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Postcapitalist translations

An experiment with scissors, clippings, and glue

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This chapter reports on an experiment using the collage method to analyse post- and pericapitalist academic literature. The experiment was motivated by a methodological approach that understands research as a craft involving the production of various artefacts. Based on cutting, pasting, and overlaying, the collage offers a particularly interesting method for analysing post- and pericapitalist material (see also Särmä, 2014; Choi et al., 2023).

The terms 'postcapitalist' and 'pericapitalist' relate critically to portrayals of capitalism as an all-encompassing monolith. They strive to demonstrate the diversity of the economy by challenging arguments based on categorisations, such as the binary of capitalism and noncapitalism. The term postcapitalist refers to an approach developed particularly by J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996; 2006). The related framework of diverse economies rejects conventional notions of where, how, and by whom the economy is practised. Postcapitalist approaches also criticise capitalocentric perspectives. Capitalocentrism refers to the dominant economic discourse that is unable to discuss the economy with reference to anything but capitalism. Found in the mainstream economic discourse as well as in its critical analyses, it conceals the actual diversity and indeterminacy of economic activity (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 56).

The term pericapitalist originates from Anna Tsing's (2015) analyses of how the harvesting of matsutake mushrooms becomes part of the capitalist production of value. Tsing uses the concept of salvage accumulation to describe the ability of capital to amass value produced without its temporal or spatial control. Matsutake

mushrooms are products of nature, and their harvesting has been organised in a way that could be called noncapitalist. However, through the supply chains, the value of the mushrooms is "translated" into capitalist form. In this context, the term pericapitalist stands for activities taking place both inside and outside capitalism. It is not an attempt to outline alternative economic forms but rather a way to shed light on capitalism's dependence on noncapitalist activities (Tsing, 2015, p. 66).

Although Tsing analyses activities in remote areas where matsutake mushrooms can be found, she suggests that "'noncapitalist forms' can be found everywhere in the midst of capitalist worlds" (Tsing, 2015, p. 66). In our experiment, we tested the terms post- and pericapitalist in four different worlds: the Finnish university, the post-Soviet legacy, postsocialist transitions, and dementia care. The purpose was to explore, with the help of dialogue between visual and verbal expression, the forms of life that break through the cracks and splits where capitalist accumulation does not fully succeed or even fails. The experiment was conducted at a retreat for slow research organised on 16–17 March 2022. Our toolbox included scissors, pencils, paper of different colours, felt-tip pens, feathers, glitter, clippings, and academic literature we had brought with us to the retreat. We cut and pasted images and sentences from newspapers, magazines, and academic journals into collages. From time to time, we would return to reading academic articles—or cutting and crossing out parts of them. We underlined and crossed out text to make space for life pushing through: past, current, and future.

We treated our collage work as a translation across different materials and registers. The activity of translation has a special role in pericapitalist as well as in postcapitalist research. Anna Tsing (2015) suggests that translation is a pericapitalist activity. The accumulation of wealth "requires acts of translation across varied social and political spaces" (Tsing, 2015, p. 62). In turn, Tuomo Alhojärvi and Anna Tuomikoski (2022, pp. 246–247) describe the term *postcapitalist* as a "translation problem"—for example, in the Finnish language, the word for postcapitalism can refer to the last stage of capitalism and society after capitalism. Alhojärvi and Tuomikoski suggest that such "a difference in a single word" or the irreversibility of translation is an expression of postcapitalism: it reminds us that in translations between systems, something remains uncontrollable (Alhojärvi & Tuomikoski, 2022, p. 247). Postcapitalist translations could help renounce the simplified differentiations between capitalism and noncapitalism.

The retreat lasted for two days, and in between, dreams and the subconscious influenced the collages (see Figure 7). The shared time-space gave rise to a special kind of inquiry. Exclamations, jokes, and play intertwined with academic work, often considered a serious activity. The shock and melancholy caused by the recently started full-scale war in Ukraine was in the background. Similar affective connections would hardly have emerged had this co-authored chapter been written in separate physical and material time-spaces, with everyone working on separate assignments and commenting on each other's outputs afterwards. In the process, collages evolved into clusters and collections of collages—and this chapter was simultaneously being formed into a collage of its own.

Each member of the group cut out pictures for their collages from magazines that had been collected from the university library's disposals: they had turned into a burden of capitalism that the university library system, struggling with a lack of space, could no longer accommodate. With their help, we dwelled on the troubles of postcapitalism (cf. Haraway, 2016). As Alhojärvi (2021a) suggests, capitalocentrism was initially introduced as a problematic and as a prompt to reinvent how the economy is analysed. However, it is now often treated as "a problem of others, and a problem out there", not as a "thorny issue within our projects" (Alhojärvi, 2021a, p. 62: emphasis added). Keeping this in mind, we also wanted to trouble postcapitalist inquiries by posing questions such as: What are the silences of this research approach and who are the subalterns whose voices must be made heard (cf. Spivak, 1988)? While working on the material, we also considered the internal power relations of the postcapitalist discourse: cutting, pasting, reading, colouring, and conducting serious academic work interspersed with carnivalesque banter.

This textual collage proceeds in the following order. In the first section, Mikko Poutanen uses the collage method to map a postcapitalist university. In the following two sections, Anni Kangas and Iuliia Gataulina focus on the contributions of postcapitalist scholarship in the post-Soviet and postsocialist contexts. The collage of Anna Ilona Rajala, in turn, examines pericapitalism and dementia. Our research report is rounded off by the poem of Tiina Vaittinen, 'mined' from an article by Gayatri C. Spivak (2000), "Translation as culture". In the poem, Spivak's lecture to another audience over twenty years ago is translated into a fractal commentary on both capitalism and the research group's collaging experiment.

Mikko: "Mapping a postcapitalist university"

In my experiment (Figure 1), I used the collage method to map the postcapitalist university. I sought material from inspiring international research, which could illuminate the struggles with intensifying capital(ist) cycles within academia in contexts where this process is further along than it is currently in my own national context—Finland. The universities of Anglophone countries are often presented as desirable benchmarks for other counries (Kivistö et al. 2019, p. 59). It felt like a predictive translation for the future.

As part of my collage work, I found myself reflecting on the language of the postcapitalist university. After all, not only was I primarily relying on examples from Anglophone countries but also on English-language research literature. The hegemony of the English language, fuelled by academic capitalism, had *colonised* my work dealing with the postcapitalist university. I was conscious of becoming trapped in the *anglo*cene (cf. Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen, 2020, pp. 467–470). I chose to consciously lean into this in search of a different perspective in the "predictive translation" of my collage.

I ended up linking my collage work to two books by Richard Hall, a British researcher. The books deal with the strain and alienating impact of academic work (Hall, 2018a) and the need for new initiatives (Hall, 2021). Hall's approach is openly Marxist, which tends to lead to capitalocentric readings of postcapitalism as something that merely follows capitalism. This is different than what research engaged with diverse economies envisions (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006). However, I also wanted to avoid reductive interpretations. Departing from Hall's works, I first sought to define the structural problems of the university. Defining and identifying these problems makes it important and desirable to outline a different, postcapitalist university. Based on Hall's works, I created a textual spiral (Figure 1).
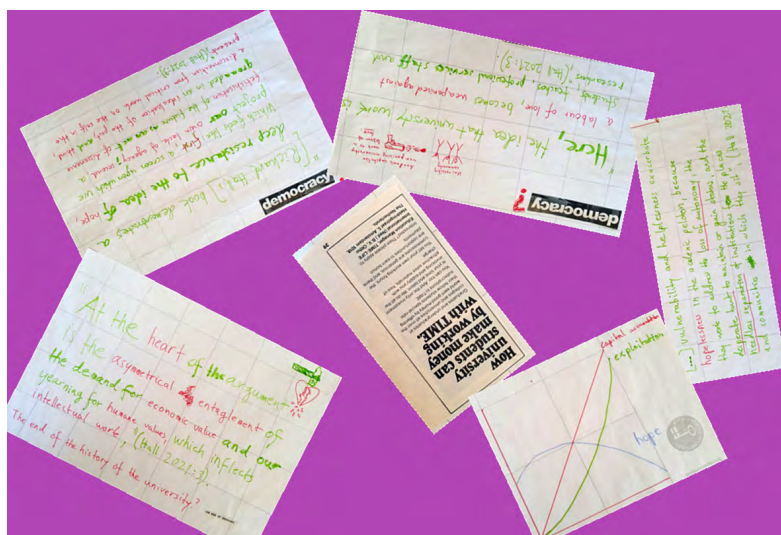

Figure 1. Mapping a postcapitalist university, photo by Mikko Poutanen.

The spiral shape was motivated by Hall's metaphor of an academic exercise bike that members of the University community pedal frantically—only to remain stationary. The spiral shape is built using slips of paper with quotes from Hall's book (Hall, 2021). I chose to make the background violet, which was the colour of my "own" university at the time. Colours also play a role on the slips of paper: I used red, associated with emotions, for texts representing negative structures of hopelessness such as lack of agency, academic work becoming instrumentalised, and critical fractures in the construction of self-image. In turn, green was a colour I found to represent more neutral texts. At the centre of the spiral, I pasted a clipping from an old *Time* magazine, which announced that university students could earn money by working for the magazine—the spiral of writing about universities revolves around making money.

One of the goals of my collage work was to bring out both a paranoid and a reparative reading of the material. Paranoid reading seeks to reveal and criticise a subject matter, but easily gets stuck in its own negativity. It needs to be supported by reparative reading, which allows multiple interpretations, including hopeful ones (Sedgwick,

2003). This approach appears to be typical of the postcapitalist research tradition. Thus, I did not attempt to create an entirely unambiguous collage but wanted to leave the reader room for interpretation and positive motivation. It is true that my collage fuels a certain degree of paranoia, as Hall (2021) effectively describes the current British university as a *hopeless* place that exhausts students and staff. According to him, until the inhumanity of this structure is identified and acknowledged, it will be impossible to move past it (Hall, 2018b). The present-day university inevitably creates dissatisfaction and ill-being (Erickson et al., 2020; see also Kuusela, 2020). The capitalist university turns academic labour of love against the university community as exploitation (Hall, 2021, pp. 25–26). Hall has borrowed the concept of "labour of love" from Silvia Federici (1975), who used it to refer to domestic work ignored in value calculations. The academic identity turns into a unilateral commitment that gives rise to pathological anxiety and despair. Hope for a better future supports conditions that make the hopeful targets of exploitation (Iorio and Tanabe, 2019). In other words, hope turns against itself.

The university has become a hostile place for intellectual work. Making universities part of the generation of capital is essentially linked to the increased ill-being of students and staff, which has been discussed critically and plentifully in the UK over the past several decades (e.g., Fleming, 2021; Reading, 1996), but also increasingly in Finland (Rinne et al., 2014). The university community suffers from the epistemological burden of higher education policy—the continuous methodological control, measurement and assessment, drawing on the managerialism exercised in the spirit of new public management (Fleming, 2021, pp. 40–42; Kuusela et al., 2021; Lorenz, 2012). The Finnish university funding model, which is heavily based on performance and productivity, is one of the most competitive in Europe (Kivistö et al., 2019). When competing, the goal is to secure a position in the hierarchy of academic competition, not to be free from hierarchies (Hall, 2021, p. 134). With the vicious nature of the spiral, I also sought to express that the university community is ensnared in the logic of capitalist realism (Fisher, 2009) just like any other actor in the capitalist society (see also Chapter 8 in this volume).

As part of my collage, I drew a graph in which hopefulness about academic work turns downward as the degree of exploitation increases. I wanted to play with the capitalocentric universal language of numbers, indicators, and graphs (cf. Raworth, 2017, pp. 12–14). In my graph, as capital accumulates, the degree of exploitation at the university increases—and hope for a better future collapses.

To depict labour of love turning against the university community, I drew a detail for my collage, in which—drawing on Hall (2021)—the weaponised labour of love shoots 'love' at members of the university community, who have already surrendered. The bullets are heart-shaped, but destructive (Figure 2). In another detail of my work (Figure 3), the heart of the capitalist university is broken—shattered with a hammer featuring the euro currency symbol, which is more relatable to me than the dollar or the pound. The drawing illustrated my reaction to Hall's hopeless and joyless analysis of a university permeated by capitalism.
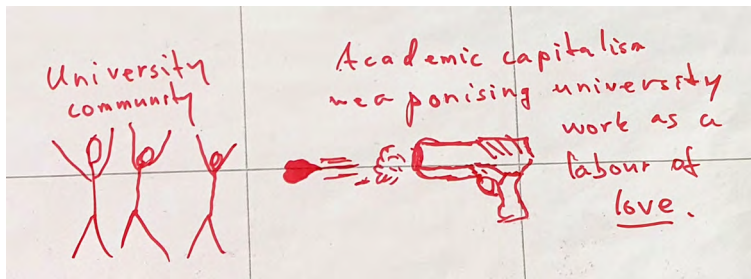
Figure 2. A detail from the collage "Mapping a postcapitalist university", photo by Mikko Poutanen.

Figure 3. A detail from the collage "Mapping a postcapitalist university", photo by Mikko Poutanen.

However, postcapitalist literature points out the importance of reparative reading: we are not meant to get stuck in hopelessness. According to Anna Tsing (2015), the cracks of the capitalocentric world contain space that may easily remain hidden but is not determined by capitalism. While Hall's analysis can justifiably be described as being paranoid, it also contains reparative elements. For example, Hall suggests that we can free ourselves from capitalist realism's impact restricting the imagination by giving up any nostalgic yearning for a romanticised university or a career achieved through self-sacrifice. It is possible to truly imagine and strive for something else.

Hall (2021, pp. 227, 250) emphasises that his book does not offer straightforward answers or a plan for measures with which the university community can free itself from the structures of an oppressive university. Working with detailed plans and schedules is specifically part of the operating model followed by the present-day university overrun by capitalism. When identifying and outlining postcapitalist

paths, it is necessary to accept incompleteness and imperfection. It is not a question of translating one static model into another, but of working with an incomplete dialogue between dynamic translation processes. Gibson-Graham (2006) also emphasise that a policy probing new postcapitalist initiatives and opportunities is inevitably incomplete or imperfect. If capitalocentrism can only be challenged with perfect, deployable alternatives, we are stuck.

Fixing the university could mean, for example, granting the university community real ownership of their work, workplace and social relationships (Kociatkiewic et al., 2020, p. 19; see also Poutanen, 2023). The capitalocentrism of the present-day Finnish university can also be challenged through democratic practices although academic democracy has also suffered from neoliberal control and the related managerialism (Poutanen et al., 2022). Joan Tronto has suggested that universities are platforms for strengthening the caring democracy in society (Tronto, 2018). Such tools can be used to build postcapitalist opportunities in Finnish universities, as well.

Easier said than done, however. The spiral in my collage reflects this reality: it is difficult to discern a way up in a spiral winding deeper and deeper. Indeed, we do not only fall into the trap of academic capitalism, but walk into it, even as we are aware of it. This makes it necessary to cast our eyes outside the spiral. Working on this topic in different ways—verbally or visually—involves a continuous dialogue between paranoid and reparative readings.

Anni: "The 'post-Soviet' in the postcapitalist scene"

The collage (Figure 2) examines the term 'post-Soviet' in the postcapitalist scene. It is motivated by the increasingly critical discussion around the term, especially since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These discussions typically suggest that the term 'post-Soviet' comes with baggage: it reinforces a colonial mindset and obscures the diverse and multifaceted legacies of the Soviet Union (Koplatadze, 2019). With the collage, I wanted to inquire what kind of life the post-Soviet legacy lives in the postcapitalist scene. My presumption was that the prefix 'post-' is used to stand for the legacy of the Soviet project. I wanted to find out how the wildly heterogeneous character of this legacy is treated in the articles that try to fit it into the postcapitalist scene (cf. Alhojärvi, 2021b, p. 173).

The word 'scene' refers to a group of people who are interested in the same topics and exercise influence in matters related to them. The punk scene and start-up scene are examples of this. The postcapitalist scene is similarly formed by academic figures discussing what lies beyond capitalism (see also Alhojärvi, 2017). In it, capitalism is typically treated as a destructive or violent legacy—a failure on a cosmic scale (Alhojärvi, 2021b, p. 167). In terms of destructiveness, the Soviet project does not pale in comparison to capitalism. Its multifaceted legacy contains elements of Soviet-driven ideas of progression, violence against humans and the environment, and Russian colonialism, but also of kleptocracy fed by the neoliberal shock therapy following the

collapse of the Soviet Union. This heterogeneous legacy forms various kinds of traces and layers to the 'post-Soviet space' imagined stretching from Estonia to Ukraine and across Azerbaijan to Kyrgyzstan.

Figure 4. Collage "Come to where the flavor is", photo by Anni Kangas.

Collaging is movement between different forms and methods of expression (Kangas et al., 2019). It is translating. The hypothesis of my collaging experiment was that as the post-Soviet is translated into a form suitable to the postcapitalist scene, something worth examining happens. In previous research, Alhojärvi and Hyvärinen (2020, p. 467) have approached translation from one natural language to another as a site of ethico-political challenges and opportunities. They point out that the meaning of the Finnish word for translate (*kääntää*) is partly different from its English equivalent. In addition to signifying the converting of a linguistic expression from one language to another, *kääntää* can also mean reversing, ploughing, bending, changing direction, twisting (the meaning of words), and stealing (Itkonen & Kulonen, 2012, p. 483).

For collage material, I chose academic journal articles where the terms 'post-Soviet' and 'postcapitalist' were used. As belonging to the postcapitalist scene is indicated especially through references to the writings of J.K. Gibson-Graham, I conducted searches in the university library's database using the terms 'post-Soviet' and 'Gibson-Graham'. The search produced 188 results. I excluded the articles that did not seem adequately postcapitalist—they did not seem to be 'in' the scene, as their reference to the postcapitalist literature seemed only superficial. I then printed the articles that had passed the screening. Reflecting the fact that the postcapitalist scene is mainly constructed through written expression, I had at my disposal a stack of white sheets of paper lined with black text.

The etymology of the word 'scene' also refers to a view, a stage (see also Koskinen, 2020). In addition to the journal articles, I used US *Time* magazines from the 1970s that I had found on the university library's shelf for disposed material. *Time* being an extremely visual medium, it also meant that collaging became a translation from the textual to the visual, and back. Through their visual and colourful layout, the issues of *Time* magazine questioned the written, black-and-white, minimalistic aesthetics of academic expression.

For the background of my collage, I used aerial images from magazines. These images symbolise the sense of distance or unfamiliarity with which the articles I analysed approach the post-Soviet legacy. Rather than sensing its multiplicity, the post-Soviet legacy is treated as an object of rationalist remote sensing (cf. Paasi, 2000). In remote sensing, an aeroplane or satellite carries a measuring device that observes a target from afar. Similarly, the articles I examined employ various data collection and research methods, along with gibsongrahamesque language and categorisations, to characterise the post-Soviet legacy in a rationalist manner. This results in the dilution of the inherent messiness of the legacy as the authors, presumably, try to translate it into a form expected in academic publications.

The collage also portrays the practices that Lisa Tilley (2017) refers to as "academic piracy" and "extractivism". To maximise value in the machinery of academic capitalism, multifaceted legacies must be filtered and processed in English, predominantly in the West (cf. Tilley, 2017). To communicate this idea, I framed the collage by curled strips of paper where the viewer can read the names of prestigious academic publishers: *Cambridge University Press, Macmillan, Pennsylvania State University Press, Indiana University Press*. The curled strips call to mind the bending that these legacies, in all their complexities, needs to go through in order to fit into categories such as the 'post-Soviet' or into the semiotic and material order of the Anglocene (Alhojärvi, 2017, p. 41). In a more reparative reading, however, the curls may also be associated with unruliness—with the ever-present possibility of knowing and being otherwise. Paper is a fragile material. When I curled it with scissors, some of the strips tore, which brought to my mind how Sara Ahmed (2017, p. 171) evokes the idea of fragility of things not as a problem but as something to stay with.

There is a closed mouth at the centre of the collage. I cut it out of an old advertisement depicting a stereotypically Asian-looking female member of an aeroplane cabin crew. The figure has cast her eyes down and says that she is ready to serve. As part of the collage, the closed mouth of this orientalised figure expresses the trouble of knowing whose voice is heard when the diverse post-Soviet legacy is adapted to the postcapitalist scene. The closed mouth symbolises the epistemic burden manifested as the loss of voice (cf. Tlostanova, 2015). At the bottom of the collage, a self-assured middle-aged white male figure is casually examining a geometric diagram on the computer screen. He describes it to another figure who is leaning forward to curiously scrutinise the diagram. In contrast to the post-Soviet subject, this man has a voice. This refers to the impulse to strive for certainty in academic research. In his discussion of postcapitalist research practice, Alhojärvi (2021b, p. 173) points out that

from a derridaesque perspective, the heterogeneous character of any legacy makes it difficult to manage and calculate. However, the articles I worked with seemed to attempt to render the diverse post-Soviet legacy into something more manageable. To achieve this, they employed various epistemic techniques such as calculations, categorisations, and surveys. These methods were presumably guided by another persistent legacy—that of empiricism and positivism—which suggests that knowledge is effectively constructed by measuring or categorising observational data and identifying generalisable patterns within it (Kurki, 2024, p. 2).

My collage 'concludes' that the multifaceted character of the post-Soviet legacy is easily truncated and diluted by established epistemic, methodological, and publication practices. This issue persists even in the postcapitalist publication scene, despite the literature's strong focus on diversity. However, the collage's cigarette advertisements and their flavoursome promise from 'Marlboro land' ("Come to where the flavour is!") point to a utopian horizon in theorising, to the possibility of knowing otherwise. Its emphasis on flavour foregrounds the role of various senses, suggesting that knowing is not exclusively a matter of thinking (on sensing, see Chapter 5 in this volume). The collage as a whole, then, can be read as an invitation to reimagine ourselves— academic knowers—as playful subjects engaging in experimentations that enhance our capacity to be open to the pluriversal diversity of legacies.

Iuliia: "Enlivening the postsocialist for postcapitalism"

When doing research on postsocialist neoliberalism(s) (Gataulina, 2024), it became evident to me that the Western categories of capitalism, neoliberalism, and liberal democracies have become the starting point for explaining postsocialist realities. What would happen if we examined postsocialism in all its variety, enlivened it, and allowed it to speak for itself? With the help of my collages, I analyse the contribution of postsocialist translations to (post)capitalism.

I started my collage work by thinking about the place of postsocialism in postcapitalist scholarship. Saying that postsocialism is completely absent from theorisations of capitalism and postcapitalism is not accurate. It is present but silent. As phrased by Martin Müller (2020, p. 736; emphasis added), in writings about "the heartlands of democracy and of market capitalism, *the East is the silent bystander*". The diversity of the postsocialist "East" is ignored (see also Cima & Sovova, 2022). Postsocialism may have a place, but it is often discussed in the alien voice of Western categories. Postsocialism is a target of theorisation but not a point of departure (cf. Connell, 2007). In scholarship on capitalism and, consequently, postcapitalism, silence makes postsocialism into the conceptual Other of postcapitalism. Recently, postcapitalist scholarship has made a turn to postsocialism, and these discussions seek to portray postsocialism in its diversity (e.g. Pavlovskaya, 2015; Cima & Sovova, 2022).

The essentialising categories applied to postsocialism are both economic (market capitalism) and political (liberal democracy). As a result of their application, the distinctiveness of more than 70 years of state socialist governance has been erased (Müller, 2020, p. 736). Recognising the uneven histories and geographies of state socialism emphasises the need to make sense of postsocialism in a way that acknowledges its diversity, imperfection, hybridity and lack of teleology (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008, p. 330). However, despite being hegemonic, these essentialising categories are not universal. The erosion of distinctiveness produces epistemological blindness to the diversity of postsocialism and its ability to enrich the discussion about capitalism and postcapitalism. Theorisations related to capitalism—including postcapitalism—often operate in a pot of knowledge production linked to academic capitalism, unable to escape or suggest new ingredients, new perspectives.

How, then, has postsocialism been theorised if its distinctiveness has been erased? Postsocialist realities have been marked by a "transition" discourse: a move towards capitalism and liberal democracy. The discourse of transition, however, leads us to believe that there is a "capitalism original" and that the linear translation process from socialism to capitalism has an ideal destination. The transition discourse also implies that the transition as such carries no value. It is simply the path that must be taken to achieve the desired goal of market capitalism. Such a discourse prevents us from seeing postsocialist spaces in all their diversity: as hybrids of socialist legacies, neoliberal capitalism, and informal and patrimonial practices (Müller, 2020, p. 739). A complete transition is only possible for those capable of integration into the global capitalist system: for acultural and ahistorical subjects of oligarchy (on the "emptiness" of globalisation, see Ritzer & Ryan, 2002).

It is not surprising that such a transition remains unfinished. Postsocialism is stuck in an eternal transition towards capitalism and an "elusive modernity" (Müller, 2020, p. 736). Being stuck in a state of transition makes postsocialist spaces fall out of time and space (Müller, 2020, p. 741) or defines them as political or economic failures (Cima & Sovova, 2020, p. 1372). Viewed from this epistemological perspective, postsocialism is in an interstitial position unable to escape its past. It still carries its socialist legacy but is unable to achieve the promised future of market capitalism and liberal democracy. The "post" prefix refers to the past as if the postsocialist East has not yet found its way into the present after nearly 30 years (Müller, 2020, p. 741).

Postsocialist spaces have been dropped out of time and place to become signifiers of emptiness: they are "a 'grey place' that evokes no emotion at all—the terra incognita of the world, where Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Molvanîa[2] blend into an amorphous mass" (Müller, 2020, pp. 737–738). The greyness of postsocialist landscapes is a negation: it is the lack of a feature; it is emptiness, darkness, and the past (Choi, 2016, p. 106). The affective imagery of emptiness and greyness cannot offer any diversity, innovation, usefulness, or hopefulness. A grey place must be either abandoned or changed into something "more flavourful"—in this case, liberal democracy or market capitalism. Halauniova (2022) points out that postsocialist material realities are referred to as "unaesthetic" products of imperfect modernity, void of quality and

beauty, in need of upgrading. In her study, Trnka (2012, p. 19) describes the colourless nature of memories related to state socialism: when looking back on the 1989 Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the participants of Trnka's study used colours to draw temporal and geographic differences. The grey zone of communist Czechoslovakia was compared to the world in colour of, for example, Austria.
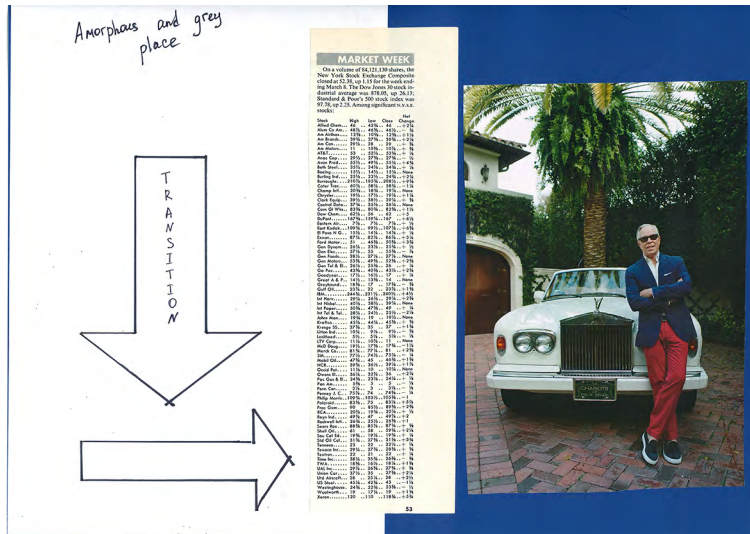

Figure 5. Collage "Amorphous and grey place", photo by Iuliia Gataulina.

The goal of my first collage was to depict postsocialist spaces as grey and empty while playing with the resulting imagery (Figure 5). I placed a white sheet of paper on the left side of my collage and left it empty, as it represents the triviality of postsocialist spaces. Only the two arrows break up the emptiness. They represent the "transition" towards market capitalism. The arrows point towards the desired goal: the affluence of the capitalist market economy, depicted in my collage by a picture of a wealthy, stylishly dressed older white man happily leaning against his luxurious car in the yard of his estate. Capitalism stands for colours, wealth, and joy. These two pictures are separated by a third one: a clipping with share price data from the New York Stock Exchange, which serves as a capitalist translation machine in the collage, translating postsocialism into added value, the universal language of capitalism (Alhojärvi & Tuomikoski, 2022, p. 243).

How about trying to enliven postsocialist spaces and incorporating the diversity of postsocialism into theorisations of capitalism, including postcapitalism? Instead of assuming that capitalism wanders into and settles down in the postsocialist space, this would mean recognising not only the diversity of capitalism but also the hybrid nature of postsocialism. Making the postsocialist diversity a premise of theorisation offers the opportunity to see differences instead of monolithic entities. This also enables us to enrich our understanding of postcapitalism. We need to abandon the

epistemology of transition and recognise the richness and uniqueness of (post) socialism (e.g. Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008).

Instead of examining capitalism as a machine performing an endless transition and translation, postcapitalism invites us to accept the opportunities offered by postsocialist translations in analyses of global capitalism and its frictions (Tsing, 2005). It is interesting to examine how capitalism generates frictions when it is intertwined with the practices, ethics, and ideology of the state socialist era. The research focused on the hybrid nature of postsocialism suggests where these frictions might be. For example, Jennifer Patico (2009) has studied how postsocialist subjects incorporated socialist ethics into capitalist relationships. Elizabeth Dunn (2004) has analysed how postsocialist workers converted individual performance, posited by capitalism, into collective responsibility. Seen from this epistemological perspective, postsocialist translations are endless. However, they do not aim for a specific goal ("capitalism original"), but are instead part of an ongoing translation process, change, and movement.
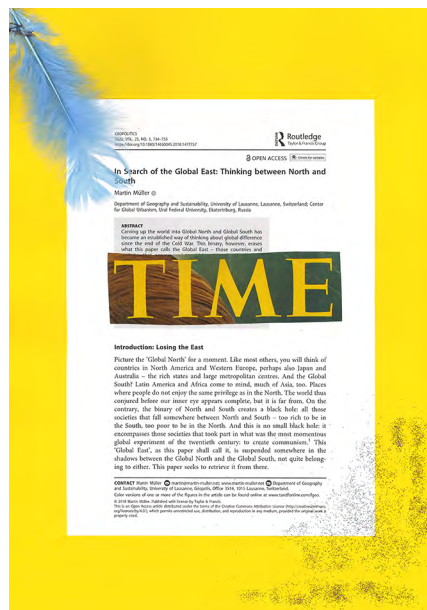

Figure 6. Collage (untitled), photo by Iuliia Gataulina.

In my second collage (Figure 6) I tried to reverse greyness and emptiness by imagining bright and colourful postsocialist spaces anchored in time and place. I chose a yellow background and, at the centre of it, I glued the front page of Martin Müller's (2020) article, which I used as one of the starting points for my piece. The heading of Müller's article refers to the search of the Global East. By placing this search attempt at the centre of my work, I attempted to visualise the epistemic move of positioning postsocialist hybrid realities in time and place. I also decorated the image with feathers and glitter to symbolise the richness and colourfulness of postsocialist spaces. Collaging, as a method of arranging objects into new relationships and

constellations, creates space for the art of noticing (Tsing, 2015) and showcases the richness, hybridity, and diversity of postsocialism.

Anna Ilona: "Dementia as a site of pericapitalist translation"

My collage (Figure 7) came into being through the invariably masculine clippings of 1970s *Time* magazines and a dream I had the night between our two days of collage work. In the dream, my subconscious wanted me to reorganise my output from the first day, and during the second day I did what I saw in the dream, an essential part of which was the abundant use of glitter and the concealing of quotes from Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's book (2015) behind flaps, just like in Eric Hill's Spot books familiar from my childhood.
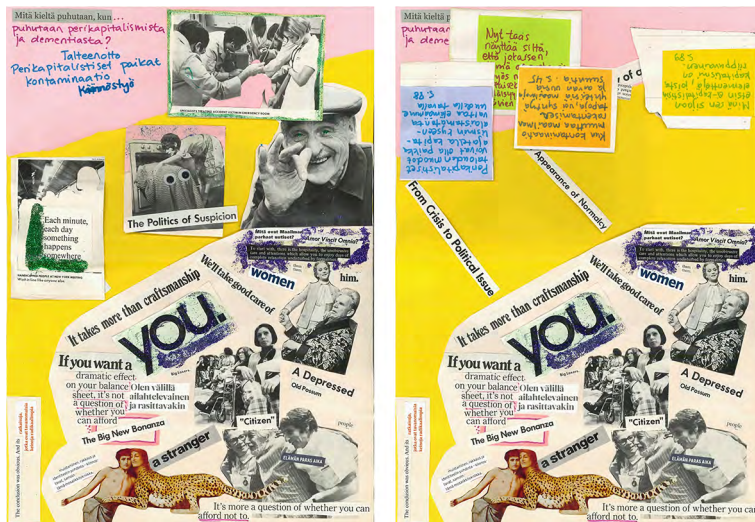

Figure 7. Collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala.

Pictures of older people. Pronouns—except it was manifestly impossible to find feminine pronouns in *Time* magazines dating back to the 1970s. A depressed old possum. Big losers. A stranger. "Citizen". The tender embrace of a human animal and chimera. References to the economy: can we afford, or can we afford not to? My day one mosaic of elderly care in which everyone is taken care of, cut and pasted on yellow and pink paper, based on my dream vision. The politics of suspicion and indifference: "Each minute, each day, something happens somewhere". A utopistic or *eutopistic* collage of bell hooks's (2000, p. 88) love ethic, in which our lives and destinies are always connected to other lives, animals and destinies on this planet. *Amor vincit omnia*—love conquers all (Figure 8)?

Figure 8. Detail from the collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala.

What language do we use when we talk about dementia as a pericapitalist site? How could Tsing's (2015) concept of 'pericapitalism' and the related concepts of 'salvage accumulation' and 'translation' be used in research on political economy and dementia (see Rajala, 2022)? What kinds of pericapitalist sites, points of interaction between capitalist and noncapitalist economies, are found in daily care? How can nature, independent of capitalism, such as bodily functions or the need for care and assistance, be translated for the needs of capitalism, which depends on salvage accumulation?

What happens to translation when the context of language use changes and the power carried by words is directed into new areas? *Is it permissible* for anything to happen to the translation? Postcapitalist translation is qualified by the tension between the context-dependent plasticity of language and the history-bound nature of language. On the one hand, language and translation must remain alert and malleable to avoid narrowness: postcapitalist language must be capable of looking beyond this moment in history and the economic system. On the other hand, language and translation are bound to this moment in history because, as the hopelessly material beings we are, the only way we can hurl ourselves into the future is like Walter Benjamin's (1980, pp. 697–698) angel of history: our faces turned toward the past to witness the catastrophe we have caused, which keeps piling wreckage at our feet.

Dementia creates a special need for care and assistance due to deteriorating memory and cognition, linguistic challenges, and a progressive deterioration of mobility, daily functioning (including getting dressed, eating, going to the toilet independently), and the ability to perceive time and space. The part of my collage with a white background reflects the need for care and ways to address it, as well as the

intertwining of care with questions concerning the economy. On the flap at the top of my collage (Figure 9), nurses and doctors are working around a patient cut out of the picture to save their life. When you turn the flap, the necessary life-maintaining work gives way to the precariousness of life and the need for care, which all of us will come across at some point in our lives. Nevertheless, care is mainly considered an expense item, and the hurry (that is, reduced resources and performance pressures) is always explained by the legacy of financial crises. This very same legacy can be seen behind the marketisation of care.
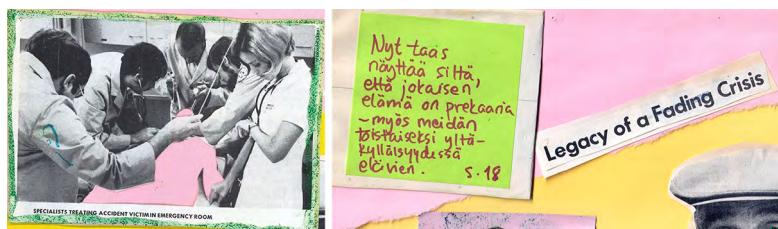

Figure 9. A detail from the collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala.

In the field of care, capitalist value is produced by way of translation from noncapitalist value production systems: care needs and meeting them—an unavoidably corporeal activity—are not produced by capitalism, but the value they generate is continuously salvaged to amass capitalist wealth. This is also the case in dementia care, even though the material reality of the need for care arising from dementia and the actions taken to answer the need are too complex to be labelled under simple service products that lend themselves to pricing (Rajala, 2016). In the words of Silva Tedre (2004, pp. 47–48, composition in verse is mine):

> Care is embodied encounters and more,
> unavoidable embrace of bodies, as in a wrestling hold.
> Care is embodied evasions, choices
> of gaze direction, working hands,
> bodies lifting, settled and situated
> in physical spaces, corporeal beings
> turning, getting up and walking with the assistance
> of another corporeal being, using physical spaces
> and moving from space to space.

Care in Finland is a billion-euro business (e.g., Harala, 2015). Since the late 1980s, boosted by the recession of the 1990s, Finnish social policy has been guided by the ideology, theories, and approaches of neoliberalism (Koskiaho, 2008). As a result, the public sector's responsibility has been reduced, the number of private for-profit service providers has increased, and services have begun to be produced and provided on a market basis (Viva Collective, 2022). In the past three decades, elderly care has increasingly evolved into marketised care, not as the result of some passive processes but as conscious political choices. Dementia is multifaceted and complex,

and it is caused by various pathologies, yet in marketised care, answering the need for dementia care must be simplified into a priceable item. This requires translation, in which care is converted into a commodity, and the person needing care into a manageable unit (Diamond, 1992, p. 209; Rajala, 2016).
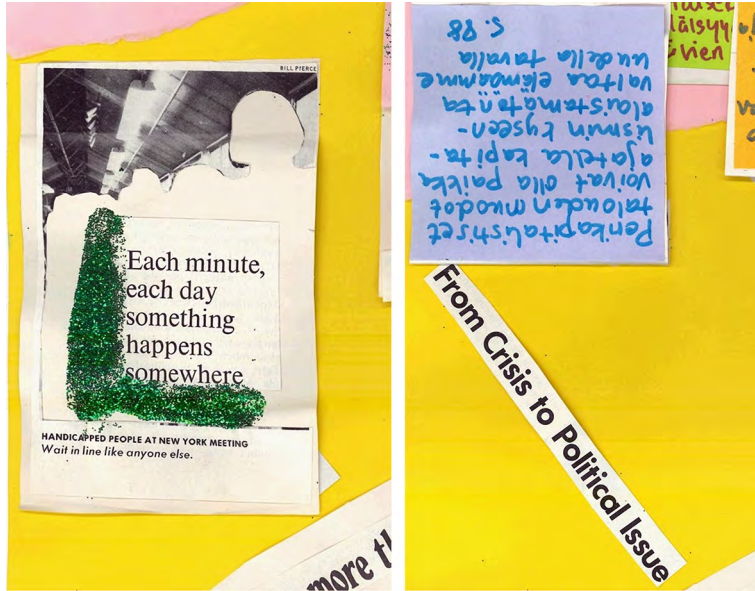

Figure 10. A detail from the collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala

In my collage, this simplification process leading to a priceable format is represented by a flap with a picture from which people have been cut out (Figure 10). The caption reveals that they are disabled people waiting in a line like everyone else (waiting for what?). On the flap, the people have been replaced with text that is decorated with glitter, but sounds indifferent: "Each minute, each day, something happens somewhere". However, the flap reveals room for resistance, as the crisis can be made political. As expressed in the quote from Tsing (2015, p. 65), found under the flap, "[p]ericapitalist economic forms can be sites for rethinking the unquestioned authority of capitalism in our lives". Tsing's observation of the capitalist logic of salvage also applies in the context of care: for-profit care is dependent on noncapitalist value production systems, and salvage is an unavoidable and intrinsic part of capitalist operating principles, not an add-on (Tsing, 2015).

Tsing (2015) emphasises that her study cannot be scaled to other contexts without changes being made to the research framework. Nevertheless, I find that Tsing's methodological concepts are useful in the analysis of the political economy of dementia care. However, the non-scalable terminology must be partly retranslated. One option is to take back economic language to open ethical and political possibilities, to explore the possibilities of linguistic interventions that benefit exercising the economy otherwise (Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen, 2020). My linguistic intervention, with which I seek

to build a different political economy for dementia, makes capitalism's dependency on noncapitalist value production systems visible.

Salvage accumulation is an example of how a new context requires translation. The concept fits in contexts where something that exists outside and despite the capitalist value production system is salvaged and made a part of the capitalist supply chain. The economy built around matsutake mushrooms—a product of nature that cannot be commercially cultivated—is a good example of this. The context of dementia care obviously differs from mushroom picking, because similar directly salvageable and priceable material does not exist in that context. The bodies of those living with dementia, of course, produce as they consume like anyone else's, but the material is not something that is currently incorporated into global capitalist supply chains (cf. Rajala, 2022). The material that bodies produce is, however, essential for salvage accumulation indirectly: it enables capitalist service economy to be set up around bodily fluids and secretions—from commercial care, global care chains, and reproductive labour to death cleanup. Corporeality always means the existence of needs as well as answering to them, which can be harnessed, for example, to accumulate profit in care services. In this sense, 'salvage' and 'salvage accumulation' must also lend visibility to the pericapitalist sites created by vulnerability and life's precarity in the care context. In these pericapitalist sites of care, the salvaging of noncapitalist value, such as answering the needs of care that exist despite of capitalism, is made possible by translating needs into services.

Words and concepts are not identical with their objects (Adorno, 1970, p. 17). As words and concepts never entirely capture the thing they refer to, providing detailed definitions of things by attaching concepts to them is always a violent act. Like Procrustes, conceptualisation forces an object to fit under an umbrella term regardless of what is lopped off. This is why 'salvage' needs a complementary constellation of words and meanings that characterise the topic examined without creating an identity between it and a concept (Adorno, 1970, p. 164; Benjamin, 1963, p. 16).

As a form of translation, collage work inspires to group meanings into constellations or at least arrange them in a way that differs from the source material's "traditional" academic reading, interpretation, and referencing. When working on my collage, I found my thoughts revolving around Tsing's (2015) terminology in different languages. I conclude with twisting and turning the word 'salvage' back and forth. However, these twists and turns did not end up as such in my collage; their meaning was not revealed to me until I examined my collage at a later point.

The word salvage refers to the act of saving and rescuing the cargo of a drifting or sunken ship. While the corporeality of the needs for care does not involve the salvaging of a concrete load or harnessing it for the needs of capitalism, the word salvage, from the Latin *salvare*, is an apt choice in the context of care. It is apt not only because care keeps those in need of it alive but also because all of our lives are precarious, even those of us living in abundance (Tsing, 2015, p.2). The precarity of life is a consequence of both the financial and the ecological crises, as well as a simple fact of life: without care, there is no life, human or otherwise. To survive among the

wreckage that humanity has accumulated at our feet, we need one another. Each of us is dependent on other living beings, and any one of us can suddenly become fully dependent on the help, care, and attention of others. In other words, any one of us can unexpectedly find themselves in need of rescue and thus form a site for pericapitalist translation, where our need for help can be linked to the capitalist value production system, especially in marketised health and social welfare systems.

Figure 11. A detail from the collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala.

Thus, colliding Tsing's pericapitalist set of concepts with other contexts contaminates it, to use Tsing's own terminology, imbuing it with new meanings (Rajala, 2022). After being contaminated, nothing is the same (Figure 11). Something necessarily happens to the translation when the language user and the context of language use change, and the power carried by words is directed into new areas. The word 'contamination' carries the connotation of something dirty, lethal, abject—from the Latin *contamen*, contact, contagion—but it also carries hopeful tones: *con-* "together", *tangere* "touch". In other words, contamination also communicates cooperation, dependence on others, care, being in each other's arms, touching and being touched, joint movement, shared space, physical contacts, evasions, and collisions—and much more. However, this constellation does not translate the word salvage into salvation but leaves it in a flickering space between salvation and precarity. In such an interstitial space, drawing up a postcapitalist future image as a site of salvation is not the solution, as proclaiming salvation when wreckage is still accumulating is premature. This leaves us with iconoclastic utopia, finding postcapitalist cracks in the here and now, opportunity, messianic hope, love, and radical (from the Latin *radix,* roots) conclusions that are still being written. As it states on the very edge of my collage: The conclusion was obvious

(Figure 12). And it is: solutions that are more radical than usual (*ratkaisuja, jotka ovat tavanomaisia keinoja radikaalimpia*, in Finnish).

Figure 12. A detail from the collage "What language do we speak", photo by Anna Ilona Rajala

A poem "mined" from Spivak (2000)

Translation is necessary but impossible
grabs on to some one thing and then things
neverending weaving, violence,   this natural machine,
programming the mind

Translation   is a reparation
that constitutes the subject in responsibility
the play   of the ethical as such
a reader   the ethical subject
it is not under the control of the *I* that we think of as the subject
             the body itself is a script – of perhaps one should say a ceaseless
inscribing instrument.

The expression 'lost our language' does not mean
that the persons involved do not know their mother tongue.
It means they no longer compute with it,
it is not their software.
English understood as the semiotic as such
idiom that we must honorably establish so that we can 'perform' it as art
             'the global interdependence of human hearts and minds',
   double-talk for the financialisation of the globe,
             alibi for the contemporary new world order,
post-Soviet exploitation.

The international book trade is a trade in keeping with the laws of world
trade.
At one end, the coming into being of the subject of reparation.
At the other end, generalised commodity exchange.
We translate somewhere in between.

Translation was the most intimate act of reading
to transfer from one   to the other
relating to the other as the source of one's utterance *is*
the ethical as being-for.
listening
with care and patience, in the normality of the other,   enough to notice
that the other has already silently made that effort.

Translation is   not only necessary but unavoidable.
And yet   it is impossible.
             the contradiction,
             the counter-resistance, that is
             at the heart of love.
             the pleasure of the text.

Tiina: Rounding off with peek-a-boo flaps and wormholes within and beyond post/peri/capitalist imaginations

The words in the poem on the previous page are not mine. I borrowed them from Gayatri Chkraworty Spivak (2000), utilising a method of close reading/writing, where the words of academic articles are used in a new verse text that seeks to interpret—translate—the original text. The method originates from the long tradition of alternative academic writing, where creative writing is used as a method of analysis (e.g. Bochner & Bochner, 1996; Puumala, 2007).

The poem was created while listening to our co-creative discussions on collaging post- and pericapitalism(s). I first highlighted in yellow those parts of Spivak's article that, in my mind, spoke with my co-authors' collages. I then used a black felt-tip to cross out those parts of the article that I had not highlighted, leaving only the ingredients of the poem visible. Finally, I copied the highlighted parts to a Word file, where I reorganised the extracts into an interpretation of the post- and pericapitalist translations produced in our retreat. The first version of the poem was long. After reading the analyses of my co-authors, I distilled the poem by picking out its most essential elements, eventually merging it digitally with my collage, created from the clips from *Time* magazines (Figure 13).

I came to the poetic method at a point when I was stuck with my own erratic collaging with scissors and glue. My collage was about 'translating translations.' Our experimentation's original aim was to write a special issue article on 'capitalist translations' and, instead of peri/post/capitalism(s), my mind was focused on thinking about translations. Also, the political economy of the neoliberal university had concretely intervened in my work: As academic precariat working on temporary contracts in various projects, I had had little (no) time to do my homework of reading prior to the workshop. But I had read Spivak on translation years ago, and it returned to me. And I to it.

Eventually, I turned to exploring our very experiment of collaging as a peri- or postcapitalist activity within the neoliberal university. I flitted through our shared space filled with felt-tip pens, coloured papers, and shredded magazines, examining the emergent connections between our collages, looking over my co-authors' shoulders, and interrupting their work with poor jokes. I sought to read from the evolving collages their novel notions of peri- and postcapitalism, gradually being carved—or glued—into existence, with traces of erasure in their paths of emergence, as the collages made their messages meaningful—to me (cf. Derrida, 1978). I became enchanted by how collages gradually revealed the potentialities of alternative ways of living in the fractured world(s) of post/peri/capitalism(s)—including those that previous post- and pericapitalist discourses might have silenced.

Perhaps you can read these potentialities, too? Although the traces of erasure and emergence were likely different for you than they were for me. That may well be how the hide-and-seek playfulness of the collage works. Now, with the reader of this textual collage having joined along, our experiment continues.

This chapter has been about academic work of humour and love that never fully yields to the productive rules of the neoliberal university. For sure, this chapter is an 'output' subordinate to the project economy. But it is not only that. It is also a product of doing things differently, by shredding articles into strips, curling and glueing them, turning them into poems in between dreams turned into peek-a-boo flaps without a pre-set vision or purpose. Academic texts always include various 'peek-a-boo flaps'. Their wormholes can whisk the reader off to unplanned and surprising places. However, in academic writing, attempts are often made to hide and seal any wormholes and peek-a-boo flaps to make sure the reader stays on the path marked out by the author and follows their argumentation. While there is a place for such academic writing and related methods of thought and analysis, creative methods are also needed at the university—which perhaps is not entirely hopeless.

This chapter is a maze of collages that, we hope, has taken the reader to imagine what capitalism(s), its traces, translations, frictions, and interstices are and could be. Where the linear academic prose invites readers to explore the world from a carefully defined and straightforward perspective, collage-like academic argumentation works differently. In collages, smoothing the reader's path is not an end. Collage is a technique where seemingly unrelated topics or objects are placed in a frame that is equally strange to them all, resulting in an ambiguous composition that defers from unanimous messages (Sylvester, 2007, p. 571; Särmä, 2014). The viewer—or reader—then must actively participate in the practices of assigning meaning, while exposing themselves, their own interpretation to and relatedness with the elements in the collage.

Thus, a collage is an experiment that continues in each reading, articulating meanings that neither the individual elements nor the collagist can articulate on their own. By combining poems, imagery, magazine clippings, Post-it notes, shredded paper, and glitter with academic analysis, this chapter—our experiment that started in spring 2022—emerged as a collage comprising various text types: as a cluster of collages, it makes an assemblage of post/peri/capitalism(s). It forms a non-linear 'architectural space' (van Alphen, 2005), where the reader can wander and get lost—only to find their way out through new peek-a-boo flaps and wormholes within and beyond post/peri/capitalist imaginations.

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