – your agency and engagement with economics is vital for the full modal network to be launched. We need you to help develop how economy and ethics grow together, how they shape each other. This is an inclusive conversation.

ⁱ 'Economic Man' coined by J.S. Mill, as cited in John Laurent, *Introduction to Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*

The strategies above will be executed through transdisciplinary communication. The separating of capitalism from human nature is the most important task, transcending conventional practice, discipline, and methodology. We start from the problem and work outwards to find the methods that are most effective.

The best methods are determined to be a synthesis of socially engaged artistic practice, speculative design, and heterodox economics. The Department has visualised new alternatives with colours and textures and materials that assure you of our authority and capability, and encourage you to project your own versions into the space. It disseminates this visualisation through product development focus groups, instructional diagrams and video, creative non-fiction writing, and interactive web media. These forms are threaded from art, design, and economics in equal measure.

From design: the visualisation of new futures, aesthetics, and human interfaces, systems design and prototyping; Anthony Dunne, Fiona Raby, and Sou Fujimoto.

From art: the critique of the present, the shift of audience to active participant, the history of activism,

and the aesthetics of listening; Pedro Reyes, Dane Mitchell, Santiago Sierra, and the Yes Men.

From economics: The seeds of new structures, the elements and materials that make up trade, production, and immaterial exchange; the economies of Jeremy Rifkin and Charles Eisenstein.

Please remember that our system is a system, made of our interactions; and therefore able to be reformed. Join us in fixing the seeping decay bound to the current structure. This is the next step from capitalism – help us improve it.

10

What would you change about your economy? We're here to listen.

Note that the following terms are essential to the Department:

Economy is the system by which humanity produces, distributes, and satisfies the requirements of human life and society. This goes beyond goods and services to include the flows of wealth and resources, methods of trade, and the fulfilment of physical, emotional, and aesthetic human needs.ⁱⁱ

Economics is the study of economy: the distribution of wealth, the predictions of behaviour, and the analysis of systems.

Capitalism is the current economic system, which uses 'capital': the financial, human, and material resources to produce goods and services to supply the demand of consumers. This has spread outwards from Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and can be attributed to the deregulation of markets, the advent of consumerism, and the linking of power to wealth.ⁱⁱⁱ

Heterodox economics are alternative economics: either significant modifications to mainstream capitalism, or entirely new structures.^{iv} This is the space from which the modal economy stems.

11

ii As defined by Louis Putterman, *Dollars and Change*

iii Capitalism's role in society is expanded on in Book I.

iv As defined by Peter Corning, *The Fair Society*

1

THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE
CURRENTLY, AT THE INTERSECTION OF
ECONOMICS, BEHAVIOUR, AND HUMAN NATURE.

I feel guilty for being a member of the human race
– Jack Kerouac¹

14

¹ Jack Kerouac, *Big Sur*, 127.

I am not an economist.

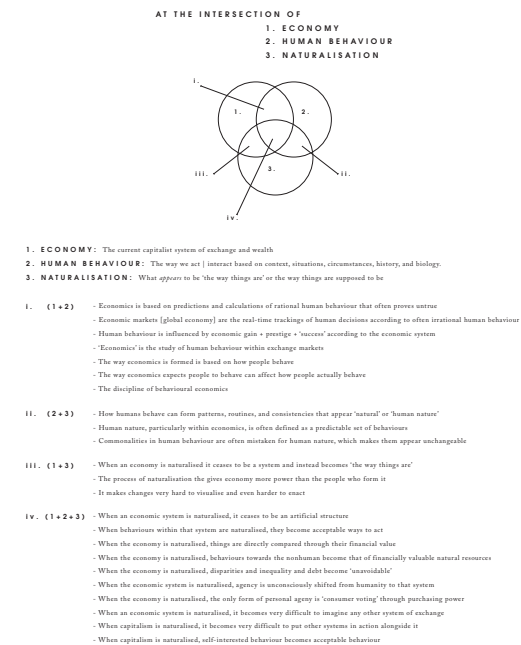
Don't let that dissuade you of my ability to touch the forces that bind our entire planet into a single system. The global economy connects the human and nonhuman, the living, the abiotic, the moss. I am a part of it, and I like to watch its workings.

This research project is based on my assertion that the causes for social and environmental ruin are located at the specific intersection^[Fig. 1] between economics, behaviour, and human nature. The cycles of influence between them currently create an environment that rewards selfishness and greed, and naturalise that behaviour. This, in turn, results in the spread of capitalism from a type of economy to a hard science, and from a trading structure to a complex, globalised chain. We are losing our grip on what is natural.

15

In this book I will be discussing the serrated edges that the intersection has created: the disparities caused by capitalism; the historical relationship between capitalism and human nature; and the naturalised shift from system to ideology. I will also propose a new theory of human nature that forms the foundation of my work.

Fig. 1



WHEN THE NATURALISATION OF THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM
AND THE BEHAVIOURS THAT ARE NATURAL WITHIN THAT
SYSTEM ARE NO LONGER VISIBLE, THEY ARE NO LONGER
ADJUSTABLE.



MAKE NATURALISATION APPARENT [Series 1]



HIGHER ABILITY FOR ADJUSTMENT AND REDESIGN [Series 2]

Brought to you by
The Department of
Economic Adaptation
17th April 2014

Development work: "At the Intersection of".
Text on paper, 2014.

THE INEQUALITIES CAUSED BY CAPITALISM;

One of the most elusive and dangerous aspects of capitalism is its ability to naturalise behaviour in the interests of the wealthy and powerful.² The foundation of its inequalities can be found in the systemic veneration of self-interest and avarice; the otherisation of lower classes and developing populations; and the legitimisation of this behaviour by claiming it is our natural instinct to do so.

Economists William Baumol and Alan Blinder describe the capitalist marketplace as a series of rewards and penalties that automatically engender inequality. Philosopher Franco Berardi adds that it relies on the scarcity of commodities, capital, and labour to create hierarchies that motivate work and growth. It sustains itself, malignant creature, in its creation of *desire* - for the lives of others, for the material goods that will fill our emotional needs. What we earn and how conspicuously we spend it are inextricably bound to our identity - as sociologist Georg Simmel⁵ explains, our wealth becomes part of our self. Your purchasing power, your consumer dollars, and your labour create your social value and your personal identity.

2 Particularly pertinent to the removal of financial limits to political 'gifts' in the USA this year as mentioned in Gary Younge's article "You ain't seen nothin' yet"

3 William J. Baumol and Alan S. Blinder, as cited in Peter Corning, *The Fair Society*

4 Franco Berardi, *After the Future*

5 Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 79, 256

Everything that the economy touches is measured by monetary worth.⁶

We cannot see what we have; only what we are still to accumulate. We cannot see the pain of those under us, only the brightness of those above us.

The neoliberal incarnation of capitalism is particularly vicious. According to the theory of its founder Adam Smith, it creates a natural balance between the forces of supply and demand without the damaging effects of government interference.⁷ However it assumes a level playing field in which all actors - individuals, companies, and nations - are equal to begin with. This allows the rich to believe their success is from hard work; the unemployed, those under the poverty line, those hampered by the inconveniences of marginalisation are *lazy*, not systemically disadvantaged. They don't work as hard, they aren't as smart, because the market rewards dedication and perseverance - anyone can do it, it's only a coincidence that in America 90% of the 400 richest people are men, and 97% of them white,⁸ and that New Zealand's rich list has only two women and no Māori.⁹

6 Ibid., 326

7 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

8 Kerry Dolan and Luisa Kroll, "The Richest People in America, 2014"

9 The National Business Review, "The Rich List 2014"

To admit the system is weighted in their favour would bring into question their sense of self, too painful to examine closely.

Peter Corning also noted capitalism's otherisation of those outside of our social circle: the tribal in-group/out-group phenomena.¹⁰ In 2013, 1129 people died in the collapse of an unsafe offshore garment factory. Neoliberal economists dismissed this as the workers choosing reward, their pay a return for the higher risk they took on,¹¹ because they *chose* starvation wages, because they had plenty of viable alternatives to pick from, because they were not modern day slaves. The tragedy was a one-off case, the fault of an errant factory owner, *not* the economic pressures of Western contractors and consumers. Berardi attributes this to the systemic dehumanisation of the working class into time packets and units per hour,¹² where workers such as those in Rana Plaza^(Fig. 2) were not real humans but a series of numbers that didn't calculate profit at the end of the April quarter. We put up artificial barriers to empathy between those who manufacture our goods and ourselves, so that we are able to close our eyes to ensure my ASOS cardigan stays under \$10.

10 Corning, *The Fair Society*

11 Matthew Yglesias, "Different Places Have Different Safety Rules and That's OK"

12 Berardi, *After the Future*

Fig. 2



Taslima Akhter. "Rana Plaza Collapse: Death of a Thousand Dreams." Photograph, Savar, April 2013.

Not only have we built alienating walls between our class and 'the poor' as a faceless mass, capitalism walls us off from the once-permeating environment. It is 'other', a resource to be used at will, and the climate merely an economic externality. We assume we are superior to animals, forgetting that we *are* animals, as destructive as any earthquake or locust swarm. Philosopher Bruno Latour states we are pitting the laws of economics against the laws of nature and behaving as if the economy will win.¹³ The economy values the subjective, the inherently valuable, living creatures and philosophical ideas and indigenous cultures alike with a homogenous, quantifiable market price.¹⁴

Naturalist Charles Darwin noted the detrimental effects of unfettered competition to the evolution of species;¹⁵ free-market capitalism enables such an environment. The dwindling planet is being divided amongst a handful of humans that are obscured behind fog-like multinational companies. They never stay still long enough for us to form an opposition.

This is what motivates me. Call it the offset of guilt, or altruism, or whatever you like – I cannot stand to be witness without trying to do something, no matter how insubstantial or quixotic it might be.

13 Bruno Latour, "The Affects of Capitalism"

14 Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 256

15 As cited in Robert Frank, *The Darwin Economy*, 138

THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND HUMAN NATURE;

Everyone has a theory of human nature

- Steven Pinker¹⁶

Moral philosopher Adam Smith was the first to outline capitalism in his seminal text *The Wealth of Nations*, and the founding father of free-market ideologies. When I read it I feel as if I am standing both in 1776 and 2014, looking into the past to see the present, like both eras are parallel, overlapped, and the transparent outlines of each draw eerily similar pictures.

Smith believed that society would be benefitted by selfishness, because mankind is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention...By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."¹⁷ An individual's success only raises the society of the nation; a rising tide raises all boats. Adam Smith's capitalism is truly effective when its capitalists and workers alike nurture their greed, their competitive instinct, and their selfishness.

16 As cited in Corning, *The Fair Society*

17 Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Book 1, 400

But Smith's view of human nature is idealistic at best. He assumed that the rich "consume little more than the poor...in spite of their natural selfishness. ...They are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessities of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions"¹⁸ – the divide of wealth would never exceed its natural limit. He lived in a world where the United States had only just become an independent country, where limitless growth had the whole undiscovered world to stretch out into. He did not see the blind pursuit of one's own interests leading to the monolithic disparities of the wealth of today's economy, despite the fact it runs on the tracks he laid down. Invisible hands no longer refer to the forces of supply and demand; they are the hands of the faraway people who make our new consumer goods.

19th century political economist John Stuart Mill solidified Smith's assumptions in an entirely new creature: *homo œconomicus*, a two-dimensional human driven by its own interests, competitive, calculatingly rational, and motivated purely by the desire for wealth.¹⁹ This defined capitalism's conception of human nature, and provided the base for which, according to venerated economist

18 Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 184-5

19 As cited in Peter Groenewegen, "Alfred Marshall on Homo œconomicus", 114

20 Ibid.

21 As cited in John Laurent, "Charles Darwin on Human Nature", 105

22 Ibid, 106

John Maynard Keynes, all economic predictions, formulae, and theories are measured²⁰ – it forms the understanding that our economy is built on. Is it so strange we believe we are selfish? Greedy? Singular?

Homo œconomicus stands in direct contrast to the social animal whose evolutionary survival depended on the closeness and reciprocity of interdependent communities.²¹ Darwin noted in *The Descent of Man* that those who were most empathetic "would flourish the best"²² and argued for the extension of our empathetic boundaries to all nations, all races.²³ Altruism – the fundamental irrationality of helping others for no advantage – has even been identified in specific genes.²⁴ In fact, a group of anthropologists and economists visited 15 small-scale societies in search of capitalism's canonical *homo œconomicus* with a series of behavioural experiments designed to test the economic relationships of non-globalised societies. They did not find selfishness, nor rationality, only diversity, reciprocity, and community.²⁵ Decisions were not defined by a biological self-interest as Smith, Mill, and their successors would have you believe, but by the "economic and social interactions of everyday life."²⁶

23 And if we can empathise with all members of our species, why not include nonhuman species and the wider biosphere?

24 R. Bachner-Melman, et. al., "Dopaminergic polymorphisms"

25 J. Heinrich, et. al., "In Search of Homo Œconomicus." Experiments included ultimatum, social good, and dictator games in 11 countries across Asia, South America, and Africa.

26 Ibid, 77

In fact, nearly every discipline from sociology, philosophy, to neuropsychology and the brain sciences, has a definition of human nature, with arguments cemented in the divine, in evolution, and in science.²⁷ Some attribute them to our genetic makeup, our DNA as a formula for behaviour.²⁸ Others argue they are caused by nurture, our cultural and social context.²⁹ As Corning demonstrates, the debate is continuous, varied, and cross-disciplinary.³⁰ The definition of human nature is as fluid as water – and just as malleable. And that is where economics has found its greatest stronghold: as a Truth, an unassailable concrete definition. Capitalism has been moulded to our selfish ‘nature’ (despite centuries of evidence to the contrary) and therefore is the natural economic system.

27 (The god of our age)

28 Berardi, *After the Future*

29 Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, as cited in Corning, *The Fair Society*

30 Corning, *The Fair Society*, 55-86

THE NATURALISED SHIFT FROM ECONOMY TO IDEOLOGY;

It cannot be compared with the exact physical sciences, for it deals with the ever-changing and subtle forces of human nature

– Alfred Marshall³¹

And that is the most worrying aspect of capitalism: the fact that it has blinded us to any alternative, the fact that it models itself as human nature and we believe it. The catastrophic failures of socialism and communism have only served to reinforce this, despite the fact that all three have equally utopian concepts of human nature.³² In fact, Latour outlines that capitalism seems to *enjoy* being overthrown.³³ It easily co-opts the attempts on its artificial life: the aesthetics of revolution, riot, and true dissent have been subverted into popular culture.^(Fig. 3) Each failure reasserts its inability to be pared away from economy.

Corning asserts that human nature is an ongoing argument between the ‘hardware’ of biology and the ‘software’ of culture.³⁴ Both influence the behaviours we condone as a society. It is no wonder that the expectation and reward of selfishness so embedded

31 Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*

32 Corning, *The Fair Society*. Socialism’s egalitarian, altruistic human is no more true than capitalism’s rational, selfish one. Both systems are built on rotten foundations.

33 Latour, *The Affects of Capitalism*

34 Corning, *The Fair Society*

Fig. 3



Romain Gavras "No Church in the Wild." YouTube Music video stills, Kanye West and Jay-Z, Roc-A-Fella Records, USA, 2012.

in our economy would serve to make us more selfish – and make us believe we are naturally selfish, rather than nurtured to be so. Capitalism has no inherent morality³⁵ – it is hollow, just a façade of empty hierarchies and empty desires. It defines the cruelties of the world as inevitable, and we feel nothing but powerlessness in the face of the structure we create and nourish every day. We have come to resemble the skeleton-warped, soft-bellied, hundred-year-old *homo oeconomicus*.

Capitalism strengthens its inescapability by easing itself away from political economy to a hard science.³⁶ Latour argues that science is today viewed as objective, truthful, merely the discovery and translation of pre-existing nature.³⁷ When capitalism takes on those characteristics it becomes a set of rules that appear to be more powerful than the laws of nature itself, to the point where many believe in capitalism more than climate change. Additionally, the study of economics quite specifically tangles itself in such a way as to convince outsiders to keep their fingers out of its mechanisms.³⁸ Its esotericism serves to enhance the deific status of the system as something you will never understand nor be able to change.

35 In fact, a study by Eugene Caruso et. al. found that mentioning money is enough to influence the acceptance the immoralities of neoliberalism. "Mere exposure to money increases endorsement"

36 Attributed to Thomas Mitchell by Latour in "The Affects of Capitalism"

37 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 39

38 As noted by Michel Foucault and discussed by Latour in "The Affects of Capitalism"

It is so easy to forget that capitalism is a nonphysical system, made up of our transactions, our commercial relationships, our labour.
But it is not made of solidity or law. It is immaterial.
It is changeable.

30

It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to
imagine the end of capitalism.
– Frederic Jameson³⁹

I can find scientific evidence of our ethical predispositions. Neuropsychology and behavioural genetics have discovered morality on neural substrates and associated subcortical structures.⁴⁰ However science's version is just as subjective as the more fluid human nature of philosophy, or of evolution, and there are no doubt articles proving the opposite.

Everyone has a theory of human nature, and I have mine. I am inclined to align with Plato's fundamental duality between the ego and the social.⁴¹ My theory of human nature is that of *shifting*.

I don't think we have species-wide 'natural' inclinations toward any one behaviour, moral or amoral. We are neither wholly selfish nor altruistic. A universal human nature seems too much of a generalisation to me. Is it so hard to be satisfied with our diversity? With the fragmentation of varied proclivities, with this person being more likely to act in such a way on some such day? Surely we can embrace *heterogeneity*.

31

39 Frederic Jameson, "Future City"

40 James Woodward & John Allman, "Moral intuition"

41 Plato, as cited in Corning, *The Fair Society*

Our 'hard-wiring' – our genetic coding, our biological human nature – is the capacity to act in infinite ways, the choices between splintered degrees of reactions. It is the pre-programmed capability to respond emotionally, logically, empathetically, egoistically, kindly, viciously. Human nature is a gradating spectrum of options of being and responding – in our environments, our relationships, alone by the sea in winter, in a room with five other people and an ex-lover. Limitless responses are natural.

Our soft wiring, the nurture, the environment, filters out aspects of that spectrum and inclines it to certain channels that have had positive outcomes in the past. It predetermines which responses, of the myriad of emotions we have available to us, are to be expected socially and culturally. It bends us in common directions.

Our economic system forms so much of our environment, across all aspects of life,⁴² quite unchecked. As such, it has a direct line to how we behave.

⁴² One could argue that nonhuman wilderness on the side of Mt. Taranaki is not an economic space, nor the ocean a hundred miles from shore, nor hours spent in voluntary work. And yet somehow we make them so, we value them for the oil we can drill and the fish we can extract and the tourist dollars they entrap, the wages that could have been earned. It all comes down to a quantifiable price. The economy lies heavy across everything. I wish it were not so but it is.

We inflict suffering – burnt-flesh, human cruelty.

We act in selflessness, and love.

We are rational, and we are emotional. We reciprocate and we ostracise. We are many things all at once and at different times, simultaneous and separate, on an inconstant and unpredictable amalgam of behaviour. It is our capacity for genocide complicity *and* a civil rights movement that is human nature. It is our fluidity, our malleability of behaviour that is human nature.

This assumption is the framework for my own ethic, for my own economic system.

What happens when an economic system is built to channel the positive facets of human nature? When a system is built to acknowledge the fact that we are destructive and selfish, but also altruistic? When our economic structures are formed to make it easier to make ethical decisions – when you will not have to decide between wealth and equality?

(I am starting to see what it would look like, the network, the lights.)

REFERENCES

- Bachner-Melman, R., Gritsenko, I., Nemanov, L., Zoha, A.H., Dina, C., and Ebstein, E.P. "Dopaminergic polymorphisms associated with self-report measures of human altruism: A fresh phenotype for the dopamine D4 receptor". *Molecular Psychiatry* 10 (2005): 333–5.
- Berardi, Franco. *After the Future*. Oakland: AK Press, 2011.
- Caruso, Eugene. M., Vohs, Kathleen. D., Baxter, Brittani., and Waytz, A. "Mere exposure to money increases endorsement of free-market systems and social inequality." *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 142 no. 2 (2013): 301–306.
- Corning, Peter. *The Fair Society: The Science of Human Nature and the Pursuit of Social Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Dolan, Kerry, & Kroll, Luisa. "The Richest People In America, 2014". *Forbes*, September 29, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/>
- Frank, Robert H. *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and the Common Good*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Groenewegen, Peter. "Alfred Marshall on Homo oeconomicus: Evolution versus Utilitarianism?" In *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 114–133. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.
- Henrich, J., Boyd, R., Bowles, S., Camerer, C., Fehr, C., Gintis, H., and McElreath, R. In Search of Homo Economicus: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies. *American Economic Review* 91 no. 2 (2001): 73–78.
- Jameson, Frederic. "Future City". *New Left Review*, 21 (May 2003).
- Kerouac, Jack. *Big Sur*. London: Harper Perennial, 2010. First published 1962 by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy.
- Laurent, John. "Charles Darwin on Human Nature." In *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 96–113. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.
- Laurent, John. Introduction to *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 1–33. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.
- Latour, Bruno. "The Affects of Capitalism". YouTube video, 1:00:46, from a lecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences, Copenhagen, February 26, 2014, posted by Videnskabernes Selskab, February 28, 2014), <http://youtu.be/8i-ZKfShovs>
- Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Marshall, Alfred. *Principles of Economics*. 9th ed. London: Macmillan, 1961. First published 1890 by Macmillan.
- The National Business Review. "The Rich List 2014", *The National Business Review*, July 31, 2014. <http://www.nbr.co.nz/rich-list-2014>
- Putterman, Louis. *Dollars and Change: Economics in Context*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Simmel, G. *The Philosophy of Money*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge, 2004. Translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby. First published 1900.

Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Dent, 1981. First published 1776 by W. Strahan and T. Cadell.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by D.D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976. First published 1759 by A. Millar.

Woodward, James., & Allman, John. "Moral intuition: Its neural substrates and normative significance." *Journal of Physiology Paris* 101 no. 4 (2007): 179-202.

Yglesias, Matthew. "Different Places Have Different Safety Rules and That's OK." *Moneybox Blog*, April 24, 2013. http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2013/04/24/international_factory_safety.html

Younge, Gary. "Thought money could buy an American election? You ain't seen nothin' yet." *The Guardian*. April 6, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/06/money-bought-elections-us-donation-rules?CMP=tw_t_gu

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

AFP. "Bangladesh's garment industry says 200 plants shut since Rana Plaza tragedy". *The Economic Times*, September 11, 2014. <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/bangladeshs-garment-industry-says-200-plants-shut-since-rana-plaza-tragedy/articleshow/42267039.cms>

BBC News Business. "Viewpoints: What Should Capitalism Do?" *BBC News*, May 26, 2014. http://www.bbc.com/news/business-27517577?ocid=socialflow_twitter

Bone, John. "The Deregulation Ethic and the Conscience of Capitalism: How the Neoliberal 'free market' Model Undermines Rationality and Moral Conduct. *Globalizations* 9 no. 5 (2012): 651-665.

Cassidy, Lisa. "Women Shopping and Women Sweatshopping: Individual Responsibility for Consumerism." In *Fashion Philosophy for Everyone*, edited by Jessica Wolfendale & Jeanette Kennett, 186-198. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2011.

Clark, David L., Boutros, Nash N., and Mendez, Mario F. *The Brain and Behaviour: An Introduction to Behavioural Neuroanatomy*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Fitzgibbons, Athol. "Adam Smith's Theory of Human Nature". In *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 63-73. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.

Harenski, Carla L., Antonenko, Olga., Shane, Matthew S., and Kiehl, Kent A. "A functional imaging investigation of moral deliberation and moral intuition." *NeuroImage* 49 no. 3 (2010): 2707–16.

Jost, John T., Blount, Sally., Pfeffer, Jeffrey., & Hunyady, György. "Fair Market Ideology: Its Cognitive-Motivational Underpinnings." *Research in Organisational Behavior* 25 (2003): 53-91.

Kalis, Giorgios. "How Economics Became a Science". *Adbusters: Blueprint for a New World* 22 no. 1 (April 2, 2014). <https://www.adbusters.org/magazine/112/battle-soul-economics.html>

Knowles, Rob. "Kropotkin and Reclus: Geographers, Evolution, and 'Mutual Aid'." In *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 134-152. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.

Laurent, John., & Cockfield, Geoff. (2007). "Adam Smith, Charles Darwin and the Moral Sense." In *New Perspectives on Adam Smith's The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, edited by Geoff Cockfield, Ann Firth, & John Laurent, 141-162. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Lasn, Kalle. & Adbusters. *Meme Wars: The Creative Destruction of Neoclassical Economics*. London: Penguin Economics, 2012

Matthews, Dylan. "Poor countries can keep workers safe and still escape poverty." *Washington Post*, April 25, 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/04/25/poor-countries-can-keep-workers-safe-and-still-escape-poverty/>

Palombi, Luigi. "Human DNA belongs to no one - it shouldn't be patented." *The Guardian*. September 8, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/08/human-dna-belongs-to-no-one-it-shouldnt-be-patented>

Pieńkowski, Dariusz. (2009). "Selfishness, cooperation, the evolutionary point of view and its implications for economics." *Ecological Economics* 69 no. 2 (2009): 335-344.

Pierlott, Matthew F. "Moral considerations in outsourcing to foreign labour." *International Journal of Social Economics* 31 no. 5-6 (2004): 582-592.

Ridley, Matt & Low, Bobbi S. "Can Selfishness Save the Environment?" *The Atlantic*, September 1, 1993, 76-86.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991. First published 1969 by Delacorte.

Walker, Ranginui. *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*. Auckland: Penguin, 1990.

d. guilt.

How can anyone imagine a future in the face of imminent destruction? In the face of my death, yours, the death of the people you passed on the street today and yesterday and six years ago. In the face of sheer helplessness, the impossibility of doing anything about it, of sitting bound in that gilded cage where each one has one person in it & we all sit there looking at each other and below in some sort of synchronised restriction that stretches out with an unceasing plunge between this row & the next, to the unguided, & the one above, & just enough space between me & you to almost brush the tips of our fingers together

I don't cry because I've had a bad day, not for surface reasons. I cry because I can see the roiling mass of our world & it blackens me, it hollows me. I cry because feminism is a dirty word & because the only people who don't think racism is a problem are pink. I cry about college rape and the deforestation of the Amazonian tribal lands & reporters breaking down on camera because Gaza is too much for their professional facade. I cry because of science reports on climate change and Ferguson, Missouri. You can laugh at me or pity me if you want, for being sentimental & too easily affected. You can call me patronising, or tell me not to watch the news anymore because ignorance is less painful. I don't really care what you think because I am telling you the truth, & you can choose to believe me, or not.

I'm just feeling raw at the moment, like my heart is too close to the surface, like my skin is tender and stretched to thin tissue, or even peeled away and leaving my eyeballs & muscles & organs bare red and slightly wet. Maybe it's just too much thinking. Maybe I need to learn how to compartmentalize.

Of the slaughterhouses in all their forms, of oil, of water, of labour in fabled lands, of fat coarse pigs.

The obese & the bone.

I can't wait for everything to collapse because I can truly see no way out. You see, as much as I am trying to build something with space & collectivity & balance, I'm not entirely convinced I mean it. I think I might just be trying to make a universe I can escape to for my own selfish sanity. I think I am trying to convince myself there is a future. And this dualistic unease will manifest itself in my economy of hope & compromise.

2

AND SO FOR THE LACK OF FINDING ONE
THAT I LIKED, I BEGAN MAKING OF
THE MODAL ECONOMY.

An outsider's perspective can see the fractures that are invisible to those who lie too close. My inexperience is what allows me to imagine an alternative to capitalism. Though those who know it best – Adam Smith, for example – define it as the production, consumption, and exchange of market goods,¹ in its most basic form I see an economy as a series of social links. People drive the economy, not goods or services. Makers, growers, and users form webs of relationships, desires, and necessities in which objects are the secondary part.

My definition of economy enables me to rectify the problems I have with capitalism in a way that is constructive rather than cynical. This book will discuss the making of the modal economy through the designed aspects of my practice.

¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*

DESIGNING IN A FRAMEWORK OF FICTION

In a world 'ruled by fictions', the writer's
task is to invent the reality
- J. G. Ballard & Anthony Dunne²

Critical designer Anthony Dunne notes the field's unique position between 'consumer' and 'producer' – the intermediaries and translators who can talk to the needs of both parties.³ This close proximity to a wider public is a position to be subversive and critical, to highlight social and environmental problems, without alienating audiences.

I am particularly interested in making my audience *aware* of the manipulation of their behaviour. The design aspects of my practice are formed around the idea that neither the reality I present to you, nor the reality we currently occupy, is natural.⁴ Both are constructed. I mirror the appropriation of corporate aesthetics and customer service skills, the calculating methods of brand identity, capitalist design to sell anti-capitalism. Will my audience be caught in enough of a feedback loop to make them realise how much of our behaviour is constructed?

² As cited in Antony Dunne, *Hertzian Tales*, 75

³ Ibid.

⁴ What is 'natural', as outlined in Book 1, is the spectrum of behaviour. We construct nurtured channels on top of these, and design is often used to ease these channels into normalisation.

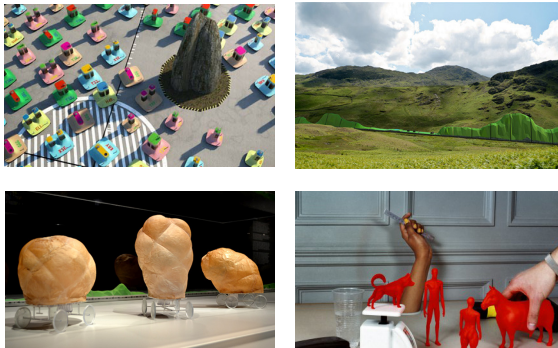
No. It's not enough to simply criticise with distorted reflections. I need to offer potential.

Dunne and his associate Fiona Raby outline a new form of critical design: speculative design - the creation of alternative future scenarios endeavour to "highlight the weaknesses within existing normality"⁵ with speculations about the way things *could* be if a different path was taken. An example of this is the design experiment *United Micro-Kingdoms*,^(Fig.1) which investigated four fictional political alternatives to democratic capitalism. Based on axes between left and right, authoritarian and libertarian, the microstates of Digitarians, Bioliberals, Anarcho-evolutionists, and Communo-nuclearists each had their own ideology and political structure.

However they would stay unlinked to the present without something to enable comparison and provoke criticism. Dunne and Raby used the ideologies as a base onto which they built everyday life. They fleshed out the material cultures of each one, encapsulated into transport design as a comparative focus. From four different philosophies came four radically different approaches to interacting with geography, of laying out physical social infrastructure. They made spikes

⁵ Dunne and Raby, *Speculative Everything*, 35

Fig. 1



6

- a. Dunne & Raby, "Digitarians." CGI by Tommaso Lanza, London, 2013.
- b. Dunne & Raby, "Communo-Nuclearists." CGI by Tommaso Lanza, London, 2013.
- c. Dunne & Raby, "Bioliberals." Photograph by Jason Evans, London, 2013.
- d. Dunne & Raby, "Anarcho-Evolutionists." Photograph by Jason Evans, London, 2013.

into a whole realm of possibility that exists outside the slowly homogenising monoculture of capitalism.⁶ But the outcomes are still dismissible as fiction. Their exhibition as artefacts in glass cases, almost archaeological, distances them from possibility. The projects highlight how our political and economic systems embed themselves in design, yes – but what is the next step?

The blurring of the boundaries – between real and fiction, humour and seriousness, criticism and optimism, action plan and distant ideal – is what draws me to speculative design as a methodology for my own practice. The project relies on building a structure at a level of realism that the participants can imagine themselves within. My speculative design is located in a space that is both in the present and in a present that has yet to exist, in a *reachable* future. It inhabits a space, digital and physical, which prompts the user to imagine occupying it functionally. My work suggests reality is just one possibility amongst countless others.

Anthony Dunne's earlier book *Hertzian Tales* outlines the productivity of the space between art and design. Though design has a strong relationship with the

⁶ Dunne and Raby, *Speculative Everything*, 189

7

everyday and industry that art can lack, fine arts has the ability to reveal reality through warping to highlight the absurdity of daily life, the subversion of designed familiarity.⁷ Conversely, social designer Victor Papanek disparages it as egotistically introspective “at the expense of the spectator,”⁸ not as concerned with usability or integration the way design is. The two disciplines have weaknesses that can balance each other out.

My methodology lies on the overlapping borders of art and design, and from design I take the speculative framework, the “sketches of possibility,”⁹ the closeness to audiences, industry, and the present, and the democracy that comes from a two-way communication between end user and designer.

8

7 Dunne, *Hertzian Tales*

8 Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, 40

9 Dunne and Raby, *Speculative Futures*, 189

OTHER ECONOMIC PLACES

Though there are many heterodox alternatives, some embedded in capitalism and some completely separate,¹⁰ contemporary economist Jeremy Rifkin's Collaborative Commons and philosopher Charles Eisenstein's Gift Economy have been the most influential to my own.

The Gift Economy is grounded in the “economic realisation of the interconnectedness of all beings”¹¹ and the binding of exchange relationships through gifting as the dominant form of trade. It is closer to a utopia than a working system – too much so for me to base my project on. However there are traces of his through mine: the backing of capital in the things that are important to the biosphere, the shift from a reliance on the profit-driven job market to smaller working weeks and time spent pursuing the interests of the earth, a reliance on cradle-to-cradle production, and no need for growth. He extends the concept of ‘the self’ outwards into our ecology, redefining the self-interest of *homo oeconomicus*.

9

The Collaborative Commons¹² is based on a zero-marginal economy¹³ in which the Third Industrial

10 Including behavioural economics, feminist economics, bioeconomics, evolutionary economics, the Austrian school, Marxian economics, neuroeconomics, ...the list is extensive.

11 Charles Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics*, 160

12 Jeremy Rifkin, *The Zero Marginal Cost Society*

13 Once overheads, research and development, and infrastructure have been paid for, the unit cost of production is near zero.

Revolution – an interconnected Internet of Things¹⁴ – bridges the role of consumers and producers into hybrid ‘prosumers’. Rifkin outlines a peer-to-peer market system rather than having the traditional forces of supply and demand. He is extremely technology-focused, but the system itself seems quite plausible. What I find most important is the structure he presents; decentralised neural networks of government, organisations and communities, which can generate their own power and make their own products in a manner similar to existing co-operatives. Rather than a reliance on competition as a motivation for development, he sees transparency, collaboration and the freedom of information as the key to innovation. Technological unemployment¹⁵ will provide time for the pursuit of other interests. Property gives way to access; trading power (money) is replaced by sharing value. Rifkin expects that capitalism will no longer be the dominant model by the late 21st century.

The Māori concept of ownership, particularly concerning *whenua* (the land), was instrumental in the replacement of property with access. Land belongs to itself and “cannot be bought or sold”¹⁶ for which we who populate it are responsible, because we come from the earth, we are made of the earth.¹⁷ It is not

14 Rifkin defines the Internet of Things as the connecting of all people, natural resources, businesses, machines etc. on a global network using sensors and softwares for previously unreachable levels of efficiency.

15 The mass replacement of human workers with automated technology and artificial intelligence, as defined by Rifkin.

16 Michael Shirres, *Te Tangata*, 55

17 Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*

ownership, but a relationship, the careful stewardship that allows us to sustain ourselves from sea and forest. As Ranginui Walker documents, the earth lasts beyond the life of a human and we are responsible for the time we spend on it.¹⁸ It is this mutually beneficial and long-lasting attitude of collaboration that is far more harmonious and sustainable than the masterful Western domination of property. It also places Aotearoa in the unique position of being more receptive to this component of the modal economy.

I would like to signpost the systems of communism and socialism as separate from my interests.¹⁹ The modal economy is not a violent revolution but incremental shifts in mindset and structure, slow changes that you have to look back on to realise the depth of its impact. Its hypothetical but earnest implementation will occur in a hundred-year timeline of believable moments.

18 Ibid., 70

19 As Latour noted in “The Affects of Capitalism”, their catastrophic failings have served to strengthen capitalism’s naturalisation as the only possible system. They were revolutionary utopias that promised equality and instead delivered dystopia, corruption, and the deaths, suffering, and transience of millions of people including my own family.

FILLING THE OUTLINES OF A NEW ECONOMY

Man alone has the capacity to form mental images of the kind
of society he wants, and the capability of bringing this about
– Kenneth Boulding²⁰

Capitalism's control of behaviour and its lack of ethics are the reasons for the modal economy's existence. My economy started in reaction to the way capitalism values everything on the same cold numerical scale, and how everything intangible that is not profitable and cannot be commodified is considered worthless.

12

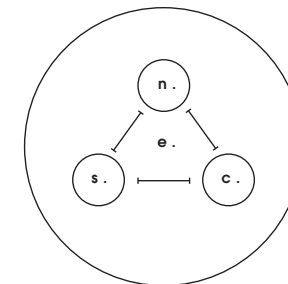
The three modal capitals^(Fig. 2) were made from things our economy does not value that I think are truly important – nonhumanity, culture, and society. They are not separate bodies, but four cores that dissipate into hybrids and crossovers and partnerships. They make up what essential to humanity and the planet essential for the economy.

The 'modal' economy was named for its phonetic similarity to 'modular'; segments that can be moved around each other and shifted as necessary. For me, 'modal' evokes responsiveness and transmutability. The word itself is taken from the modal fibre, a regenerated cotton where the cellulose material in its existing form is chemically processed into something different. This is parallel to the process of implementation: we begin

²⁰ As cited in John Laurent, Introduction to *Evolutionary Economics*.

Fig. 2

INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 4- CHOME



13

with the existing structures of capitalism and reform them into something quite new.

The word has productive connotations: its relation to modal analysis – the study of the dynamic properties of structures under vibrational excitement. Modality semiotics – the way information is to be encoded for presentation to humans. These meanings thread together to supplement my version of the word, my version of the economy: dynamic structures and presented information made to increase responsiveness and engagement.

The following frameworks^(Fig. 3) have been used to develop the modal economy. Each of these has been instrumental in fleshing out the mechanisms and articulated movements, the living body of a new economy.

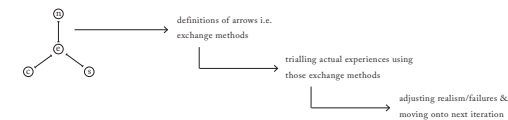
STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

It was difficult developing a network for three near-intangible capitals and emotional, dynamic economic actors. The modal economy needed forms that were not hierarchical, but instead balanced the complexity of global trade with the simplicity of human-to-human contact. Mahatma Ghandi's 'oceanic circles' describe

Fig. 3

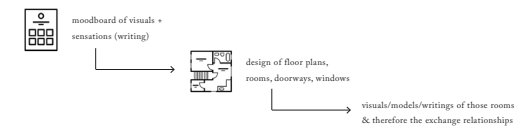
1. EXCHANGED-BASED

- Day-to-day functionality of the basics of what 'economics' really is.
- ㊦, ㊧, ㊨ are all part of the current economy (through commodification), but they now need to be valued in their own right
- Semi-realistic new layout of earning/funding a living



2. AESTHETIC-BASED

- Purely off images, architectures, sensations, moods, feelings. [light]
- Focus on the metaphoric to begin with: if the economy is a house, how does it work?
- Focus on the interrelationships of the 4-chome, rather than everyday function
- Focus on the sensations & experiences of the new economy



3. PHILOSOPHY-BASED

- What the new economy will fix/adjust *morally* i.e. attitudes towards ㊦, ㊧, ㊨
- Philosophies of *wabi-sabi* & *mono no aware*: transience & imperfections & the beauty within those
- Most closely aligned with ideas around human nature
i.e. systems to encourage ethical behaviour while accepting imperfections and impermanence



Development work: "Developing Methods". Text on paper, 2014.

communities of individuals that form “ever-widening, never-ascending circles.”²¹ I began with networks (Fig. 4) of circles - individuals embedded in communities and organisations that overlap like Venn diagrams, according to location, interests, and activity. These independent, mobile, and decentralised circles interconnect in a network that prioritises people over production.

However a structural failing of the modal economy – thus hindering its believability and its acceptance by participants – is the lack of real forms of trade. The transactions are hardly functional – how does one exchange the feeling you get when you are alone at night by the dark sea for time spent absorbing the interior space of a James Turrell^(Fig. 5) light-work? This is something I hope to workshop with my participants.²²

I wanted to form my economic structures around the inconstancy, fluidity, and heterogeneity of being human. Though we are socially nurtured into typical responses, the structure of the modal economy will diversify what is considered economically successful to include reciprocity and empathy. Social engineering is a menacing concept, but I have no qualms in trying to manoeuvre people away from the destructive

²¹ As cited in Rifkin, *The Zero-Marginal Cost Society*, 106
²² I do not foresee the end of the project coinciding with the end of my MFA.

Fig. 4

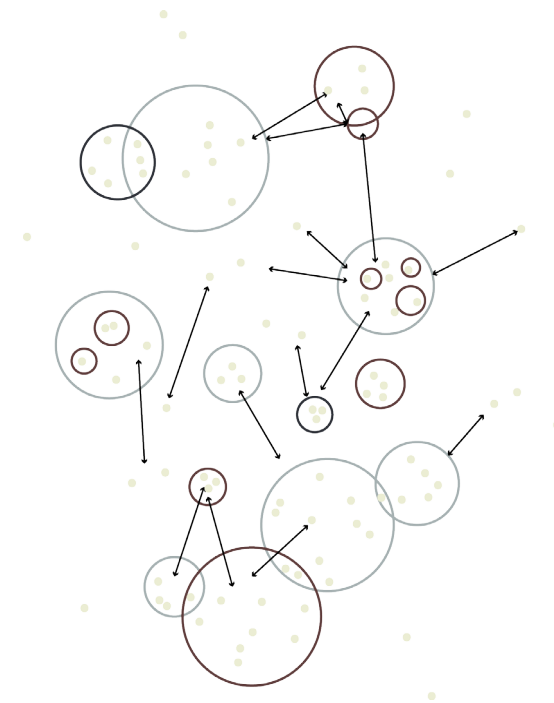


Fig. 5



18

James Turrell, "Breathing Light." LED light into space,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, November 2013.

cliff-face we are standing on the edge of.
There are behavioural manipulations behind all of
the components.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

I am still wrestling with the hypocrisy of condemning capitalism for manipulating behaviour through naturalisation, and then creating a system that does exactly that. But does it count for anything that my intentions are earnest? I can't decide if it's hypocrisy when I do it *intentionally*. I make a mirror image to highlight the artificiality, the scaffolding at the back, but is it right to highlight by creating more of it? When the reflection is an additional body?

19

Philosopher Peter Singer informs much of my ethical foundation – particularly concerning the nonhuman and the first vs. third world gap.²³ Humans and nonhumans are equal beings and inextricably, atomically part of an ecology that is not separate to humanity but within it. Consequently, the expense of 'ownership' in the modal economy takes into account the destruction of a life force that is equal to your own.²⁴ Singer also

²³ Peter Singer, "Speciesism and Moral Status"

²⁴ This has been tempered as the modal economy moved from idealistic to something more realistic– if I was to actually implement the new system, world-wide vegetarianism is unlikely to happen. A compromise must be reached, even if it is only hypothetical.

wanted to redefine charity to obligation, because “If it is within our power to prevent something bad from happening, without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it.”²⁵ Consequently the modal economy is suited for global implementation, and does not differentiate between for-profit and non-profit organisations.²⁶

20

My practice is founded on a very strong ethical identity found in the behaviours I adhere to and what I abstain from, in light of how I see humans treat others on the altar of profit and consumption. I find it difficult to understand why we don't all act similarly. If you know what factory conditions are like in China, why still shop at chain stores? If you couldn't kill a pig with your own hands, why still eat pork? I genuinely can't comprehend how others with knowledge about these issues are able to ignore them. It is a personal empathetic failing, and one I am not sure I want to fix. For those friends and peers I have asked in the hopes of understanding, it is usually because they can't see any change in the future, nor how their individual actions would make a difference. Things are just how they are.

25 Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”, 231

26 Though hopefully when profit is no longer a goal in itself that line will grow less distinct by itself.

This project can be easily accused of preaching to the choir. But when the choir is tired, and disillusioned, and hardened by so many wanting change and so little of it occurring (myself included), then reinvigorating a flagging collective is still important. Things are *not* just how they are. I will myself, and you, to believe that change is possible.

AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENT

The modal economy was as much informed by unbleached silk organza as it was by economics. Economists cannot visualise in a textural abstraction in the way that my design practice can. I see the economy as a terrifying cancer of transparent-pinkish veins that connect everyone on the planet. It's coagulated, and there's a smoky tint of chartreuse that I find quite nauseating. However the veins themselves seem to be clear as glass – they just need redirecting.

21

The Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto^(Fig. 6) is perhaps one of the most important models for the modal economy. He creates buildings that are somehow not stationary. There are incremental levels, and steps, and pathways, modular boxes that form themselves

Fig. 6



22



a. Sou Fujimoto, "Wooden House." Photograph by Iwan Baan, Kumamoto, 2008.

b. Sou Fujimoto, "NA House." Photograph by Iwan Baan, Tokyo, 2011.

around the existing space and plant life – they do not push anything out of the way. His architecture is “something like a framework, which subsumes the complexities and richness of this ever-changing world, and assimilates what is not yet comprehensible.”²⁷ He forms partitions of glass and degrees of lightness, delineating areas without physically segregating their outlines. His House NA creates micro-spaces out of rectangles that can be repurposed as necessary, and Wooden House has multiple configurations that physically shift to make furniture, rooms, walls, and windows.

The multi-functionality that moves as the inhabitants need, from moment to moment, is what I find so engaging about Fujimoto’s work. This is echoed in modal economy: a temporary structure that leads paths and stairways out of capitalism, and when the nightmare has passed, rearranges itself as required. Architectural structures were immensely useful as a development tool to visualise the rooms the each capital would inhabit, how people would move through it, and how the light, air, and earth’s surface decided its form.

23

An economy is a fluid and abstract entity - “a space that can be flowing like sparkling water.”²⁸ We need to

27 Sou Fujimoto, Julia Peyton-Jones, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, “In conversation”, 27

28 Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias”, 48

make it behave in such a manner instead of attributing the qualities of concrete to it. Fujimoto's adaptable constructions make the modal economy the halfway point. Water is far more suited to describing the economic movements of the modal economy.

24

Papanek outlines bionic design that is more interested in why nature appears as it does, how the parts interrelate,²⁹ than just the form of things. When I draw the shape of the modal economy (in diagrams, in sketches of jellyfish, in inky water) it always comes back to veins that distribute, where you can see the nature of the matter held within. My design practice relies on this visualisation to sketch out the arrangements of an update to capitalism. Structures are formed and reformed in water, in glass, in ink as representations of capital and exchange.

25

29 Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, 189

REFERENCES

Dunne, Anthony. *Hertzian tales: Electronic Products, Aesthetic, and Critical design*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999.

Dunne, Anthony, & Raby, Fiona. *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011.

Eisenstein, Charles. *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, and Society in the Age of Transition*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2011.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias". *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* 5 (1984): 46-49. Translated by Jay Miskowiec. <http://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html>

Fujimoto, Sou., Peyton-Jones, Julia., & Obrist, Hans-Ulrich. "In conversation." In *Sou Fujimoto: Serpentine Gallery 2013*, edited by Sophia O'Brien, 26-34. London: Koenig Books, 2013.

Latour, Bruno. "The Affects of Capitalism". YouTube video, 1:00:46, from a lecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences, Copenhagen, February 26, 2014, posted by Videnskabernes Selskab, February 28, 2014, <http://youtu.be/8i-ZKfShovs>

Laurent, John. Introduction to *Evolutionary Economics and Human Nature*, edited by John Laurent, 1-33. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003.

Papanek, Victor. *Design for the real world: Human ecology and social change*. (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1984.

Rifkin, Jeremy. *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Shirres, Michael. *Te Tangata: The Human Person*. Palmerston North: Accent Publications, 1997.

Singer, Peter. "Speciesism and Moral Status." *Metaphilosophy* 40 no. 3-4 (July 2009): 567-581.

Singer, Peter. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1 no. 3 (1972): 229-243.

Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Dent, 1981. First published 1776 by W. Strahan and T. Cadell.

Walker, Ranginui. *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*. Auckland: Penguin, 1990.

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.

Aydin, Necati. "A Grand Theory of Human Nature and Happiness." *Humanonics* 28 no. 1 (2012): 42 - 63.

Cassidy, Lisa. "Women Shopping and Women Sweatshopping: Individual Responsibility for Consumerism." In *Fashion Philosophy for Everyone*, edited by Jessica Wolfendale & Jeanette Kennett, 186-198. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2011.

Dikötter, Frank. *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe*, 1958 - 1962. New York: Walker and Co, 2010.

28

Geng, Olivia. "China bids farewell to man who paid for cancer treatment with bowls of noodles." *The Wall Street Journal China*, September 10, 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/09/10/china-bids-farewell-to-man-who-paid-for-cancer-treatment-with-bowls-of-noodles/>

Gürak, Hasan. *Heterodox Economics: Foundations of Alternative Economics*. Frankfurt: Peter Land, 2012.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. London: Vintage Books, 2007. First published 1932 by Chatto and Windus.

Lemann, Nicholas. "The Hand on the Lever: How Janet Yellen is Redefining the Federal Reserve." *The New Yorker*, July 21, 2014, 42-53.

Mitchell, David. *Cloud Atlas*. London: Sceptre, 2004.

Maak, Niklas. "On Sou Fujimoto." In *Sou Fujimoto: Serpentine Gallery 2013*, edited by Sophia O'Brien, 26-34. London: Koenig Books, 2013. 47-56.

Morris, William. *News from Nowhere*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1908. http://www.sfu.ca/~poitras/Morris_News-from=Nowhere.pdf

Murakami, Haruki. *Kafka on the shore*. London: Harvill, 2005. Translated by Philip Gabriel. First published in 2002 as *Umibe no Kafuka* by Kondasha.

Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Signet Classic, 2008. First published 1949 by Secker and Warburg.

Rand, Ayn. *We the living*. London: Penguin, 2010. First published 1936 by Macmillan.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "The Rise of Anti-Capitalism." *The New York Times*, March 15, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-anti-capitalism.html?_r=0

Simmons, Christopher. *Just Design: Socially Conscious Design for Critical Causes*. Cincinnati: How Books, 2011.

29

b. the veins, the overstructure

A brief peripheral glance one day caught on the edge of an invisible hand. I couldn't quite look at it at first, and indirectly squinting hurt the space behind my eyes.

A few days later soft pinkish stains seeped to fill a three-dimensional form with tiny lucent hairs and nail beds & scoops between the stumps of fingers. Late Saturday afternoon, after work, I stopped to lock the door & watched colour bleed into creased valleys & crisscrossed lines to make a full form of waxy skin. The outline ended at the wrist, just disembodied hands that were suspended at the napes of the people on the street.

I gradually recognised outlines & shapes like they had been there the whole time. They spread outwards in shivered increments as the months passed, bearing a network of nerves & veins & vessels that expanded out into a bodiless overstructure that ascended through the air & eventually darkened the sky with so much volume it slid in & out of focus like my contacts had slipped, (like I couldn't blink clear. Thick arteries swelled from organisations & infrastructures & individuals in some sort of parasitic phantasm that suckled unsteadily, weightily, gluttoned at some nodes & skeletal at others & heaving & roiling & pulsing & living. I watched it pull us across intricate webbed patterns in soft, deliberate movements. I couldn't disentangle myself & I couldn't unsee it & know it was there & know also that somehow it was not natural

some artificial virus that we collectively kept alive, & terrified because I was segregated in a veined cocoon that fed me & sheltered me & kept me safe & gilded & educated & can anybody else see it; how can I possibly tell you there is an invisible hand behind you, touching you so intimately, finger tips suspended at the gentle hairs at the hairline of your neck & beguiling you across the surface of the earth without you even knowing, how can I have you believe me, how can I possibly pull this whole system into verifiability for you

When I first found the line from the hand to deep within my throat my heart folded apart. I reached through teeth that were dry & inched it out of myself with shivering hands, gently, carefully, & then desperate panicked heaving at some anchor at the base of my spine below my stomach in dark infeelable anatomical space. Something plugging sucking wrenched apart & then I was light & nauseous & whole & alone & the tunnel was seeping blackly on the concrete & I retched the traces out of myself with my own shuddering body

I cried at the emptiness of the air & at how we were cut apart.

Its corpse absorbed the salt.

3

BECAUSE THE CHANGE IS
INCREMENTAL, SLOW, A SHIFT IN
THE ROTATION OF OUR WORLD
THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT.

My practice lies at the intersection of art, design, and economics. I use that specific space to contribute to what increasingly seems like a minority of people who know the world is at a dangerous precipice of environmental, social, and emotional violence and who are not content or cynical enough to just watch.

I don't know how to fix it any more than the next person – this project has been, in part, an exploration in possibility, in the actual potential for a better world – but activist art has the ability to provoke and transform our emotional responses to the overwhelming problems in our world. This is the context for the Department of Economic Adjustment (D.E.A.) – the fictional, customer-focused institution responsible for implementing the modal economy.

POLITICALLY ENGAGED

I don't want art that points at a thing,
I want art that *is* the thing
– Tania Bruguera¹

4 Art has the ability to make social change: in positive, focused projects such as Austrian group WochenKlausur's *Intervention to Aid Drug-Addicted Women* (1994), to more structurally critical and shocking works such as Santiago Sierra's purchase of human skin. Political art does not argue facts and logic in the same way scientific reports on climate change do – it evokes emotion, catalyst, energy. Curator Nato Thompson observes how things make us feel and how things make us think are often very different,² and art can work to provoke the viewer/participant in multiple ways for a more transformative experience. Art is a life-changing force, whether that is one life or many, human or nonhuman.

Art historian Claire Bishop identifies socially engaged practice as a method of initiating change through the re-humanisation of submissive or passive audiences: from spectator to participant.³ I can use engaged

1 As cited in Nato Thompson, "Living as Form", 21

2 Ibid., 32

3 Claire Bishop, "Participation and the Spectacle", 36

methodologies to connect with an otherwise faceless audience in a two-way conversation that externalises my initial economy to a more democratic medium. However Bishop also polarises art intended to ameliorate society, and art that questions established value and morality systems. I find this unnaturally oppositional as a practitioner whose sole purpose is to instigate social change *through* questioning the ethics of economy. Why should a humanitarian methodology not expose or criticise as well as offer operational alternatives?

Pedro Reyes' 2008 work^(Fig. 1) *Palas Por Pistolas*⁴ turned 1,527 guns voluntarily given from the city of Culiacán into 1,527 spades that planted 1,527 trees. The transformation from object of death to life effectively neutralised a concrete number of weapons through non-monetary exchange. But the work simultaneously highlights the wider moral context: the entrenchment of gun violence in the Culiacán community.⁵ Weapons of violence are an atrocity that the community had normalised. Reyes made a social impact as well as emphasising the absurdity of moral systems where gun violence is expected or even acceptable. This is a "contradictory social truth"⁶ that belongs to Bishop's definition of avant-garde practice

5

4 *Shovels For Guns*

5 Pedro Reyes, *Palas Por Pistolas*

6 Bishop, "Participation and the Spectacle", 38

Fig. 1



Pedro Reyes, "Palas Por Pistolas". Performative exchange, Culiacán, 2008.

– and yet how can she argue that the work is not also participatory art bettering the city?

Reyes' work is also an enactment of exchange not based around money or profit, a form of economy interested in community rather than business. He showed me how exchange could become a form of art, how to blur the lines between art and real life, and ways to visualise beautiful trade which is both symbolic and ameliorative.

However there is definite value in work that does challenge conventional systems of ethics or meaning. Santiago Sierra's economic works involve the purchase of exploitative human labour in a three-party exchange: between the spectator, the artist, and the human subject. In *Estudio Económico de la Piel de los Caraqueños*⁷ (Fig. 2), he photographed the skins of the backs of ten people with no money, ten with one million dollars, and turned them into a grey scale with numerical value. Black was valued at US\$-2.106, white at US\$11.548415.⁸ Though this monetisation of colour is affronting – how could he possibly put a price on race – all it really does force us to see the existing reality. The economy will pay more for one gender,

⁷ *Economic Study of the Skin of Caracans*

⁸ As cited in Klanten, et.al., *Art and Agenda*, 124

for one colour, than others. The free market is not as blind as its advocates would have you believe.

*Línea de 250cm Tatuada Sobre Seis Personas Remuneradas*⁹ (Fig. 3) involved paying six unemployed men \$30 to be tattooed with a 250cm line. The work unsettles neoliberal assumptions about the free will of people within capitalism. He hollows into the depths of the link between wealth and power, confronts us with real moments of marginalisation. Sierra's works are violently beautiful crystallisations of the aspects of capitalism we'd rather not engage with. Though he does not directly improve society or the lives of his 'purchases', he forces us to see what we're unbelievably good at ignoring – in a symbolic, and somehow seductively confrontational economic transaction. I can't look away.

Sierra also demonstrates the ability to bring together a series of complex issues into a single symbolic moment that says so much with so little. This is something that my practice entirely lacks. I am enamoured with the interconnecting complexity of our systems of exchange and the way it pulls people in and out of its web. But I struggle with bringing these vast ideas into digestible portions, with communicating them

9 *250cm Line Tattooed on Six Paid People*

Fig. 2



Santiago Sierra, "Estudio Económico de la Piel de los Caraqueños." Performance work, Venezuela, 2006.

Fig. 3



Santiago Sierra, "Línea de 250cm Tatuada Sobre Seis Personas Remuneradas." Performance work, Cuba, 1999.

outside of my own mind. My project is not in the same genre as the elegant simplicity of Sierra's work, but he showed me how smaller moments can say more than depicting everything all at once.

Sierra runs parallel to Thompson's definition of socially engaged, political art: the production of new forms of living, investigating art as the world.¹⁰ How can art embed itself into life instead of sitting aside, separate, with no real contact to the rest of the world? I think context is a large part of this – to those not embedded in the art world, a white-cube contemporary gallery is hugely alienating. This includes the diversity of people I am trying to engage with. Work outside of white space – digital, physical, commercial, everyday – invites public discussion because it is approachable for varied audiences. If art wants to make social change, it needs to leave the gallery.

An example of this is The Yes Men – the ongoing performative project of Jacques Servin and Igor Vamos – who insert themselves in corporate environments. They use a variety of strategies to parody the absurdities of the business world: blow-up 'Surviva-Ball' suits for CEOs in climate disasters, candles made from the body fats of deceased workers.

¹⁰ Thompson, "Living as Form", 32

Horrifyingly often, these pitches are met with approval. They push their corporate identities into a level of satire that I thought was very transparent, but is sometimes still embraced by those it seeks to ridicule.

Their most useful tool, “identity correction,”¹¹ involves impersonating organisations and acting out how they should behave, in stark contrast to how they *do* behave. In 2004 Servin appeared on BBC World impersonating a Dow Chemical representative and ‘officially’ apologised for the 1984 Bhopal disaster.¹²

(Fig. 4) This had two effects: a forgotten and ongoing tragedy was brought back to public attention from where it had languished; and the Dow stock price plummeted.¹³ What I found most aligned to my own practice was the way in which Servin and Vamos used corporate devices and symbols as a way to pitch ethical or risibly unethical proposals to suited businessmen, and then frame their outraged and often comical responses. They become those they malign in order to expose their hideous insides.

11 In Jacques Servin and Igor Vamos, *The Yes Men Fix the World*.
12 A gas leak incident at a factory owned by Union Carbide Corporation (a Dow Jones subsidiary) in Bhopal, India.
13 A company who appeared to be doing ‘the right thing’ suffered negative economic consequences instead of approval. This only serves to emphasize the complete contrast of ethics and economy.

Fig. 4



Jaques Servin and Igor Vamos, “The Yes Men Fix the World.”
Motion picture still, United States, 2009.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT

For a theorist so caught by polarities, Claire Bishop defines the most arresting works to be those who hold them in tension: the ones that balance precariously between spectator and creator, passive and active, systemically critical and socially conscious.¹⁴ When the subject matter is something as embedded and complex as economics, it is impossible to avoid crossing lines between disciplines. How can I 'communicate' the economy with only art, design, or economics?

14

I can't – the economy is too important to be left to a single discipline's blind spots and ingrained belief systems. Neoliberal economists are unaware of the false assumptions about human nature; heterodox economists are unable to engage a wider audience beyond themselves.¹⁵ Design is often the link between producer and consumer, embedded in industry.¹⁶ Contemporary art can be alienating, esoteric, and entangled with the elite and the wealthy.¹⁷

In fact, interdisciplinary practice is really the only way for me to express the networks of our economic

system. I start with a problem – the casual effects of selfish behaviour and economy – and work outwards to the best methods for alerting my participants and audience to this problem. The methodology that was capable of disconnecting capitalist behaviour and human nature was not to be found in design, fine art, or economics alone. It needed a synthesis of all three. None of the artists, designers, and economists who inform my work are limited to their discipline either. Ghandi is as much responsible for the network aesthetic as Fujimoto is important to the ethics of the human-nonhuman relationship. The lines break down, almost a discipline-synaesthesia. My practice inhabits not only the edges, the multifaceted and delicate intersections, but also the slightly uncomfortable between, and the overlap, and the synthesized, raw space above. I'm still feeling it out, holistic non-boundary. I find it hard to categorise things.

15

It was not enough for me to make up a new economic system. It was too insular. The purpose of the D.E.A. is to stand the modal economy upright in three-dimensional, immaterial form, to push it against other people and opinions. It needs to be challenged to be real. The Department itself draws from performative, dialogical art practice in order to do so, beginning

14 Bishop, "Participation and the Spectacle", 40

15 As discussed in Book 1

16 As noted by Dunne, *Hertzian Tales*

17 As observed by Holert, "Burden of Proof", 251-2

with an institution of indeterminate size and a single representative proposing the modal economy to focus groups in product-development sessions. It provides the space for probing into different people's conceptions of *economy*: how they think it affects them and what they would change about it if they could, set against the contrast between capital and modal.

Art historian Grant Kester's dialogical framework connects artist to community, using the aesthetics of listening,¹⁸ of an empathetic feedback loop, to gently (without raising defensive instincts; our image of the world is delicate and painful to examine closely) destabilise assumptions¹⁹ for all parties – artist, audience, collaborators. My work necessarily needs to be shifted sideways by others as much as myself in order to be successful. I have as much to learn as to give.

Is it possible for the proposal of a new economy to be a catalyst for participants to unlink capitalism from human nature? Unfortunately this is not the kind of project with tangible check boxes of positive difference. My work targets a more systemic and emotional macro-critique of our economic assumptions of human nature, where its effects contribute to a wider force of

¹⁸ Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 75

¹⁹ Through a cycle of "coherence, vulnerability, dissolution, and re-coherence" Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 123

other protesters, media, politicians, activists, artists, designers, and heterodox economists all engaged in trying to change the structures we live within. These affects are indirect and cumulative.

AUDIENCE

My strong concept of acceptable, ethical behaviour often manifests itself in my work as a condescending and evangelistic attitude.²⁰ This usually repels audiences rather than seduces them. The socially engaged aspects of my practice are vitally important, perhaps even more than the speculative and utopian elements of critical design – because they are not an opportunity for me to explicate my vision of the future (video and imagery does this) but a space for me to listen. My participators became co-authors, collaborators. They highlighted my prejudices. My work would not exist without them.

18

In fact, Kester notes that it is common in socially engaged practice to see the marginalised and the environment as a “raw material”²¹ in need of awakening from the universal, critical, and transcendent position of the Artist. The critique of capitalism is often initiated from a position of power, in the contemporary bourgeois of the art world.²² Art historian Tom Holert adds that art is entangled, financially and culturally, with the elite it criticizes.²³ This applies to me – I have never been hungry, I could never truly empathise with poverty. I am very much guilty of looking out at the

20 There are certain aspects of this attitude that I have embraced, outlined in my discussion of tone and aesthetic in Book 4.

21 Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 138

22 Creischer and Siekman, as cited in Holert, “Burden of Proof”, 252

23 Holert, “Burden of Proof”, 251

state of the world and deciding I could do a better job of arranging it.²⁴ I am not rich in New Zealand, but I am in the context of the overwhelming population of the earth.

But so is my audience. Those of us in developed countries living above the poverty line are a small number in comparison to all of humanity. You, and you, and I are part of it. We are the ones in the position of power – we are more capable of enacting structural adjustment than the marginalised communities that socially engaged practice often interacts with.²⁵ There are two categories within this audience: the elite who feel helpless against the inequalities they see, and the elite who are embedded in business as usual to the point where the state of the world is unchangeable.²⁶ The latter group I will gently prod at – will they consider the fact that capitalism has helped to form their concept of human nature? That is has influenced their behaviour, and their ethics?

19

The former group I want to tangibly affect. They have the predisposition for a change in mindset – can I prompt them to start considering *how* an economy might be better formed, what they would change if they had the ability – and then to start considering

24 In my defence... it's in a fairly terrible state at the moment. There isn't much of a standard to improve on.

25 Kester gives a good overview of the marginalized communities that socially engaged practice and community art often interacts with in *Conversation Pieces*.

26 The context for my final exhibition, the Reserve Bank Museum, is a microcosm of this group. This will be discussed in Book 4.

the potential for *collective* change? If those of us who want change – want adjustment – could really believe in it, in the face of right-wing governments²⁷ and fruitless climate summits, then we might actually make it happen.

²⁷ National has just won the election; so it goes.

REFERENCES

Bishop, Claire. "Participation and the Spectacle: Where Are We Now?" In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by Nato Thompson, 35-45. New York, NY: MIT Press, 2012.

Dolan, Kerry, & Kroll, Luisa. "The Richest People In America, 2014". *Forbes*, September 29, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/forbes-400/>

Holert, Tom. "Burden of Proof: Tom Holert on Contemporary Art and Responsibility." *Art Forum International* 51 no. 7 (March 2013): 250-260.

Kester, Grant. *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Klanten, Robert., Hubner, Matthias., Bieber, Alain., Alonzo, Pedro., and Jansen, Gregor. *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Reyes, Pedro. "Palas Por Pistolas," 2008, <http://pedroreyes.net/palasporpistolas.php>

Servin, Jaques, & Vamos, Igor. *The Yes Men Fix the World*. Motion Picture. United States: Docurama, 2009.

Thompson, Nato. "Living as Form." In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by Nato Thompson, 16-33, New York: MIT Press, 2012.

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alonzo, Pedro. "Anger is an Energy." In *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, edited by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hubner, Alain Bieber, Pedro Alonzo, and Gregor Jansen, 216-225. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Berardi, Franco. *After the Future*. Oakland: AK Press, 2011.

Bieber, Alain. "I Revolt, Therefore I Am." In *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, edited by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hubner, Alain Bieber, Pedro Alonzo, and Gregor Jansen, 50-55. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. Green Investment Bank: Green Party Policy Paper. Wellington: Author, May 2014.

Hardt, Michael. "Affective Labour." *boundary* 26 no. 2 (1999): 89-100.

Hardt, Michael. "Immaterial Labour and Artistic Production." *Rethinking Marxism* 17 no. 2 (2005): 175-177.

Holmes, Brian. "Eventwork: The Search for a New Civic Imagination." In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by Nato Thompson, 72-85, New York: MIT Press, 2012.

Jansen, Gregor, & Klanten, Rob. Preface to *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, edited by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hubner, Alain Bieber, Pedro Alonzo, and Gregor Jansen, 3-9. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Lasn, Kalle. & Adbusters. Meme Wars: *The Creative Destruction of Neoclassical Economics*. London: Penguin Economics, 2012

Mitchell, Dane. *Radiant Matter I/II/III*. Berlin:
Berliner Künstlerprogramm/DAAD, 2011.

Siegel, Katy, & Mattick, Paul. *Art Works: Money*.
London: Thames and Hudson, 2004.

Stevenson, Michael, & Verwoert, Jan. *Animal Spirits: Fables
in the Parlance of Our Times*. Auckland: Cloud, 2013.

Superflex. "The Bank," 2013, [http://www.
superflex.net/tools/the_bank](http://www.superflex.net/tools/the_bank)

The Yes Men. "The Yes Men are Revolting."
Thresholds: Revolution 41 (April 2013): 134-135.

WochenKlausur. "From the Object to the Concrete Intervention."
In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited
by Nato Thompson, 62-65, New York: MIT Press, 2012.

c. the best of intentions

don't you see, the possibility, the sparking of all

this energy & brightness at from the spaces

between your ribs?

So many of us, we want different, we want the next.

I know I inhabit somewhere shifted to the left, but

surely there are enough of us to agree, enough to occupy

the streets & arcades

the places of commerce (only numbers in time)

the places of power (they are nowhere, they are ghosts)

and that terrible frightening hope

that cups my jaw in its hand, turns me to meet its eyes

that intersperses through the atoms that differentiate

me from the keys, from the bed

that hooks itself into the cavity of my chest the flesh of my heart & pulls

(tenebrous hope, opaque & dappled)

and I can truly believe in the capacity for humanity

to stop justifying its demons in profit

(not that there will be much less affliction, but at least
we can be honest about why)

and maybe intersperse the atoms that separate the

masters of the 2.3 trillion from the dark eyes that

look up at them

the atoms between the human & the ocean.

4

THE VIRUS, A BODY, A
DISTRIBUTER, A CARRIER
THE D.E.A. FOR THE MODAL ECONOMY

I have constructed an entire system in the earnestness of actually, truly trying to build something that would work – a functional economy, an improvement to what currently exists. How, then, do I balance the line between intentional evangelism and menacing dictator? The blur between holier-than-thou and honest sincerity?

But this proposal was never about making a working economy, as much as I have tried to do so – it's about making something to highlight behaviour, economics and their effects on each other. It exists for you to disagree with, to contrast with how you'd do things. To show you, through your own imagination, that capitalism is a system and can change, if we all realise it can be changed.

2

AESTHETIC

We find beauty not in the thing itself but in the patterns of shadows, the lights and the darkness, that one thing against another creates
– Jun'ichiro Tanizaki¹

In defining my audience as our world's elite, my tone, delivery, and style needed attuning to seduction, persuasion, but also subversion. I wanted to make them complicit, to give them power over economics in a way to emphasize the power we do have. The institutional aesthetics of the D.E.A. are designed to reflect a slightly warped version of other organisations, distorted just enough to unsteady you.

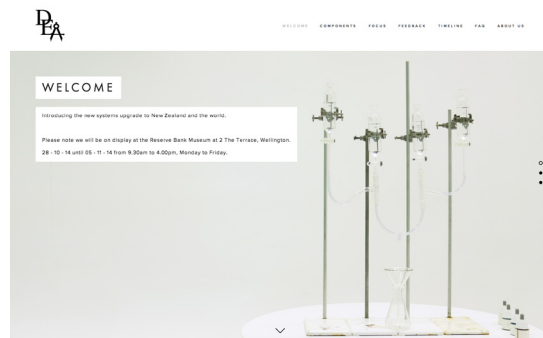
3

INSTITUTION

The brand identity was developed in the same manner as any professional company. The Department^(Fig. 1) needed to be believable as an institution, to look clean and professional, well designed in the most banal and corporate sense of the word. The logo incorporates a drafting compass to suggest accountability and accuracy, the use of a serif font suggests tradition and establishment. The sans serif is one used on

¹ Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, 30

Fig. 1



D.E.A. website screenshot "www.modaleconomy.org"
Digital media, 2014.

New Zealand bills.² The calming off-whites, creams, greys, and neutral colour palette evoke its official non-partisan status. We aim to look trustable, the same way any business tries to look trustable.

The institutional aesthetic of the D.E.A. was developed to be credible, official, placidly modern, and slightly dull.

Where the D.E.A. differs from commonplace corporates, however, is in the slight push into the unreal, into the line between existence and fiction. Everything is a little too white, a little too clean. The photographs on the website were given a slight green tint to suggest an uneasiness. The name itself – the Department of Economic Adjustment – hints at a large organisation but does not specify activities. At no point do the videos or the website list actual names for people, or give you an assurance for our accountability.³ At no point do we state that it is a creative work. You are left to wonder what – or who – the organisation really is. You should be wary of the D.E.A.; you should feel the need to question its intentions, because they are just as evasive as any corporation. The D.E.A. is designed to make you suspicious, reflective of the manipulations capitalist-driven branding.

² ITC Avant Garde Gothic

³ Our given address is Parliament House in Thorndon

I look forward to seeing it in context at the Reserve Bank Museum where people are unaware of its fictional circumstances, and their reaction to something that presents itself without an indicator of how to read it.

I also draw from pseudo-science to give the project the credibility that economy seeks from hard science,⁴ and to visually represent complex systems of value and exchange. This is most apparent in the physical objects used. Scientific apparatus measures flows of qualitative capital. My tunic^(Fig. 2) emulates a lab coat altered to be slightly more fashionable, more appropriate for the pleasant and moderately attractive spokesperson. Black, linear diagrams make abstract equations to calculate incalculable and beautiful things like the sound of the wind through the trees. A lot of this style was informed by advertising that also uses these techniques to sell consumer products, in particular Sensodyne and Clinique.^{5 (Fig. 3)}

Artist Dane Mitchell has been an influential model for the navigation of the boundaries of scientific material culture, the tangible, and the intangible.⁶ His glass vitrines and vials in *The Smell of an Empty Space (Liquid)*^(Fig. 4) contain abstract ideas and perfumed molecules alike. He makes science a fable, a collection

Fig. 2, 3, 4



6

7

4 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 52-3
 5 Clinique, "Clinique Smart Custom-Repair Serum"
 6 Emily Cormack, "Minor Optics"

2. D.E.A. presentation tunic, cotton and silk, 2014.
 3. Clinique, "Clinique Smart Custom-Repair Serum."
 from Clinique website, 2014.
 4. Dane Mitchell, "The Smell of an Empty Space (Liquid)."
 Aromatic installation, Artspace, Auckland, 2011.

of phenomena. Mitchell questions the integrity of the chemical truths we take for granted by placing science and ghosts in the same space. He juxtaposes different ideologies of knowledge – shaman-esque with pale modern medicine, and the systems of belief that they are born of. He questions the unquestionability of science, similarly to the way I am questioning the solidity of economy.

I also find his use of demonstrating the immaterial very evocative. He promises us sensations like the smell of an empty room, and my memory of the rain released,^{7 (Fig. 5)} personal, perfumed, and transient. I find his work intensely seductive, attractive – glass and mirrors and thin gold circles, hypothetical realities in the guise of physics and chemistry. The glass vials he creates are at once elegant and believable. This is beauty that does not detract, but adds to the credibility of the work. I only wish his work could leave the gallery, and invite audiences outside of the alert and critical contemporary art crowd.

His use of materials is reminiscent of Bill Phillips' MONIAC.^{8 (Fig. 6)} It is an incredible model for economics as a measurable, orchestrated, predictable science in which "all the crucial processes in the cell unfold

7 Mitchell, "Your Memory of Rain Released", 2011, in *Radiant Matter I/II/III* 20-1

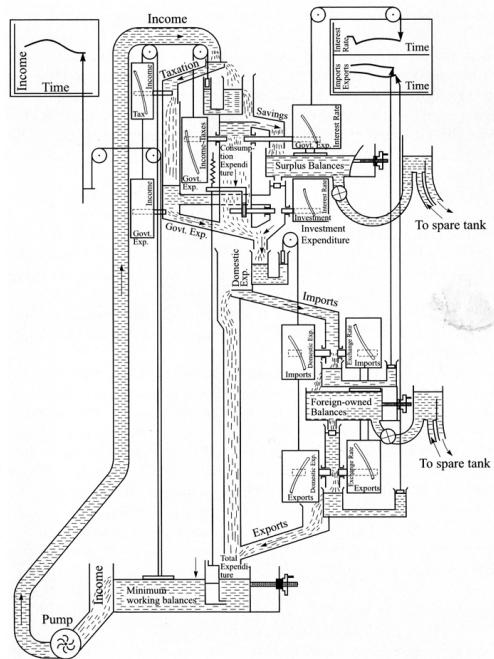
8 For the virtual MONIAC visit <http://www.rbnzmuseum.govt.nz/activities/moniac/introduction.aspx>

Fig. 5



Dane Mitchell, "Your Memory of Rain Released." Aromatic installation, Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, 2011.

Fig. 6



Bill Phillips, "Monetary National Income Analogue Computer." Schematic diagram, taken from Strogatz, "Like Money for Water", 2009.

over time... when things go right, the genes switch on and off in a beautiful but mystifying choreography."⁹ I am also drawn to the linear diagrams and structural blueprints for the machine, tanks for national income and expenditure, interest rates on diagonal scales. For me, the MONIAC represents the narrow vision of economics, the limited assumptions and unrealistic equations it creates in predictive models. I look forward to displaying my capitals' flow of the immaterial, the companionship of insects or the psychological value of a healthcare system next to the financial flows of the MONIAC at its monthly demonstration. Both are equally impossible representations.

I'd also like to signpost Michael Stevenson's use of the MONIAC in his works, particularly *The Fountain of Prosperity* (2006) in which he created a facsimile of the MONIAC the Central Bank of Guatemala was supposed to have purchased in 1953 to support its faltering economy.^{10 11}

LIGHT

Light has always been the foundation of my visual practice. The D.E.A.'s use of light is almost painfully

9 Steven Strogatz, "Like Water for Money"

10 Michael Stevenson, "Answers to some questions about bananas"

11 As Jan Verwoert outlines in "Faulty Converters, Ingenious Operators", 58, much of his work deals with macroeconomics and therefore inhabits a similar artistic space to my own – but his lies on a higher level of criticism and the accumulation of far-flung objects, artefacts, apparatus, to tell economic ghost stories.

bright, invasive – something that was simultaneously clinical and authoritative, reminiscent of interrogative lamps. It puts the spotlight, quite physically, on the viewer. It is, however, a little extreme, as it is not conducive to encouraging viewers to spend the time on the website and watching the videos. I broke this flat whiteness up with images^(Fig. 7) from the experiments and apparatus used: rust stains on the clamp stands, the bluish glass of flasks, and inks separating in water, which for me were representative of the material developments of the modal economy.

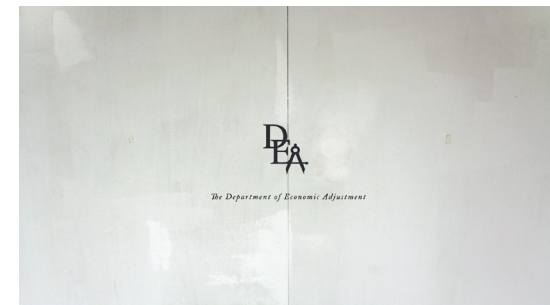
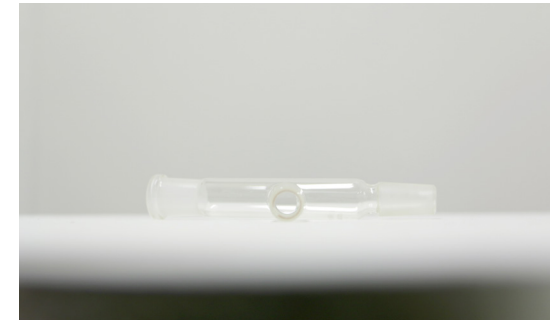
12

The minimal, off-white, diagrammatic aesthetic is vulnerable to accusations of elitism and evangelism, which to a certain degree I encourage – I am trying to lull you into this system in ways that capitalism lulls you into itself. I am taking existing capitalist seduction and subverting it: superficial and exclusive, vaguely corporate, visual hierarchies to sell an egalitarian future.

But my visuals are also drawn from a place not informed by the contemporary arts nor Western popular culture. The immersion in the clean outlines of *manga*, from Japanese shadows¹², from the lines of woodgrain, from the colours of paper and raw silk

12 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*

Fig. 7



13

a. Photograph of glass distillation adapter, 2014.
b. Photograph of white painted wall, 2014.

is equally important. From *wabisabi*, the beauty of the rust and watermarks. From *śūnyatā*, the oceanic, the loss of the borders of the self into emptiness and interconnected networks, the way that the more you try to delineate one thing, the more it expands into a spider web of the whole universe.¹³ This, I believe, proved to be a natural fit to the purposes of the D.E.A. – the minimalism and cloudiness run parallel to science fiction, to building a future world with its new mindsets manifesting themselves in visual and material culture between the future and the present. The resulting textural images on the website, pamphlets, and video titles.

14

The facets of elite-authoritative/futuristic-minimal/institutional-accessible/pseudo-scientific all form vibrating sides of the D.E.A. It is too much, too many splinters within a unified aesthetic – but I am trying to reach the complexity and contradictory form of human nature and behaviour. Anything less but the ambiguous would be didactic.

You are as much a maker of meaning as I am in this proposal: bring yourself and your own perceptions to its blank off-white slate, to its outcomes.

13 Alan Watts, *Psychotherapy East and West*, 68

14 Holert, "Burden of Proof", Kester, Conversation Pieces, & Bishop, "Participation and the Spectacle"

15 Decentralisation, collaboration, heterogeneous value

16 See Jeremy Rifkin, *The Zero Marginal Cost Society*, Chapter 9 for more a more detailed account

VIRUS: DISSEMINATION

One of the key tenets of socially engaged practice is its refusal to be assimilated into the mainstream or co-opted by capitalism.¹⁴ I am creating a project *intended* for assimilation. The modal economy is a virus whose purpose is corruption. If the modal economy can be assimilated but hold onto its core values¹⁵ then it can adjust the definition of economic success away from capitalism's self-interest, competition, and greed. As public awareness of environmental and social implications of business increases,¹⁶ the base for a modification to capitalism grows more and more receptive.¹⁷

15

The modal economy must reach beyond the close proximity of focus groups. The D.E.A.'s official strategic mission is, after all, to adjust the economy. My work needs channels of dissemination that have global access in order to initiate the network of a collaborative community and intimate economy where "even a longer network remains local at all points."¹⁸

If the modal economy is the virus and the D.E.A. the distributor, the carriers are the outputs: an interactive

17 I'd also like to note Jean Tirole's very recent win of the Nobel Prize for Economics for his work in regulating monopolies, one of the few winners to commend limits to free market capitalism. See John Cassidy, "Why Jean Tirole Won the Economics Nobel".

18 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 117

website presenting a video series, pamphlets, and focus groups, bound as a group by images and writing. Their effectiveness is important, but they are not the work alone. They are the interfaces, the surfaces, the filters between you and I.

Internet spaces are increasingly used for forming communities in the face of corporations and global politics.¹⁹ However they are also becoming volatile, disproportionately controlled by Google, Twitter, and Facebook algorithms that have profit-motivated political underpinnings.²⁰ The D.E.A.^(Fig. 8) website is part of a network that pulls the Internet back towards collaborative space. I intend it to become a forum for discussion of economic systems and how the modal economy can be improved prior to implementation. The digital component of this project is intended for easy interface: surveys on current and modal systems with click-rated responses, scales from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The layout is as simple as possible while displaying the relationship of the economic components. The 'About Us', 'FAQ', and 'Timeline' pages are purposefully detailed to discourage further inquiry into our identity with a wall of words and superficial details.

19 Including the Occupy movement and the Arab Spring, as noted by Nato Thompson, "Living as Form"
20 Rifkin, *The Zero Marginal Cost Society*, 203-4

Fig. 8

HOW DOES THE ECONOMY AFFECT YOUR BEHAVIOUR?

To me, success means:

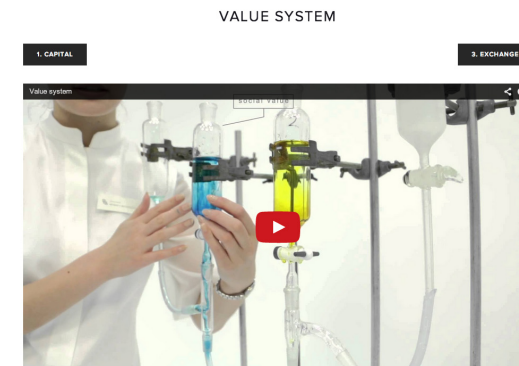
- ☐ Wealth
- ☐ Career fulfilment
- ☐ A comfortable lifestyle
- ☐ Family and community
- ☐ Contributing to the lives of others
- ☐ Other:

Most importantly, it gives space for people to get involved and to see how previous sessions have impacted the system. At the time of writing it has had over 1000 page views from over 275 discrete visitors, far larger than the reach of focus groups. The response forms will be further simplified, as there have only been three submissions. Some of the questions are too broad – how *does* capitalism affect your behaviour?

The video series^(Fig. 9) hosted on the website are a string of lectures on the working components of the modal economy, explaining simply how the new systems components interlock and impact on social behaviour. They have some superficial technical faults in the audio and lines, which given more time I should like to fix as they can distract from concentrating on the content, however I think that overall they make the new economy simple and concise. The ‘experiments’²¹ are precise and searingly colourful against the white, the modal economy sharply contrasted with the D.E.A. The scripts and delivery are genuine but smilingly impersonal – we don’t know if the presenter means what she says. They echo corporate advertising, extolling innovative, transparent, and integral organisational virtues in neat letters. The videos are

21 These are just physical demonstrations of the components, but the laboratory equipment allows it to utilise a scientific styling.

Fig. 9



D.E.A. website screenshot “Value system.” Online video, 2014.

an uneasy mix of an ethical system and a clinical delivery, a deliberate mismatch between content and aesthetic.

The pamphlets (digital and physical) are insertions into daily life, guides to consult as if the modal economy were about to be implemented, detailing how your exchanges and earnings would be affected. They will be carried around and consulted as you continue outwards into the everyday, modal manual in hand. These are the synecdoches, the supplements of my alternative future scenario. They are instructional in a different way – they simplify the modal economy to the way it works on the way home, at work, on the way out of the city. The pamphlets are less about being aware of the manipulations of capitalism, and more focused on how your behaviour would be affected in the modal economy. They are the next step, the most future-focused of the three.

These specific outcomes were chosen for their ability to slot into existing organisational channels of communication. If the D.E.A. were truly an organisation, they would be using similar methods to reach as wide and varied an audience as possible. Each forms a segment of a cumulatively realistic presentation – enough methods of delivery to look like a real institution.

20

COLLABORATION

We are the architects of our republic

– Martin Luther King, Jr.²²

Social engagement changes my role: I am no longer the sole producer of the work. The project becomes collaborative through the discussions with my focus group, through the feedback forms on the website. It is, as Kester describes, a semi-utopian, parallel space for dialogue where new ideas and ideals can be reached as an exploratory, empathetic, and discursive group.²³ The modal economy is *responsive*.

The exploratory series of focus groups were made up of five participants per session and myself, acting as the D.E.A.'s 'New Zealand representative'. I performed as an agent with the role of communicator, able to hide the gaps in the modal economy behind other figures of authority not present, who did not exist but functioned as if they did. They ran for at least an hour, in one case for over three, with light refreshments provided. The video series was played with questions and answers, then a conversation was instigated: what participants would change about the current economy, what they would change about the modal economy, and how

21

22 Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream"

23 Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 109

they could see the modal economy impacting their life, their workplace, and the wider community. The structure was based on those similarly outlined for business product development sessions.²⁴

The most important thing to come out of these sessions was watching the shift from the passive reception of videos to active engagement, when disbelief was fully suspended and participants were heatedly discussing what would work better, and what I'd overlooked. The most validating part for my project as a whole was watching the modal economy come to life in minds outside of my own.

22

They exposed my bias for the nonhuman: one group agreed that the modal economy would be a more sustainable system, but they also saw a lack of social development I was unaware of. Another group focused on the lack of self-determinism in the modal economy, seeing too much of a similarity to inhibitive egalitarianism. They exposed my underlying need to control those who I considered unethical actors, businesses as well as bystanders. I was able to rectify these issues in later developments of the economy.²⁵ One participant wanted a timeline of implementation, a long-term schedule, suggesting that if the D.E.A.

24 Edward McQuarrie, *The Market Research Toolbox*, 75-87

25 For more information, see <http://www.modaleconomy.org/focus/>

focused on the shift of mindsets then the eradication of wealth and consumerism would not be seen as negative and therefore the implementation would be much more likely to succeed. She saw details – paths forward – ways the modal economy could become a reality that I had not.

There were tense moments when we discussed the politics of representing the desperately poor in Uganda, and the role of the modal economy in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.²⁶ Things deeply personal and important to my participants became part of what was originally a macro-economic discussion. We got lost in tangents that only highlighted how interconnected social issues, politics, and human rights are by the economy. The participants become co-authors, no longer separated by the roles of spectator or audience. Suspension of disbelief was no longer the issue, but rather exactly how we could change our economy. We could grasp at “knowing somehow this situation can and will be changed.”²⁷

23

However the first set of participants, despite varied ethnic, national, age, and gender backgrounds, all had similar political leanings. They were all left wing, and therefore more inclined to agree with me on issues of

26 One of the participants works with volunteers and communities between New Zealand, Uganda, and Nepal. One works in the Office of Treaty Settlements. One has affiliations with Ngāti Porou, among others.

27 Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream”

equality and state regulation. This is the major flaw of my project – I should have allowed more time for different groups. The modal economy needs to be tested against a representation of the New Zealand population as a whole – including the overwhelming number of right-leaning people, as shown by the recent election.²⁸

24

During the installation at the Reserve Bank Museum, the second series of focus groups will be run with Reserve Bank of New Zealand staff, and a group of Young Nation Party members. This will test different aspects of the modal economy that were not obvious in the first series; how will people who are successful in and supportive of business as usual react to the dismissal of the profit motivation? Or to the stated equal importance of society, culture, environment, and financial health?

And how will they react to the corporate and clinical aesthetic of the D.E.A.? Will they be aware of the subversive co-optation of capitalist visuals, or take it at the instructional and confident face value? I regret that I did not run these groups earlier in my project, to be able to discuss the results here.

²⁸ This in spite of my aforementioned inability to empathise with the right wing, emotionally and logically.

INTENTIONS: TRYING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

And I asked myself about the present: how wide it was, how deep it was, how much of it

was mine to keep

– Kurt Vonnegut²⁹

I disagree somewhat with curator Alain Bieber's claim that, in light of the failings of social infrastructures, art must take up the cause.³⁰ I am not making work around the failings of economy because society has not done so. I am doing it because I think change needs to come from all aspects of society, that everyone's disciplinary voice must enter the conversation, and creative practice is just as valid and necessary as science or politics. I am making work because I want to provide a space for a range of people to consider their economic structures and how they might be affected by them – and subsequently how they might affect them.

25

Those are my intentions in the parameters of this degree.

But how much further could it go? Imagine a space – physical or immaterial – in which our very economic

²⁹ Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, 18

³⁰ Alain Bieber, "I Revolt, Therefore I am", 51

structures are contested and discussed not as inevitabilities or parameters in themselves, but as flexible, fluid, and responsive organisms. And I do not mean the dry analysis of economics by academic papers and drier economists, but by people of all classes and cultures and nations.³¹

Of course this is a utopian ideal – but a utopia that operates that maps out what could be,³² between reality and unreachable possibility. And if that is the direction we head in, then aspects rather than the whole of our unrealistic utopia may become real. My optimism is heady.

26

If I could imagine an ideal end to this project – in a hundred years – I would wish to see the implementation of a collectively designed, changeable economic system, not necessarily the modal economy but perhaps built from its foundations in collaboration, decentralisation, and 4-spectrum value.³³

There are uncomfortable tensions between my idealistic hopes, between the optimism of the modal economy, and the reflective manipulation of the D.E.A. Do they cancel each other out, transparency clouded by corporate evasiveness? I think ambiguity is productive and inciting, but this may be just plain

³¹ I do find it so hard to separate, to segment, when the holistic picture is so resonant and whole. My intentions are macro, not micro.

³² Rob Klanten and Lukas Feireiss, *Utopia Forever*, 7

³³ I do not see the modal economy as an end point but a catalyst, because it has too much of myself and my own biases embedded into its breathing. As I mentioned in book 3, I am more concerned with

contradiction. Or maybe I am placing too much importance on aesthetics and design that the Reserve Bank Museum will not even notice.

These intentions do not outline what I expect to happen. Like so many activists, I am riding a wavering line between hope and cynicism. I can't *not* make work that is socially and environmentally motivated – to do so would be superfluous. I can't see into the space ahead, but that is no reason not to go into it with hope, and the best of intentions.

27

the rights of the nonhuman and the marginalized third world than the poverty in my own country, down the road. It hurts to analyse this too closely. Perhaps it is easier to imagine world-solving solutions than to make a concrete difference here. But I can't see past the holistic nature of the systems, and one sickens me more than the other.

REFERENCES

Bieber, Alain. "I Revolt, Therefore I Am." In *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, edited by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hubner, Alain Bieber, Pedro Alonzo, and Gregor Jansen, 50-55. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Bishop, Claire. "Participation and the Spectacle: Where Are We Now?" In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by Nato Thompson, 35-45. New York, NY: MIT Press, 2012.

Cassidy, John. "Why Jean Tirole Won the Economics Nobel." *The New Yorker*, October 13, 2014. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/worthy-economics-nobel-jean-tirole>

28

Clinique. "Smart Custom-Repair Serum". Youtube video file, 1:09, online advertisement, posted by "Clinique", June 09, 2014, <http://youtu.be/5-TTVV9P4OA>

Cormack, Emily. "Minor Optics," 2009 <http://www.danemitchell.co.nz/#!minor-optics/ckpr>

Holert, Tom. "Burden of Proof: Tom Holert on Contemporary Art and Responsibility." *Art Forum International* 51 no. 7 (March 2013): 250-260.

Kester, Grant. *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

King, Martin Luther Jr. "I Have a Dream: Address at the March on Washington." Youtube video file, 17:28, from a speech at the Washington D.C. Civil Rights March on August 28, 1963, posted by "sulentoy", January 20, 2011, <http://youtu.be/smEqnklfYs>

Klanten, Rob. & Feireiss, Lukas. *Utopia Forever: Visions of Architecture and Urbanism*. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

McQuarrie, Edward F. *The Market Research Toolbox: A Concise Guide for Beginners*, 3rd ed. London: Sage Publishing, 2012.

Mitchell, Dane. *Radiant Matter I/II/III*. Berlin: Berliner Künstlerprogramm/DAAD, 2011.

Rifkin, Jeremy. *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Stevenson, Michael. "Answers to some questions about bananas," 2006, http://www.michaelstevenson.info/projects/answers_to_some_questions_about_bananas/index.html

29

Strogatz, Steven. "Like Water for Money." *New York Times*, June 2, 2009. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/guest-column-like-water-for-money/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

Tanizaki, Jun'ichiro. *In Praise of Shadows*. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1984. Translated by Thomas Harper and Edward Seidensticker. First published in 1933 as *In'ei Raisan*.

Thompson, Nato. "Living as Form." In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by Nato Thompson, 16-33, New York: MIT Press, 2012.

Verwoert, Jan. "Faulty Converters, Ingenious Operators: On the Work of Michael Stevenson." In *Michael Stevenson: An Introduction* edited by Laura Preston, 57-63. Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2013.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991. First published 1969 by Delacorte.

Watts, Alan. W. *Psychotherapy East and West*. New York: Pantheon, 1961.

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davies, James C. "Essay Four". In *What It Means to be Human: Essays in Philosophical Anthropology, Political Philosophy and Social Psychology*, edited by Ross Fitzgerald, 64 - 82. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1978.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias". *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* 5 (1984): 46-49. Translated by Jay Miskowiec. <http://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html>

Latour, Bruno. "The Affects of Capitalism". YouTube video, 1:00:46, from a lecture at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences, Copenhagen, February 26, 2014, posted by Videnskabernes Selskab, February 28, 2014), <http://youtu.be/8i-ZKfShovs>

Jansen, Gregor, & Klanten, Rob. Preface to *Art and Agenda: Political Art and Activism*, edited by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hubner, Alain Bieber, Pedro Alonzo, and Gregor Jansen, 3-9. Berlin: Gestalten, 2011.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. London: David Campbell, 1992. First published 1955 by Olympia Press.

Reserve Bank of New Zealand "About the Reserve Bank Museum". Wellington: Author, 2008.

Sanderson, Anna. *Brainpark*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006.

in retrospect

In truth I can see an end to capitalism: when its voracious need for more, for higher, runs out of a planet to consume. I know I swing wildly between future and destruction, but as much as I fight for solutions this seems the most plausible. A system we created is eating us, and everything around us, and my whole world and your world and all the beauty in it will be lost, and that is something I can't bear to imagine though I see it in front of me constantly, so I keep fighting in order to move my eyes away from an inevitable vision of death.

32

Forgive me for being so intensely personal, for laying myself bare like this. But how else can I reach you if I am not honest? How can I connect to you if you can't see my failings and my preconceptions? These are not concerns that will end when my project is handed in; these are not resolvable within a two-year period. I will keep going.

I have ambitions for global change (there, I said it).
I want to change the world (regardless of my ability to do so).

I can be reproached for all the superior evangelical first-world charity, all the fetishizing of 'the poor' and 'the environment' as homogenous masses, but that does not matter to me compared to the sickness at my heart of Chinese fur foxes skinless and red, and blinking silent in the snow, because it costs too much to kill them first. These accusations are nothing when I think about femurs that are broken in two and overlapped so that when they heal and grow to adulthood the labourer has one half-leg, unable to run away, physically tied to a factory floor.

There are things that are wrenching not because I am privileged, but because I am human. The politics of responsibility is a valid discussion, but this is a sickness I will fight to do something about, for as long as I am able, before my youthful idealism wears off and I subside into the encroaching golden bubble. It would be easier to shut my eyes, and I wish I could, and I am fighting to keep them open.

33

I want you to believe that change is possible, because so many of us are disillusioned and tired, and if we know that this is not the only way things have to be, then we will do something about adjusting it. If I can make more and more people aware of how economy

controls ethics, of how capitalism manipulates 'human nature' in the interests of the rich and powerful, then we are starting to get somewhere productive. Though my reach is not global, it's a contribution to many others like myself, in this feeling of post-capitalism, who work to see the realisation of the next step.

34

I'm convinced that my modal economy is a better system than capitalism, which is absurd – but really, the bar has been set so low. Capitalism has bettered so few at the expense of so many and so much. Just because I am among the few does not mean I have to be comfortable with it. The modal economy will never be operational, but it is proof (to myself if no one else) that we are not stuck in a bipolarity between capitalism and socialism.

The Department of Economic Adjustment was created as a facilitation centre between economy and the people who live within it – it draws out the base purposes of economics into a series of functional components: trade, value, exchange. It de-reifies the omnipresent and untouchable capitalism into its comparative failings as a focal point for discussion. It unhooks economy from naturalisation and leaves it a little more vulnerable.

I want you to touch your economic system, to feel the flow of it across your palm, to grip its links – and push them just slightly that way, as much as you are able. This is not radical. This is incremental. This is plausible.

35

c. dystopia

I could just not move.

I could just wait for my hands to fade from the tips,
watch passive as my nerve endings catch in the
last of the light, grasp at my mortality with the stumps
of my fingers, the bones of my wrist. I could watch the
light disappear through my palm & through the glass
less window, track the shift of the white rectangle
across the vacant room to touch my shoulder. I could
stay here & let the flesh slip quietly from my bones
& let the bones turn to dust, another vague mass in
particles of bleach, lead, shades of white.

The entire surface of the earth is crested with the
carcasses of important edifices collapsed one each other
like drowning men, & amongst them, the things no
longer living, with no descendants, whole species &
planets lost. I once tried to pull away one soft part
of the parasite & revealed a hundred more auxiliary
Lernaean nodes multiplying in replication,
jumped back in pure nausea
(he hailed a vicious & rational god)

we can look at two-dimensional representations
of them on paper & try to imagine them back.

d. heterotopia

- can I ask you, what do you define as acceptable hells?

The things we choose to leave behind in the other room,
in the reflection of the mirror, in the place between two
parallel futures - which are the things we have to
flaw so we don't get lost in unreality? Which are the
things that will break before they are even touched, &
which are the things we will treasure as never before?
You see, everything is changing, & suddenly I'm not
quite sure.

(He will take the wooden bowl home wrapped in old
white paper, & use it & know it until he gives it to
someone else a shade darker from the oil of his
hands & the rice & the water)

e. utopia

when I slowly rejoin my body my skin will be
wrinkled from the water & it will take me so long
to reattach my distant thoughts that I mistake
the sparkling phosphores on the inside of my eyes
for a whole day passed into stars.

the cusp of no-place.