Chapter 5: Measuring the Hologram (and the Neoclassical Impasse)

The last chapter recast the question which was underlying much of the previous two chapters: the question of whether or not non-market production and the whole economy could and should be measured. The analysis of emotional labour and the embodiment of labour suggested that measurement of this 'economy' was neither possible nor desirable. The delimitation and alienation of production required for any measurement reflected the standpoint of capital over the (gendered) embodied experience of labour. However, for a variety of pragmatic and epistemological reasons, I nonetheless argued the need for a (different sort of) definition and measure of the economy. I suggested that what was required was an approach which, unlike the monodimensional malestream measures, opened up (rather than foreclosed upon) a vision of the economy as being both more than, and different to, the production of goods and services. Where better a place to begin the project of moving towards such a definition and measure than with what I have hitherto identified as the most intransigent problem with the official measures: the problem of emotional labour.

Problems in Measuring Emotional Labour

Clearly from the perspective of a definition and measure of the economy informed by feminism, not only must non-market production be included, but issues of emotional labour and the embodiment of labour must also be included. But, as we have seen, there are major problems in doing this. The first of these problems has been dealt with at length: the seamlessness and unmeasurability of much of women's work, and of emotional labour in particular. However, I also noted there are various different analyses of emotional labour, including those of Hochschild, and Delphy and Leonard, which to some extent dealt with it as disembodied labour, as abstract tasks or actions. I criticised this analysis because it did not take account of the particularity of the labour and the labourer - that certain activities were quite different to their generic description when they were done by a particular person, a particular wife/mother/woman.

Nonetheless, these analyses do have a significant advantage if we are interested in (or forced into) measuring the economy. Because labour is not viewed as uniquely embodied, it can

fulfil the third person criteria. Or at least, given the above criticisms, it approximates the sort of production which might be measured on a par with commodity-like production. Thus, for instance, the emotional labour of wives of executives and public figures, while embodied and specific to 'the wife' (or indeed, as Finch notes, an obligation of being the wife of those particular paid workers[1]) could nonetheless be seen as performance. Such an act/performance may bear no necessary relation to the emotional attachment between marriage partners. It is a performance for a particular duration while in the public sphere. Similarly, in other contexts the unpaid nurturing of partners and friends - listening, advising, supporting, ego building - things which might appear part of a relationship, can be abstracted as counselling activities. These have a particular duration and, when stripped of their emotional ties, they have market substitutes or can be seen as analogous (though not necessarily identical) to market work. And again, the tasks which Delphy and Leonard identify as building solidarity in and between households - the work of building friendships, organising common activities and mutual supports, can all be counted as emotional labour. Indeed, Donaldson argues that such networking provides an important base of economic support and welfare, especially for working class women.[2]

By the nature of the abstracted analysis, all of the tasks of emotional labour could be measured by time use and imputed wages. Again, this is not a perfect measure, or a measure of emotional labour taken on its own terms. The approach is inherently a compromise in order to produce the possibility of an accounting for emotional labour. But though compromised, it does represent a pushing of the production boundary to include more of the tasks which form part of women's work (particularly) and a greater recognition of women's economic contribution.

Of course even if an accounting were possible based on this definition, it could not overcome many of the problems with time and money measurements noted in Chapter 3, nor would it include all elements or all tasks of emotional labour. Some aspects of cultural display, being attractive, bright, middle-class, neat, etc, *could* perhaps in theory be measured by accounting for the time inputs into such cultural display - the body management and exercise, making up,

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1 Again see Janet Finch (1983) *Married to the Job: Wives' Incorporation in Men's Work*, London: George Allen & Unwin. pp 90 - 92.

2 Mike Donaldson (1996) *Taking Our Time: Remaking the Temporal Order*, Nedlands: University of Western Australia. pp 42 - 43.

shopping, etc. But, other activities contributing to this display, like dieting, not being hung over, and having a 'proper' accent defy time measurement. It is also an open question whether the *preparation time* here is really the same as *the activity* of emotional labour. The cultural display is not the getting made-up or the exercising, but the effect.

Similarly problems arise in relation to smiling, whether it be as an air hostess to customers (Hochschild) or a wife to a husband (Delphy and Leonard). It is an activity of emotional labour. Yet it is hard to measure the time of a smile or of a husband/partner's or customers' appreciative look. And there is no getting around the embodiment of a smile by considering it as an abstract task which is theoretically capable of measurement. Smiles can not be measured in practice. But even if, in the most intrusive of workplace regimes, the length of smile a worker gives to a customer is regulated and trained into the 'service', the point is not really the time it takes. Rather the point in recognising the smile as emotional labour is to make visible the social relations presupposed and perpetuated by it: the gendered relations between worker and customer, between employee and employer, and perhaps, an effect on a corporate bottom line - an issue to which I shall return later.

The more immediate point here is that these aspects of cultural display raise not only questions of how they might be measured, but also perhaps a greater problem of precisely what activities to include and count. This is more than just a question of which acts can practically be measured and which still need to be excluded. The definitions in the last chapter were very broad, but useable enough in terms of a conceptual discussion of the issues involved. However, the activity of measuring such labour requires a much more precise definition. Indeed, the concern to abstract the tasks of emotional labour from their subjective context suggests that what is aimed for is a standardised list of tasks which are to be counted in any measure. Indeed, such a (Taylorist) approach is ultimately necessary for a national accounts style measurement, so that the time spent on emotional labour can be logged and a money value imputed as a 'wage' for that activity.

Clearly from the above discussion, some of these tasks might not be measurable in a practical sense. But there are also broader conceptual issues concerning which tasks might be included, particularly in relation to which, if any, tasks undertaken by men might be included as emotional labour. As in the last chapter, the example of sex or sexual services as an activity of emotional labour might again be useful in clarifying the issues.

The argument of Delphy and Leonard and others is that sex is work for women because it is part of an institutional obligation which a wife owes a husband. It is exploited work because of the patriarchal nature of the institution of marriage. In a sense, the wife produces sexual services and the husband consumes those services. Presumably though, as a conjugal obligation, sex might also be considered as work for husbands. However, as Delphy and Leonard's focus is on exploitation (not work *per se*), they do not consider whether *his* sex is work. Similarly, Beasley considers women's emotional labour to include husband care, but does not comment on men's caring role and whether this would qualify as work.

Obviously though, if emotional labour is broadly defined as certain types of tasks, then men do emotional labour in the home - as well as the emotional management which Hochschild identified in paid work. Apart from family caring activities, men's emotional labour might also include forms of masculine cultural display, encompassing possibly sport (body work) and elements of conspicuous consumption (bread-winner performance). There would then be little or no human activity outside this definition of work/production. Again we drift into an unusable theory of everything which makes measurement impossible or meaningless.

But apart from this pragmatic consideration, there are real questions as to whether men's activities here are emotional labour and production. If, as for Delphy and Leonard, it is the exploitative relations which define emotional activities as work (as productive of a service provided by one party to another in some form of institutionalised contractual exchange), then it may be that some activities/tasks are emotional labour when done by women, but not by men, because those tasks are done under different social relations. However, even if this is accepted, it is not a final answer to the issue of men's emotional labour. It is one thing to say that sex is not work for men/the male head of a household, and another to say, for instance, that a father's role in emotional management of children, even an archetypal disciplinary one, is not work in the same way that a mother's different emotional labour towards children is.

Of course it may be that a feminist economics can simply claim not to be interested in men's work (which is implicit in Beasley's approach), or alternatively that the amount of emotional labour which men do is not significant in terms of national production. The conceptual issue can therefore be sidestepped simply for practical reasons. This would be a move similar to the one noted in Chapter 1 where Marx conceded that service labour could be productive if

capitalistically employed, but in practice he ignored it because (at the time he was writing) it was economically insignificant.[3] However any claim which precluded men's emotional labour on the grounds of statistical insignificance would have to be argued empirically rather than asserted. And I suspect that if masculine performance labour was included as above, it would be difficult to claim it as statistically insignificant.

The problems around whether men's 'emotional' activities can be included in a definition of production/the economy are replicated and made more intractable when we apply the same social relations considerations to the emotional labour of some women. Even if we were to argue that the social construction of work in a patriarchal society was such that only women's emotional labour was work, there would still be problems around the differences in what might constitute work for women.

As noted in Chapter 3, the *system* of social relations which defines emotional activities as work is for Delphy and Leonard a total one - a dominant system of monogamous heterosexism to which there is no outside.[4] If all women's work was subsumed under the same system, then perhaps a consistent list of emotional activities done by women could be constructed. All women's activities would be performed within the same social relations. While this might allow for consistent measurement of such activities, we have seen that this totalising analysis of *the system* is itself problematic. It either ignores the production of 20% of non-male-headed households (by Delphy and Leonard's own figures[5]) or it erases the differences between production in male-headed and these other households.

However the acknowledgment of difference comes with its own problems. If emotional labour is defined as productive work because of the patriarchal social relations under which it is undertaken, but some households are not subsumed under those overarching social relations, we clearly should not count the same emotional activities (and perhaps other 'productive' activities) as "work" in those 'other' households - thus rendering that activity invisible in the accounting. This is not problematic for those interested primarily in the social construction of work. Miriam Glucksmann is happy to argue that

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3 James O'Connor (1975) "Productive and Unproductive Labor" *Politics and Society*, Vol 5, No. 3, p 313.

4 Christine Delphy and Diana Leonard (1992) *Familiar Exploitation: A New Analysis of Marriage in Contemporary Societies*, Cambridge: Polity Press. p 266.

5 *ibid*., p 4.

> It is not the actual activity, or task, that determines whether or not it constitutes work, since all depends on the social relations in which it is undertaken. ... the identical activity may constitute 'work' in some situations and not in others. ... Depending on circumstances, baking a cake might or might not be considered as work.[6]

This categorisation of work and non-work may be the logical end product of the social construction of work argument, but it is problematic in terms of a national accounting definition and measure of "the economy". Sometimes a particular activity will be counted as production and at other times the same activity will not be counted.[7] A feminist definition of production might then exclude from "the economy" the emotional activities of men and of women in non-male headed households, but this exclusion is problematic in terms of a national accounting which seeks to make visible women's economic activity. As the feminist critique of the SNA production boundary shows, it should not matter for the measurement of national product whether work activities are done for pay or not, in the home or private enterprise, or in patriarchal feudal or communal households (to use Fraad, Resnick and Wolff's terms).

There is also the problem that Kushnirsky and Stull noted in reference to Marxian accounts, that making a consistent measure of the amount of goods and services produced in an economy requires a standardised list of activities,[8] in this case including the emotional labour which can be counted as production. But constructing a nationalised, standardised list of tasks of emotional labour cuts across the idea of the social construction of work, an idea which is crucial to positing emotional labour as work/production in the first place.

Without a notion that social relations define/construct "work", there is no foundation to Delphy and Leonard's or Beasley's claim for emotional labour as "work" - as opposed to Glucksmann's claim that such activities are about (or are best analysed in terms of) family,

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6 Miriam A Glucksmann (1995) "Why 'Work'? Gender and the 'Total Social Organization of Labour'" *Gender Work and Organization*, Vol 2, No. 2, p 65.

7 As I noted in Chapter 1, this is the case in Marxian economics where only labour which creates surplus value for capitalists is counted as productive, often meaning that the output of the self-employed is not included in the national accounts. See for example, the accounts in Anwar Shaikh and E. Ahmet Tonak (1994) *Measuring the Wealth of Nations: The Political Economy of National Accounts*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

8 See the discussion in Chapter 1 here, and Fyodor Kushnirsky and William Stull (1989) "Productive and Unproductive Labour: Smith, Marx, and the Soviets" in Donald Walker (ed), *Perspectives on the History of Economic Thought: Volume 1, Classical and Neoclassical Economic Thought*, Aldershot, Hants: Edward Elgar.

kinship, coercion or non-economic relations.[9] The statistical imperatives of measurement are completely at odds with the theoretical analysis of emotional labour being put forward. Even using the already compromised definition of emotional labour as tasks abstracted from their subjective/embodied performance, the measurement of emotional labour which is the focus of this chapter looks doomed.

The Impasse

Again then, it appears that a feminist informed economics must abandon the notion of economic measurement (or lose its analysis of emotional labour). Yet such a conclusion is itself problematic. In the previous chapter I cited a number of reasons for wanting to measure emotional labour - principally in order to get it recognised as work and as important. These remain strong arguments despite the overwhelming problems of actual measurement. But the conclusion as to the impossibility of a national accounting incorporating emotional labour is also problematic because, in a rather ironic play on the problems above, some emotional labour is already included in the national accounts. More than that, we currently have a situation, not just where some emotional labour is included as some is not, but where the same emotional tasks are counted as production in some instances, and not in others.
The emotional labour which is counted is of course that which takes place in the market as paid work. As was noted in the last chapter, Hochschild saw airline stewardesses' emotional management as "part of the product" which is sold - indeed, it was the basis of advertising the production of air travel services. It is therefore part of the product and income measured in the national accounts. Similarly, in Adkins' research, emotional labour is "part of the job" of waitressing and work in the tourist industry. Being part of the job here refers to a general embodiment of labour, separate from the tasks required if a man had the same occupation, but nonetheless, a required part of employment for women.

While emotional labour is clearly part of the national product, ie. income earning activities, the embodiment of such emotional labour and its fusion with other tasks of work and with the whole of work creates particular problems in terms of measuring this emotional labour. In national accounts style measures, the total value of the labour, including emotional labour, is the wage/salary and the value of the product is its price. But this does not tell us the value of

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9 Glucksmann, *op.cit.*, p 70.

the emotional labour which went into it. As noted in Chapter 3, it is possible to measure labour which is done in conjunction with other work by weighting the time use/income. [10] For instance, a proportion of a waitress' wage could be allocated as payment for drink delivery, and a proportion assigned as the value of the emotional labour.

However, the actual figures used in this type of measure are quite arbitrary. How could we decide whether the smile or subordinate friendliness to customers constituted 20% or 60% of the tasks involved in serving drinks? Then again, in terms of the more traditional household labour Williams and Donath were studying, is watching TV while you cook 20% or 60% of the cooking time? In both cases the figure is arbitrary and does not reflect the seamlessness of the work. Nevertheless, it does suggest that if emotional labour is considered as a series of abstracted tasks, it could be measured in extended national accounts even where it is thoroughly embedded in the rest of work.

Of course, these examples are the difficult ones. In terms of emotional labour which is measured when it takes place in the market, it is also clear that there are a range of jobs which include discrete and explicit tasks of emotional labour. Here I am thinking of professions like doctors and nurses who must deal with the emotions of patients and relatives as well as bodily care which is the focus of their work. Indeed, human resource management models used in major hospitals measure emotional labour (time talking to patients and relatives) as a discrete unit in accounting for nursing time, although obviously some of this activity is mixed with other patient care activities.[11] In addition there are a range of jobs where the whole of the job itself (or near to it) consists of emotional labour. Professional counsellors and psychologists would fit this category, but so too would those fashion models and perhaps some actors whose 'performance' is about *looking* rather than acting, that is, cultural display.

Clearly then there is a large amount of emotional labour which is valued in the official definitions and measures of the economy. This is a problem if we wish to have a consistent measure of the economy when we have already accepted that, even when considered as

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10 See the discussion of their work in Chapter 3 here, or in the original, Ross Williams and Susan Donath (1993) *Simultaneous Uses of Time in Household Production*, Department of Economics, University of Melbourne. Research Paper 370.

11 Eileen Willis (1999) "The Timing of Nursing Work Using EXCELCARE: Task Based Real and Virtual Lean Production" Seminar Paper to the Department of Social Inquiry, University of Adelaide. (Unpublished)

abstract disembodied tasks, emotional labour can not be measured in the home because no list of emotional labour tasks can be produced. If we are to abandon measuring emotional labour altogether, or accept that only some emotional labour can be measured, then again we don't have an "apples to apples" comparison of market and non-market production. Rather, non-market production is ignored or devalued while the same work in the market is counted and valued. We are back to (a different version of) the most basic problem of the official accounts discussed in Chapter 2. The implicit message here is again that work is really only considered work when it is paid - with all the gendered consequences which follow from that.

From this point of view, and despite the seemingly insurmountable problems already discussed, some measure of emotional labour would seem to be desirable. Yet this in itself does not make the project any more possible. Even using the inherently compromised definition of emotional labour as disembodied tasks, a consistent list of tasks is still elusive and at cross-purposes with the argument about the social construction of work on which the analysis rests. And again, given the fusion of emotional labour with other work, any measurement would be arbitrary.

What we have then is an impasse in trying to measure emotional labour, although in fact I think in many ways it is simply a more acute version of the general problems highlighted in the contradictions between the feminist analyses noted in Chapters 2 and 3. In order to recognise and value women's work, that work needs to be included in a mainstream definition and measure of the economy. But those very measures hide as much as they reveal about the nature of women's work. The predicament is particularly acute in terms of emotional labour because the measures hide both its existence and the specific embodiment of that labour.

While this impasse may seem intractable, there is a further dimension to the problem of accounting for emotional labour, the analysis of which not only throws more light on the impasse, but is important because it begins to open up a way through (or at least around) the impasse.

The 'Value' of Emotional Labour

Thus far I have simply discussed whether and how emotional labour might be measured, but a further dimension is opened up by asking a different sort of question about measuring

emotional labour. This other question is simply asking, assuming that emotional labour could be quantified, what would be its value. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, whether emotional labour has a separate value of itself, and secondly, if it has, should it be included in a measure of the economy as a positive or a negative value. In orthodox national accounting these questions do not arise, because all contributions which earn an income are given a positive value. Thus, in asking these questions, I am clearly drawing on arguments from different traditions, in particular from the classical and Marxian traditions (and the "Coasian" analysis of transaction costs), and from the environmental economics discussed earlier. Indeed, ultimately I want to argue that, in as much as it facilitates production in a patriarchal capitalist system(s), emotional labour is closer to the notion of social maintenance or exchange/transaction labour in the Marxian tradition and to defensive expenditure and social costs in green political economy than it is to 'production' as defined in the national accounts. I will consider these ideas more fully later and in the next chapters. For now I simply want to argue that even where emotional labour is a separate activity and may have a 'value', it is not necessarily a positive one.

Consider Hochschild's air stewardesses. While Hochschild calls emotional labour a commodity,[12] I question whether it adds value to the product of air travel. People fly because they want to get from A to B, not because they want to have their egos stroked by attractive women - if they wanted that, they could more easily get that service in local upmarket clubs and hotels. Certainly they may expect that service when they fly, but that is not the issue. The particular emotional labour would not exist as a commodity separate from the air travel, but nor is it essential to that travel. Customers would still fly if they wanted to get from A to B regardless of the nature of the service. As an example, I am tempted to say that I and others still flew Aeroflot despite legendarily poor service! More to the point though, it simply can not be believed that, except in exceptional cases, people fly somewhere (as opposed to choosing a particular airline) because they know they will be smiled at. And if emotional labour is not really necessary to the production of air travel, then it can not be said to add value in the sense that production adds value by creating a utility to fill a need.

Of course what is actually sold by airlines is not just air travel, but air travel with emotional

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12 Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983) *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling*, Berkeley: University of California Press. p 14.

services. However, it is unclear what the value of the emotional service component could be, given that people would still fly without it and the emotional labour would not have taken place without the air travel. Underlying this valuation problem is the real issue, which is a question of standpoint.

As was noted previously, emotional labour is important in the job of air stewardesses and even forms the basis of competition between airlines. But to count this as 'production' (and therefore as socially necessary) is to adopt a particularly individualistic (neoclassical) perspective. For the individual worker the emotional labour is part of the job, and for the capitalist (in this case the airline) such emotional labour *is* necessary because otherwise *they* would not provide the service - a competitor would. The emotional labour is productive for capital because it fills a need. It brings market shares and profit to the airline, and ensures that the production of air travel happens at a particular site - their company. Hence, the employer pays for the service to be provided, thus proving its 'necessity' and making it productive in the neoclassical framework.[13]

When we move beyond the individual and consider the economy as a whole we see a different picture. If people would fly from A to B regardless of such emotional labour, then the same amount of air travel would still have been produced without emotional labour. This challenges not only the 'necessity' of the emotional labour, but also the appropriateness of the liberal/neoclassical assumption that the economy is simply the totality of individual preferences expressed through the market. The apparent individual demand for emotional labour, and stewardess' work which supplies it (which together define production in the neoclassical framework), turn out to be irrelevant to the quantum of air travel produced at the national level. And at that level I would argue that, to the extent that the emotional labour is about a necessity of airlines competing in a (patriarchal and capitalist) market, that labour does not produce new goods and services. It facilitates production and determines (in part) its social location (in a particular company). But that is not the same as actually producing the product.

The same argument holds for many instances where a particular commodity might not be

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13 On the necessity = production link in neoclassical economics, see the discussion below and in Chapter 1. Also see Shaikh and Tonak, *op.cit.*, p 3.

purchased at all but for the emotional servicing. For instance, a meal may be bought at a restaurant because people enjoyed "good food and service" - or because of the emotional labour (ie. cultural display and perhaps child care) of a red and yellow clown masking socially and ecologically undesirable practices.[14] Nevertheless, the key point in terms of economic production is that a meal would generally still have been produced regardless - it might just have been produced at a different establishment, or perhaps not in the market. For many instances of emotional labour, the product would still be produced somewhere without the emotional labour (or with different types of emotional labour).

In both the airline and McDonald's examples, the emotional labour is 'necessary'. It is necessary, either to ensure that a particular brand of product is consumed (in the airline example), or that a particular product is produced and consumed in the market rather than in the non-market economy (as in the McDonald's example). However, the emotional labour does not create a new product. Nor does it change the usefulness of the original product in a way which would necessitate a change in the measure of aggregate production. The emotional labour only changes the social location of production, including its location in either market or non-market production. In Marxian terms, it changes the use value into an exchange value. While this is important, I am arguing that this does not make that labour productive in itself.

Consider an analogous argument. A government passes an Act to nationalise/privatise a utility like electricity production, or replaces a child care centre with a subsidy for stay-at-home parents. In both cases the social location of production is shifted, but neither the Act nor the labour which went into drafting and passing the Act produces electricity or child care - obviously. And nor does the clown produce the Big Mac. The argument may be that the government's Act created the environment and preconditions for such electricity or child care production, but this does not make it productive of electricity or childcare. As Shaikh and Tonak point out, consumption of product is a prerequisite for future production, but this does not make consumption productive, unless the terms production and consumption become meaningless.[15] If *facilitating* production is indeed different to production, then the emotional

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14 The practices and the effect of the Ronald McDonald in prompting children to eat at McDonald's is documented in the film, Franny Armstrong (1998) *McLibel: Two Worlds Collide*, London: One-off Productions.

15 Shaikh and Tonak, *op.cit.*, p 25. Breaking such binary oppositions (production/consumption) may be of significance for a post-structural reading which challenges the privileged place of production, but again,

labour considered above can be seen as non-production labour - labour necessary for production to happen in a particular economic system, but not production of itself.

Of course, there are instances where emotional labour may appear to improve a particular product or provide a service of itself. The emotional labour of psychologists, counsellors, sex workers and the equivalent (ie. abstracted) tasks in the household often provide new products or services - quite separate from the production of other goods and services. But even where emotional labour is entwined with other goods and services, it is still possible that it creates a new (changed) product. To return to the airline example: while emotional labour may not be necessary to physically fly people from A to B (as opposed to flying *customers*), it may nonetheless improve the quality of the trip, that is, it might change the (utility of the) product consumed and add value to the trip. In both cases a separate, valuable product would seem to be created.

But here, a feminist informed standpoint would have to ask about the content of that 'value'-added. In a similar fashion to the environmental critique of the national accounts treatment of what might be considered "social costs", I want to argue that positively measuring (as production) much emotional labour represents the valuing of what should be considered as unnecessary (and undesirable) labour. As Belinda Probert argues in reference to attempts to value socialised 'feminine' skills like tact, communication and emotional management in award wages,

> Even if it were possible to measure feminine skills like smiling a lot or even flirting and reward them, would it be desirable to do so? It is one thing to recognise what women do as requiring real skills, ... but another to be cultivating traditional forms of femininity by demanding recognition of these skills as women's skills.[16]

Such a recognition, according to Probert, simply legitimises gendered stereotypes and the sexual division of labour. The same may be true of recognising some emotional labour as 'production'.

More generally, I would argue much emotional labour is very specifically *created by*

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in terms of constructing national accounts, some definitional lines must be drawn and some line between production and consumption is necessary even if conditionally constructed.

16 Belinda Probert (1992) *Clerical Work and Award Restructuring: Questions About Skill, Training and Pay Equity*, Centre for International Research on Communication and Information Technologies. Policy Research Paper 22. p 12.

gendered roles in a patriarchal society where women's bodies are sexual objects and women are service and sex providers. The bodily management functions Beasley refers to, Delphy and Leonard's "stroking egos", Adkins' sexualised work and much of Hochschild's "managing emotions" all result from an expectation that women do particular things and they do them in a particular (subordinate/appeasing) way. It is not simply that the patriarchal social relations define such activity as work, but that, at least in some cases, the 'service' is only provided because of those relations. If we could imagine a non-capitalist, non-patriarchal world, then perhaps the same activity (the manicured neatness and artificial smile of the air hostess, or the suggestive clothing of the bar workers in Adkins' study) might be viewed as offensive (to both men and women) and not as a service at all. Similarly, the display Pringle noted of secretaries' work which is in part about presenting the boss in a particular way is the product of a gendered work relation not of the administrative tasks involved. More importantly, this labour is undesirable as it constitutes the secretary, not simply as subordinate in terms of line management, but also a particular sexualised subordinate.

A similar argument can be made in relation to household production. In the traditional household it is also possible to argue that much emotional labour is expended not just *in* a system of monogamous heterosexuality, but *because* of those particular patriarchal social relations. The traditional wedding ceremony which formalises many such household arrangements is a public commitment to the institution of monogamous heterosexuality, but the ceremony is itself also a product of enormous amounts of emotional labour. The cultural display of parents, grooms and most particularly brides and bridesmaids, is one aspect, the care taken over the politics of guest lists, seating arrangements and gifts is another (building relations of solidarity between households in Delphy and Leonard's terms). Beyond (or without) the wedding ceremony itself, the emotional labour continues and again, in some cases, is produced by and because of the institution of the marriage. The 'cultural display' which Finch noted of particular executive wives,[17] is only one example of where that labour is only conceivable because 'the wife' is considered to belong to/with and reflect on the man.

Of course feminism is far from a consensus in the analysis of monogamy.[18] But if we assume that there are at least substantial arguments against it, then we must also question whether the

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17 Finch, *op.cit.*, ch 8.

emotional labour which supports that institution is best considered as socially necessary, productive labour. The 'necessity' here is a product of a patriarchal system/patriarchal social relations. If we are seeking an accounting incorporating feminist insights, we must ask whether such labour should be recorded as a positive contribution to society, and for women (and the answers may not be the same for these two cases).

However, any claims made about 'unnecessary' emotional labour must be seen as speculative as we can not see what emotional labour might look like in a society without the institutional and social pressures which place enormous expectations and pressures on homosexual and non-monogamous household relations.[19] Some form of emotional support and subject formation presumably would still be necessary in a world not characterised by patriarchal sex relations, but the nature of this activity (which may not be "work") would be very different to the emotional labour now practiced.

In any case, I am not claiming that all emotional labour is oppressive. Some labours, like aspects of parenting, role-modelling, community building, or nurses dealing with patients' emotions, may well be positive contributions to any society. Other emotional labour, like counselling and ego stroking, might be necessary defensive activities in this society. Indeed, it should not be difficult to see that, however we might characterise the system(s), much emotional labour is spent repairing humanity damaged by racism, homophobia, the alienation of wage labour or the shallow materialism of ruling classes[20], or by other processes in a competitive individualistic society. This is (in part) why many of the activities traditionally associated with 'leisure' involve emotional labour (eg. exercise, sex, friendship forming, family bonding). It is because they are recreational - ie. re-creational. The 'necessity' of this emotional labour then is, at best, a product of a 'defensive' discourse from within an oppressive system, that is, necessary and 'productive' only because of the nature of those systems.

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18 Victoria Robinson (1997) "My Baby Just Cares for Me: Feminism, Heterosexuality and Non-Monogamy" *Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol 6, No. 2, pp 143 - 157.

19 While Delphy and Leonard's analysis of a system from which there is no voluntaristic escape may be too universalistic, from my own experience of pushing these boundaries, I must agree with them that the dominant institutions still constrain and structure even politically informed alternative arrangements. See Delphy and Leonard, *op.cit.*, p 266.

20 By the latter, I mean the type of process Freire described, whereby the ruling classes are formed by the necessity of their oppressive roles in a system where life becomes empty of meaning - filled only by

Again, (and analogously to the green critiques of social costs and defensive expenditures) if the term "production" carries a positive connotation, the danger is that in seeking to recognise emotional labour, feminists may find themselves positively valuing the manifestations of the system of oppression they seek to change. If emotional labour is to be viewed as work, as productive of a service, and therefore incorporated into national accounts style economic measures, then it is these negative processes (eg. the creation of subordinate feminine subjectivities, of hegemonic masculinity), or the necessary mitigation of those processes, which are being positively valued via the measurement of emotional labour.[21]
Overall then I want to suggest, firstly, that if emotional labour could be separated from production activity, it might not be new production; and secondly, that even if it were new production, then it might not be desirable to normatively value it by incorporating it into a national accounting measure of the economy. The issues here are similar, but interestingly different from those identified by Marilyn Waring in her critique of the national accounts: not only do they exclude much women's work, they value (ie. make valuable/worthwhile) things she (and I) find abhorrent, like militarism and the destruction of the environment. I have already suggested that Waring's analysis is flawed, in part because of its conspiratorial overtones, but the underlying concern remains valid. Military production and the consumption/destruction of goods and services in war (or the preparation for war) is "valued" in the national accounts and makes a positive contribution to economic growth.

Yet, like many of Waring's criticisms of the System of National Accounts, this criticism relates to the use of GDP as a measure of welfare rather than as a measure of production and/or economic activity. But this is the crucial point here. It is certainly arguable that military production and destruction should not be positively valued, but (unlike some emotional labour) it is much harder to say that manufacturing weapons is not "production". The image of a vehicle (a car usually, but a tank will suffice) rolling out of the factory door or a ship sliding down the slipway is almost a definitive image of industrial production. If the purpose of national accounting is to measure production (economic activity), then it would seem that military production should be included with all other production regardless of

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having/owning/consuming. Paulo Freire (1984 (1968)) *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum. pp 44 - 45.

whether or not it added to welfare or warfare.

While the issue in relation to emotional labour is confused by questions of whether it is new production, there is no confusion in relation to military production. And with this clarity, we can argue, as I began to in the "Environmental Interlude", that we need to choose between measuring welfare or measuring production. But again, the national accounts conflate these concepts so that it is impossible to include activities like war and environmental destruction in the national accounts as anything other than welfare enhancing production. Similarly, it would be impossible to recognise emotional labour without also valuing the obnoxious aspects/tasks of that labour. Again we are at an impasse, but importantly here, I want to argue that this impasse is a product of the neoclassical definitions which underlie the national accounts.

The Neoclassical Nexus

We saw in Chapter 1 that the economy was defined by production, and that in the neoclassical framework production was about the creation of new utilities: goods and services which satisfied real needs and wants - ie. were socially necessary and added to welfare. The measure of "socially necessary" in this individualist framework was that someone was prepared to pay for them. Thus, any production sold in the market and any income earned, by definition fulfilled a need and was therefore part of production.[22] This nexus between production, the market and welfare was the core of the neoclassical moment in the history of national accounts, but it is also the core of the problem here. In this equation of production, market and welfare, there is no way to distinguish production from welfare, but also no way to separate work and production. Work is productive if it gives rise to a market income, if not, it is not part of the economy. The extended accounts discussed in Chapter 2 broke this equation in terms of the market, but left the rest of the equation intact. Indeed it is even debatable how much they broke the equation in terms of the market. The third person criteria is about exchangeability (read marketability), and in the extended accounts it serves as a proxy for the market in the neoclassical equation.

However, as we have seen, the analysis of emotional labour challenges this exchangeability

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21 Of course this may not be very different from Marxists measuring the production of wage labour, except that at least when employing Marxian notions of productive and unproductive labour in a labour theory of value, the different categories of analysis make it clear that they are measuring exploitation.

production criteria and asserts a view of a different type of labour - a labour which is never entirely alienable and which is a product, not of individual demand for more utility, but rather (in many cases) it is a product of a specific social system. This, plus the argument that emotional labour is *work* because of the social relations within which it is performed, takes the analysis beyond the individualist (neoclassical) standpoint because it requires some level of social/structural understanding. And with this, the notion of social necessity and the production (of utility) is questioned, no longer definable or guaranteed by the simple fact of a market purchase (or equivalent). The neoclassical nexus is stretched to breaking point.

More than being stretched, I am arguing that the nexus *should* be broken, precisely because there is no way within this neoclassical equation to view work except as exchangeable and productive. Its monodimensional definition does not allow for different sorts of work , as conceptually there is only one type of economic labour - that which earns (or is capable of earning) an income and is therefore productive. If it doesn't (or couldn't) be exchanged for an income it is not work, not part of the economy. Thus if we want to count emotional labour as work (and as part of the economy), it must be exchangeable and it must be deemed productive. If we do not want to give such value to particular forms of emotional labour (or military expenditure) because they are wasteful or obnoxious, we can not do so unless we pretend that they are is not really work, thereby rendering invisible a large part of the economy. There are no other choices because the neoclassical nexus joins all the terms into one work = production = market = welfare = economy, giving an "everything or nothing" choice.

This is in marked contrast to the analysis of environmental defensive expenditures and the green definitions of economic welfare which see that labour and economic activity can produce more or less welfare, or simply maintain the status quo by repairing damage caused by other economic activity. The neoclassical nexus is also in marked contrast to the logic of the more limited definition of production used by the classical economists. The classical definition clearly signalled that there were whole areas of economic activity which were work (and deserving of income), which were part of the economy, but which were not productive. In Adam Smith's words, included in these non-production areas were

> some both of the gravest and most important, and some of the most frivolous

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22 Shaikh and Tonak, *op.cit*., p 3.

> professions: churchmen, lawyers, physicians, men of letters of all kinds; players, buffoons, musicians, opera singers, opera dancers, etc[23]

This is not to say that non-market production or emotional labour per se were valued prior to the neoclassical revolution. They were not. However, the point is not what they did, but what could be done. I will argue more fully in the next chapter that the classical style 'restricted' definition of production at least opens the space to consider different types of labour, precisely because it breaks the work and production, production and economy, and work/production and welfare links. By contrast, the neoclassical/Keynesian definition does not and can not create such a space because the equation of work = production = market = economy = welfare is inherent in its definition of production and economy.

Thus, while ever we have an economic theory and a definition of the economy which assume or imply such an equation, we have not only a bias against the inclusion of non-market production, we have an impasse. This impasse was seen in the contradictions between the feminist critiques discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and again in the Environmental Interlude, and again in relation emotional labour. It is an impasse in both wanting to see household work, the environment and emotional labour as part of the economy, and not wanting to lose sight of its specificity or to value things which are abhorrent to the political analysis which pushes for their inclusion (be it feminism, anti-militarism or the green critiques noted earlier). But what I am arguing here is that, to a large extent, it is the neoclassical definition which creates this impasse by its unitary definition of work/production and ultimately "the economy". Thus, if we are to measure emotional labour - or if we are to measure the economy in such a way that emotional labour is included, we need to unravel the concepts which the neoclassical revolution tied up. As I said in the previous chapter, the analysis of emotional labour re-opens debates which have been closed for nearly a century.

How to go about breaking this neoclassical nexus in defining and measuring the economy is the subject of the next four chapters which begin to explore the choices refused by neoclassical national accounting. In making the choice between measuring production (Chapter 6) and measuring welfare (Chapter 7), the thesis opens up two different views of the economy as a hologram. But it is also important to note that these are only two of the terms tied up in the neoclassical nexus and only two views of the hologram. In this sense, we have

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23 Cited in Kushnirsky and Stull, *op.cit.*, p 86.

already begun breaking the nexus by focusing on the difference of emotional labour, and separating it from the requirements of measuring production imposed by the national accounts framework. The analysis of emotional labour which comes out of the sociology of work and labour process literature is also then an approach to defining the economy. It is a definition with a particular starting point of gendered and embodied labour, and it is a non-quantitative view of the economy. This is as legitimate an approach to defining the economy as the national accounts' approaches, and thus tends to reflect and support the feminist view that quantitative approaches should not hold a privileged position in the economy.[24]

But breaking the neoclassical nexus here means more than simply legitimising multiple approaches to economic analyses. The focus on different types of economic activity holds out the hope that, in taking any one particular approach, the possibility of other approaches is not hidden in the way that it is by the closure inherent in the neoclassical definition and measures. Thus, when considering the views of production and welfare in the next chapters, a key element will be the extent to which the approaches discussed really break the neoclassical nexus and recognise economic difference. Without this recognition there is no way to open to view the emotional and embodied labour which defies measurement.

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24 Again, see for instance, Nilüfer Çagatay, Diane Elson, and Caren Grown (1995) "Introduction" *World Development*, Vol 23, No. 11, p 1829, Beasley, *op.cit.*, p 113.