

On misogyny, patriarchy and exchange

- Looking at the confused, negative and dangerous world situation, I believe we have not gone deep enough to understand what is wrong. When we do go deep enough, we find the problem is very simple - maybe too simple for our complex society to believe. That is because we have become used to the complicated explanations that we have given because we did not start at the beginning of the thread.

Unfortunately in order to arrive at a simple explanation I have to be complicated too!

- Mysogyny is the emotional and volitional face of the replacement of mothering by the abstract male identity.

It is implemented by the replacement of giving gifts by giving harm

Putting the Maternal Gift Economy back into the Analysis

- Patriarchy and the monetized economy have dominated theory in the West for centuries, making theory itself misogynistic, leaving out the Maternal Gift Economy and the women's perspective and discrediting them.
- I want to show that the existence of the prior and still functioning gift paradigm of which patriarchy and exchange are a variation, makes patriarchy and exchange derivative and limited, not ordinary and universal.

To make a peaceful revolution, we have to restore the gift paradigm to our knowledge of ourselves

- In fact the origin for all humans is the maternal gift economy and the origin is the key. It must be considered in order to understand its derivatives and developments, whatever they are.
- Unfortunately the maternal gift has been discounted and its place has been taken by those derivatives and developments.
- In order to understand misogyny and try to dismantle it in our present society, I want to show how patriarchy and exchange have developed as variations on maternal gifting and how they exploit it in an ongoing way.
- Finally, I want to show how the Maternal Gift Economy and Patriarchal Capitalism are locked in a tragic parasitic embrace, that also gives rise to, facilitates and uses misogyny as part of a widespread intersectional structure.

- I want to propose a different kind of analysis of what is causing the disastrous world situation
- I believe there are two main kinds of social abstractions: a gender abstraction that denies and replaces maternal gifting for the male identity and a commodity exchange abstraction that denies and replaces gifting for the economy.
- These two abstractions from original gifting are merged, enacted together and replace gifting over and over in the daily practice of market exchange: buying and selling.
- The male abstraction from maternal gifting and the market abstraction from the gift economy reinforce each other to the detriment of Mother Earth and all her children.

Personal psycho-economic processes in the 'West'

- Children are mostly born in separate nuclear families where they are usually cared for by mothers or other women.
- Young children have to be nurtured unilaterally by their motherers without an exchange. They are not able to give an equivalent in return.
- The motherer recognizes the child's needs and satisfies them. The child receives the satisfaction of h/er needs.. This unilateral satisfaction of needs is what I call the Maternal Gift Economy.
- It is free and it supplies goods to needs. It consists of a transitive gift interaction that can be repeated and varied in many ways, and it forms our basic human operating system.

The maternal gift economy is the model from which the blueprint of our lives develops

- This unilateral economy is the original phylogenetic, ontogenetic, and epigenetic human economy in which our capacities develop and our interactive and cognitive structures and strategies are laid down.
- I call gifting an economy because **free** is a way of getting goods to needs that is even more widespread and efficient than the market.
- I call it maternal because it is the necessary economy of mothering without which children die. It is therefore a model that is common to all, presented in the epigenetic period after birth during which our genetic capacities begin to be socially determined and expressed.

Giving and receiving in early childhood

- Just because maternal gifting is unilateral does not mean it is not relational or that it has no response.
- In fact there is typically much ***turn taking*** of responses and responses to responses, smiles and vocalizations on the part of both partners. There is also the baby's crying and the cessation of crying, her vocalizations, the mothers' tension and relaxation etc.
- A typical game between motherers and young children, called 'serve and return' by Harvard infancy researchers, is credited with developing brain architecture through the stimulation and activation of neuron connections.

Some meaning structures of the maternal gift

- A gives to B, B receives from A – creates a relation.
- Breast feeding confirms a gift trajectory – grounding it at both ends. Each experiences the giving or the receiving of the other. This gives to both a repeated concrete internal and external experience of transitivity to and from the world around them.
- Giving and receiving beyond bodily contact creates a starting point and path-to-goal trajectory.
- Logic: If A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C
- There is a concrete experiential implication of value of the receiver to the giver and giver to the receiver,

Giving value

- Directly giving to satisfy another's need gives value to him or her by implication. It shows that the other is intrinsically valuable to the giver. Children survive because they are precious and important for their motherers. Their mothers give them value and act accordingly
- Children register this implication by valuing themselves, having self-esteem.
- The things that are used as gifts to the child also acquire a value both as instrumental to satisfying a need and as a contribution to valuing the child.
- Children also learn about the world through the significance of the gifts they receive.

- I will give a few examples to suggest how gifting functions and show how pervasive it is, so you can see the 'blueprint' even though it is hidden behind other words and concepts.

An archaeologist from the future would see many permutations of gifting in our culture

- In throwing and catching a ball
- Pouring tea in a cup that receives it.
- Putting rice in a pot with water, giving fire to the bottom of the pot that receives it and gives heat to the water
- Giving the cooked rice to the family to eat
- Hammering to give the nail to the wall. Giving the hook to the nail to give support to the picture
- Jigsaw puzzles and construction games like Lego where the pieces fit together
- Cog wheels in machines and watches
- Conduits of water, gas and electricity that transport a content from a source to a user along a trajectory.

More permutations of the gift that we don't recognize

- We go from one place to another – path to goal trajectory
- In walking we give one foot forward to be received by the Earth and then the other
- We give signs, sounds and gestures to others who receive them
- In talking we give words and ideas to others who receive them
- We put something on (give it to) the surface of the table that receives it
- We breathe in and out.

The economic gift is hidden by naming it something specifically other

- Assymetric exchange
- Unwaged work
- Cheap (labor, food, energy, raw materials – see Jason Moore)
- Low cost
- Housework
- Surplus labor
- Profit

The Male Gender Abstraction

- For both boys and girls the gift model is usually female because men don't usually do child care.
- At a certain point in Patriarchy, boys learn that they are in a radically different and opposite gender identity category from their gifting motherers.
- This is not the case in Matriarchies.
- It is common for people in Patriarchal Capitalism to look at Native economies and Matriarchies as 'primitive'. Instead I would say that they were/are healthy – still not infected by the male gender abstraction and commodity exchange.

Masculation

- The division of labor in which women care for the children and men do not and are often absent, creates a **void of a model** for the boy to know himself as different from the gifting mother.
- Nevertheless the model of the father or some other male **replaces** the mother as the model for the boy's gender identity
- I believe it is just this early replacement of one model for the other that is the basic logical glitch in our society.
- In fact the male identity model (usually the father) is less known to the child, farther away, even abstract, while the boy is engaged in giving and receiving with his mother every day.

- Although they continue to be nurtured by their mothers, boys learn they have a different gender name and identity. They are not like the mother but like a father – or anyway a man or men, who they often do not give-and-receive with, and differently from the mother, may not even see very often.
- The characteristics of male gender for little boys may seem strange if the father is often absent. If he and other male models are violent, giving and receiving are transformed into hitting, being hit and hitting back.
- In fact, this male model, which replaces the maternal gift model, is **abstract** or violent for the child, yet he has to comply. Everyone defines him that way, even the mother.

- I believe that it is not Freud's Oedipus complex or Lacan's Nom or No du père that is mainly the problem here, but a shift of category from an identity based on real life giving and receiving to a more **abstract** one based on the negation of the identity formed in the gifting mode and **its replacement**.

Replacement replaces giving

- Replacement or substitution is a self validating, self reflecting conceptual action in that as a general category it can replace other specific categories of action.
- The little boy has to replace the human identity he has been forming with his mother through giving and receiving with a gender identity that he has not yet constructed with anyone. Forming this alternative identity is necessary because it is conceived of as always already there. It appears that the boy has no choice in the matter. He is forced to re form his self concept but the model he finds is **abstract**, and I believe, it is the **model of forced replacement** itself.

Power-over

- Power-over is the replacement of others' will by one's own.
- The boy grows up with a gender model infused with the idea of power-over. Because his relation of identity with the mother has been replaced, he replaces that model with a model of replacement and power-over.
- Instead of giving and receiving like the mother, one of the characteristics of the male model seems to be hitting, which has a trajectory from one person to another like the gift, but seeks to hurt and create power-over the other, replacing the other's will with the hitter's own.

- The mother often supports the boy in his transition towards the male model, giving more to him than to her daughters. Perhaps she intuits the strangeness of this gender construction and wants to help him or perhaps she is just caught in the sexism of society which over values males. By giving more to the male not-giver, she colludes with him and devalues her own gift model, which, however, continues to be the model for her infants and growing daughters. This results in women's role being that of serving men both domestically and sexually. Men can then 'look down' on women, seeming to be more adult than their motherers.

Masculation Abstraction

- Replacement prevails while continuity of the life-sustaining gift mode necessarily continues because without it people die and the community falls apart..
- The boy needs to feel his abstract identity is a gift given by his mother (and father?) that gives gift value to him. The **gift of *not-giving* is counted as superior to the gift of giving/receiving.**
- Replacement replaces giving-receiving as the most important general principle.

- **The construction of self and community through gifting commonality is replaced by replacement itself as power-over.**
- Hierarchies are constructed this way, as each tier with fewer privileged members replaces the ones below.
- Nevertheless I insist that for the boy as for the girl and for the adult, the human blueprint is based on giving-receiving though hidden distorted and replaced by masculation and exchange.

Misogyny

- Just because the boy is forced to take on an identity that is based on replacing the mother-child giving-and-receiving, he needs to consider inferior what he has lost. He also practices his male identity by forcing his will on women (possible mothers), that is, replacing their will with his, thus affirming his more abstract identity as superior to theirs, and implying his greater 'intrinsic value'.
- He may hit women – 'giving' them blows – to prove the superiority of his identity to theirs and to force them to give preferentially to him or he may even kill them to punish them for not doing so.
- He may also enact the replacement of the giving-and-receiving identity by giving judgements and definitions of all women's inferiority.

The Market: Replacement and Exchange

- There is a logical shift in the market that is parallel to the boy's construction of male gender.
- If we do not recognize the maternal gift economy as prior to the market in every life we cannot recognize this. Indeed most economists take exchange as a given and if they consider its origin, think of it as civilized progress, an advancement over '*primitive*' gift economies.
- Instead, if we look at unilateral gifting as the original human relation-creating and mind-and-body forming economic mode, we can see *quid pro quo* exchange as its deep (and unnecessary!) contradiction.

The exchange relation invades maternal giving- and-receiving interactive structures

- As I mentioned, one of the most important interactions between mothers and young children is turntaking, ‘serve and return’, which is very important in the development of neuron connections.
- We might be tempted to think of this as an early form of the *quid pro quo* commodity exchange that permeates Capitalism.. Instead we should see it as turn taking in free giving of initiatives to be received and responded to by the other.
- When children do begin to understand *quid pro quo* market exchange (around 3+ years of age), exchange logic finds the interactive *gift* structure ready to be invaded, like a radioactive isotope that is easily absorbed into our bone structure due to the similarity between radium and calcium.

The two abstractions, linked in market exchange innumerable times a day, creates patriarchal capitalism/capitalist patriarchy

- There are two fundamental abstractions, the gender abstraction and the exchange abstraction, and they are linked together in the moment of commodity exchange for money when the model of the gift is replaced by the model of replacement itself in the actual physical performance of replacement. That is, in the exchange (replacement) of money for the commodity and the commodity for money.

- While as I said above, gifting gives value to the receiver by implication, exchange gives value to the objects exchanged, as made explicit in the general equivalent, money, which replaces each and every commodity that is exchanged worldwide. Here as in the construction of the male gender replacement itself replaces gifting.
- Like the gender term for boys, money is the abstract masculator of commodities, as their equivalent, moving them conceptually from the gift to the exchange/replacement mode, denying gifting.

- Number is the ordered series of replacements of increasing/decreasing quantities for each other, and money is the embodiment of number that serves as the replacer of products that are not to be given and (gift) values that are not to be attributed but are instead in this exchange/replacement process, commodities that are to be exchanged and gift values that are now replaced by exchange values.
- We have to make the hypothesis of the gift to see this.

The consequences of the exchange abstraction for thinking

- Alfred Sohn-Rethel was a Marxist philosopher who saw the exchange of commodities for money as an abstraction in real life that people are making without knowing it. This real abstraction makes them think abstractly. Exchanging money for commodities is an abstract process that is reflected in abstract thinking.. Value too is an abstract, socially implied quality that does not exist materially.(see Marx “Hitherto no chemist has been able to discover exchange value in a pearl or a diamond.”(*Capital*, ch. 1)

- Sohn-Rethel says that the practice of this exchange abstraction-in-reality creates a specific conceptual abstraction, which did not exist before money was introduced in Lydia in 600 BC. He and more recently, classics scholar Richard Seaford see pre Socratic philosophy as deriving from monetized exchange, and Sohn-Rethel sees the later abstract thinking of Galileo, Newton and Kant as deriving from the real abstracton as well.
- If this is true, we are being much more deeply influenced by our economic practice than we have imagined. If we are a maternal species as I contend, we need to reclaim our thinking from the exchange abstraction, **and** from the gender abstraction, not to impose their presumed contrary in concreteness but to achieve an integrated consciousness based on giving and receiving.

Double Burden

- Although they maintain their gifting identity and potential, women also take on work replaced by money, often assuming the 'double burden'. In fact the market itself has become necessary as the main or the only way to procure the means of unilateral giving for adults' and children's survival.
- Independently of gender, the workers unwittingly give surplus labor as a gift to the Capitalist, who replaces them as owner of their work and their products.
- Thus replacement has become more important than giving, both in gender identity and in the market and also in the home.

Quid pro quo replaces interpersonal gift relations of community and solidarity

- Commodity exchange is adversarial and ego oriented, with each exchanger trying to get the most possible from the transaction for h/erself
- This creates communities of acquisitive and possessive individualism superimposed on gift communities and embedded in them
- The exchange-based communities are just the opposite of communities based on giving to needs.
- However they coincide with the top-down relations of domination and replacement typical of patriarchy.

Commodity exchange is like masculation because it repeats in the market the gender-forming replacement abstraction from the giving and receiving mode

- The exchange replacement of gifting recapitulates the individual gender replacement of gifting at the wider social level of the market and generalizes it to a common social principle.
- We consider the structures of power-over that are generated by this deep structure of replacement as somehow independent of each other but they coincide in an intersectional way.

Intersectionality

- I submit that the power over motivation as it has developed in the Patriarchal Capitalist countries – of North over South, of racist whites over people of color, of nations over other nations, of colonialism, of the global market over local economies, of the oligarchy and the deep state over the general population, of the masters of information over the understanding of the many, together with that of men over women, are all expressions of the replacement of the unilateral maternal gift by replacement-exchange itself in the market and in misogynist ‘masculation’. Together they form a fractal-like structure, where each replacement pattern repeats and validates all the others.

The simple truth

- Unilateral giving and receiving form the real, original and continuing structure of human interaction, first experienced and learned in early childhood by all children who survive, and continuing throughout life.
- Gifting interaction creates implications of value
- There are endless variations on giving and receiving that are not recognized as such
- One of these interactions is male gender, which replaces maternal gifting for boys' identities with replacement itself and power-over
- Another is quid pro quo exchange, which contradicts and replaces unilateral gifting short term and changes its implications.

- Together the two abstractions reinforce each other, creating gift-denying-and-exploiting mechanisms in individuals and a parasitic economy and culture that discredit and take from their gift giving hosts at many levels, from the individual to the local to the global.

What to do

- Understand and dismantle the processes of the replacement of gifting in gender construction and in commodity exchange.
- Recognize and return to the basic template of giving and receiving for all in understanding and in action.
- Recognize, understand and factor-in any exceptions to this.

A possible addition to this analysis.

- The trans movement may be a movement in search of an identity of renewed participation in the maternal gift economy for those who are born male, and in search of the identity of replacement by those who are born female.
- However trans M to F seem to maintain something of the character of masculating replacement, as they occupy and take over the category of women – ‘trans women are women’ – while many trans F to M maintain gifting values.
- Both call into question any species specific ‘essential’ character of capitalism and of patriarchy.