

Strategic Acts of Kindness: A Suggested Strategy for Women Funders to Create Social Change

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A strategy for change needs to follow an analysis of what is wrong. In fact perhaps all strategies follow some analysis unconsciously. (Like if you say you're apolitical, that's still a political position. If you say you don't have an analysis, you're just following your gut, you can do that because your gut has unconscious priorities, a kind of unconscious analysis.) We usually have to see what is wrong and know why it is happening in order to effectively challenge and change it. When the analysis is not conscious the strategy can be weakened by other implicit analyses that may lead in other, even contradictory, directions. That makes things complicated for people who are trying to collaborate with each other.

I put this description of my own analysis in the first person because I don't want you to feel I am imposing my point of view on you. I believe there are commonalities among us, and that you will see them when they exist and make of them what you will. This strategy for change is based on the analysis I have done in my book, *For-Giving — A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, which took me thirty years to think through and ten years to write. It also is the fruit of my experience as a social change funder trying to use that analysis in practice. It was motivated by my experience as a woman living in abundance, who was and is deeply disturbed by the huge social problems that have been evident throughout my lifetime, problems of poverty, war, disease, violence and environmental degradation. As one of the 'haves', I am nevertheless moved to change the situation for the 'have nots'. I know some altruistic impulses are genuine among rich people because I have them myself. I also have a healthy disrespect for sentimentality, a respect for what works and a belief in the 1968 French Students' slogan '*L'imagination au pouvoir*'. I recognize the paradoxical situation I am in as a beneficiary of the capitalist system who wants to change it. I also recognize that as a woman I am a member of an oppressed group, however much money I may have.

My Story

When I was growing up in Texas in the 50's wealthy people did not use their money for social change as much as they do now. At most they put some of their money in charitable foundations and kept most of it. I heard that Leon Tolstoy had given his money to his serfs. It made a big impression on me that someone could actually do that. (Later I read about his sexually molesting his servant girls which pretty much destroyed my respect for him.) It was

communicated to me subliminally as I was growing up that it would be crazy for anyone to give away a large portion of their money. My family had funded a foundation, but that was a different thing. There were no alternative models for personal social-change funding available for me — which was why Tolstoy was important. Though there has been much improvement with the rise of the funding movement, I think many people's altruism is still frozen by the lack of models, especially accessible women's models.

I was lucky enough to live in Europe for 20 years and to be exposed to the currents of thought prevalent there. Italy was a crossroad of ideologies. It was also accessible to people from Africa and other parts of the Third World in ways the US is not. Newspapers habitually reported news which was never seen here in the US. Some radical philosophical thinking was going on with a Marxist basis. A Polish philosopher I knew once said to me that Europe was one of the few places new Marxist thinking could actually occur because the Soviet Union and China were so dogmatic and the USA so paranoid and red-baiting. I say this in order to forewarn you that I spent a lot of time studying Marx. Then when I became a feminist I realized that his thinking was still patriarchal and that is why his analysis was wrong and his strategy to liberate humanity through proletarian revolution did not succeed. The adversarial relations of class conflict and violent revolution come from the same manhood script that perpetrates and perpetuates wife and child abuse, hierarchy in the home, exploitation of the 'other' (sex, race, sexual orientation, religion etc.) and capitalism itself. Marx's analysis did not go deep enough. I have perhaps the arrogance to think that I can go deeper. Of course it is not all that hard, the depth is staring us in the face if we only look at it. The feminist movement has brought us to the point that we can see what is in front of us. The word 'prole-tarian' means 'the bearers of children'. Who are the bearers of children? Mothers. Marx only analyzed exchange value in the market. He did not consider non monetized services as having value. Only in the last century have women become aware of the economic value of their own free labor in the home. (See Marilyn Waring's book *If Women Counted*.) It has been calculated that some 40% would have to be added to the GNP in the US — more in some other countries — if women's free labor were counted.

I participated in discussions of women's free labor in the consciousness raising group I was part of. Most of the members of the group worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN which was located near where I was living in Rome. At the time — in the late 70's — I was trying to develop a theory of language. I began to understand that the kind of value free labor gives is similar to the value language gives, which underscores or highlights what is important (meaningful) in the culture. Both of these have been invisible to patriarchal thinkers. I connected free labor also to gift economies I had read about in anthropology. I saw a continuity among the gift economies, mothering, language and... because of my own life situation... funding. It was this discovery that allowed me to finally break through my own pa-

ralysis and begin funding for social change. I realized that there is a whole free giving aspect of life that is not being recognized because the values of patriarchy are in charge and are threatened by free giving. Women have been 'funding' life for centuries with our time, energy, and love. I aligned myself with them and began to feel it was ok or 'normal' for me to be a giftgiver, like other women, but to do it by funding with money. I could do the funding because I had the money and it was needed just as I could give my time and energy to my family because they needed me.

Maybe a good analogy is that having a lot of money is like having some unusual kind of talent (an ancient name for money) which can be used or not used. My ex husband's grandmother who lived in Trieste, in Northern Italy, had a beautiful operatic voice but wasn't allowed to sing on stage because proper women didn't do that then.

Having the money and not using it is like having the voice and not using it. It can also be an analogy for my idea of the gift economy. Suppose I had a beautiful voice and lived in a country where very few people sang. Then I did a theory about singing and started singing myself and tried to get more people to do it, and to realize how much they were already singing inside their heads and how much music there is in language, in breathing, in laughter, in the sound of the wind. The goal in the analogy would be to change the society so that everybody would have a voice and would sing; singing would be a normal and prized activity. The same with the gift economy. Everybody could have enough to do giftgiving in abundance, giving-and-receiving could be a normal and prized activity. To begin to change consciousness we need to realize how much gift giving and receiving we are already doing, not only in charity and volunteerism but in all aspects of life where we are satisfying needs beyond the market economy: from breathing in and out, to language, to satisfying psychological, cultural and spiritual needs. In fact we should redefine ourselves as 'homo donans', the giving species rather than just 'homo sapiens', the knowing species.

We need to see that patriarchy conceals our own giftgiving from us, turning us in the wrong direction, against each other, distorting our perception, creating scarcity, penalizing giving and using it to its own ends. In fact patriarchy is parasitic on giftgiving and creates an environment in which its values can continue to prevail. It paralyzes us by discounting the gift values and over valuing market values.

A few pitfalls to avoid.

(I learned about a couple of these in Europe. Sometimes I think this consciousness did not cross the Atlantic)

PF 1. Individualistic versus systemic thinking.

Believing that bad individuals cause the problems of society only allows the option of changing the individual to make things better. Instead looking at the problems as systemic — connected with each other — allows us to address the source of the problems, to address what it is in society that MAKES individuals ‘bad’, sustains and rewards them. A system in this sense is a pattern, a way things are connected to each other that produces certain results. One of these results is the perpetuation of the pattern.

The system I call capitalist patriarchy produces values which serve to maintain the system, to motivate the accumulation of wealth and the penalization of poverty, to create scarcity where abundance should be, in order to maintain an environment in which exchange, hierarchy, and power-over can have useful functions. Many individuals are socialized towards those values and become the players in an attempted upward migration. The punishment for not succeeding in this climb to the top is poverty, disease, homelessness, humiliation. Presently this upward migration is not just local or national but international, among nations, with the result that most of the countries of the South occupy the penalized positions. Even though within those countries there is a small wealthy group (usually connected to the wealthy in countries of the North), the majority of the people are poor and the general level of life is much reduced. In the wealthy countries, the development of a relatively wide middle class masks the poverty of the vast majority of the world’s peoples, both at home and abroad, making it possible for physical environments in which no one is poor to appear to their inhabitants to be the only reality.

PF 2. The idea that we should not be giving money just because we can.

Once at a funders’ meeting I heard a woman exclaiming to the group that just because she had money was not a good reason to give it away. The others were comforting her and agreeing. I do not agree. We should not sit at our laden tables while the little match girl stands outside our window looking in. And it’s not just one little match girl but millions. Billions if you consider the international picture. (They surely do look at us.) But I think we also have to access the innocence of our hearts to believe in our own desire to change things enough to try to find the reasons behind the human, economic, and ecological disaster that we call progress. And then address those reasons. That is, we should think and give strategically, give money TO something, not just give it AWAY.

The truth is that everyone should live in a world of abundance and it could happen. I think it is the sweet and sacred responsibility of those of us who live there already to make it happen for the others who are outside looking in. I remember the story of a black woman in Africa who lived in a shanty on the garbage dump and as she sifted through the garbage looking for food found old magazines with ads in them of well dressed white people getting on airplanes going to other countries. (Maybe I was one of those people.) I

want her to come on the airplane with me. I have no pleasure in the fact that she cannot, or in the fact that she and her children may now become infected with HIV.

So I am doing funding and activism because I want that woman to come with me. That's a positive reason, not a reason from guilt or self abnegation. If I use my money, intelligence, and other gifts just right maybe she can, or maybe her sisters and my sisters or her children and my children can. She is so far away though. To get to her I have to work to change the system that makes her live on the garbage dump there and me in my nice neighborhood here. I don't want to trade places with her. I want us all to live well.

One obvious thing to change would be the arms spending that makes us waste so many billions of dollars. But how do we do that? We have to change not just legislation but a mentality, a mind set. Patriarchy. Capitalist patriarchy. Everything in it is connected to everything else. Then after we stop the arms spending we have to figure out how to get the resources to that woman in Africa in ways that respect her and do not re create the system putting her or anyone else at the top and others at the bottom.

Is it that I am trying to create systemic social change because I should? In a way yes, because I can, I have that sweet responsibility. And it is sweet because I want to do it. I have an altruistic reason, a communitary bent or tendency. And that is normal. It is normal and human to care. We are 'homo donans'. Egotistical economic man is an invention of the system, a fiction created to make the system work, a rationalization, a self fulfilling prophecy. Those of us who are being brought up to care for children have to be socialized towards gift giving and other-orientation or the children would not survive. The trouble is that in patriarchy we orient ourselves toward caring for those who have been socialized to be egotists and towards patriarchal institutions like the market as the compendium of egotistical self interests. Moreover, with society's help, we are socializing our children to be egotists so they can succeed in the system.

PF 3: Sticking with a local rather than an international viewpoint.

The system works on international, not just local, exploitation. The cheap resources that come from the so-called 'Third World' to the 'First World' are the 'gifts' that make our countries rich. There is a transfer of wealth from them to us which has intensified through the development of free trade policies. Our level of life is so much higher because theirs is so much lower and vice versa. Most of the poor people in the US have a level of life which is higher than that of the poor people in 'Third World' countries. In fact many of them, especially poor immigrants, 'fund' their families in their home countries with money they earn here. Everyone here, rich or not, has advantages (and responsibilities) due to the global transfer of wealth from South to North. (That puts wealthy funders in a similar structural position with poor

funders).

PF 4. The idea that things will always be the same.

Sometimes we lack faith and vision that things can be really different. Living in Italy for 20 years gave me the experience of a really different society. Not necessarily better, but different. It convinced me that with different premises, different histories, we can arrive at different conclusions. If we want things to be different we should contribute to a different history. It is not true that everything has always been the same and will always be the same everywhere.

PF 5: The idea that we should only try to make a small difference.

It is my personal belief that Mother Earth wants change for the better and that she is helping us in our work to solve the social problems. We need to think collectively, find our commonalities and work from there. She speaks through the group better than through the individual sometimes. Another belief I have is that ideas are given to those who have the means and ability to carry them out. If you have a strategy for social change you may be THE person who needs to make it happen. Sometimes we discredit ourselves and our ideas. If we are wealthy, especially wealthy women, we may think 'our' ideas are not worth anything. But I think, if we have the idea and the money and the desire and do not do anything, who will do it? Someone who has less advantages? All of our ideas are social products, as we are ourselves. Its like we are part of a gigantic servo mechanism that society has for healing itself. (Remember James Lovelock's 'daisyworld' of Gaia?) If we use what we have to create change we are functioning parts of the servo mechanism. If we don't, we clog it up. Our ideas and our communities are part of that.

Another consideration with a kind of existentialist cut — if we act in a certain way and if we are social products, it means the society itself had the potential to act that way. If we decide to do collaborative funding, for example, it means that there was that possibility in our society all along. So maybe the society is better than we thought, and we proved it by our own behavior as agents of change. On the other hand, if we don't act for social change it implies that the society did not have that potential.

PF 6: The idea that poor people are better than rich people.

There is a kind of prejudice out there that poor people are better than rich people. Sometimes that causes rich people to abdicate their ideas and decisions in favor of poor people. It is true in a way. Poor people have not usually exploited anybody to get where they are, so they don't have that on their conscience. They have also not usually refused to give to others, first because they don't have much to give, and second because poor people are often very generous with what they do have. There are actually many rich

people in the same situation, however. Many of them realize that material goods alone cannot make them happy.

The idea that poor people are better than rich people creates a contradiction because everyone in capitalism is striving to be rich. Lack of education, health care, ability to travel, etc. appear to penalize the poor. Yet having these advantages seems not to make rich people better people or better able to create change. I think this is an illusion. Living in abundance is good for you. The problem is that living in abundance when everyone else is living in poverty is not good for you. It blocks your compassion, keeps you in denial, shrivels your soul. Living in abundance and creating social change with our surplus is the human and self respecting way to a better world. It also provides a positive model for people caught up in climbing the patriarchal capitalist ladder. Martyrdom is not necessary and living 'as if' we were poor is a lie. Letting poor people make all the decisions and believing they are right just because they are poor is also not respecting the many gifts we have been given. The thing to do is to embrace what we have been given by the system and use it to change the system. We can do that in collaboration with poor people not by abdicating all our responsibilities to them. This problem has probably arisen because of the patriarchal and paternalistic attitude which does not listen to the people who are on the receiving end of the funding relationship and treats them as if they had no idea about how to solve their own problems. The progressive funding movement has rightly reacted against this mode of behavior. However that does not mean that the funders themselves have nothing to give but money. I think what is best is to strategize together from our various standpoints, find our commonalities, communicate, form a community, a cooperative group implementing strategies in mutual trust as class-crossing feminists from both sides of the patriarchal boundary line.

Analysis in a nutshell

Patriarchal capitalism is built on the 'manhood script' which requires boys to be as different as possible from their nurturing mothers and to compete for dominance instead of doing nurturing. Cross cultural anthropologists describe many more or less atrocious puberty rites which ensure the distance of the boy from the mother and the nurturing way. The stoicism and autonomy that males are required to embrace encourage them to be impervious to their own and other's needs. Attention to needs is of course necessary for the giftgiving way to function. Cognitive psychologists have found that we construct our categories using prototypes. When a boy discovers he is not part of the category of his giftgiving mother, he seizes upon the father as the prototype for the category 'human' and he uses that prototype for his own development of a non nurturing, non female, identity, which then appears to be the human identity. There is a one-to-many relation between a prototype

and things related to it, so there is logically only one prototype per category. Boys are in the situation of having to compete with the father and with other males to be the one prototype for 'human', an almost impossible and contradictory task. The competition to get to the top and remain there becomes dominance and power-over. The values of the manhood script are incarnated in our social institutions. Hierarchies are constructed to provide many levels of categories so that at least some different people get to have the prototype positions. Competition and domination are part of the manhood script and take place in opposition to giftgiving, co operation, inclusiveness and the celebration of differences.

In response to this misconceived, artificial agenda, females are seen to be those who cannot be prototypes for the human concept and who therefore do not compete for dominance. In fact they continue to be socialized to follow a different, more human, giftgiving agenda. The fact that both men and women can participate in the work force and do child care shows that these are socially imposed roles and value systems. They are not biologically predetermined. In fact many people have both value systems operating internally, with all the conflict and confusion that 'engenders'.

The recent criticism of 'essentialism' is a reaction to the acceptance of the idea that women are 'essentially' not prototypes. What I am saying is the misuse of the prototype in the formation of MALE identity is what causing the problems. What I do believe is that human life — beyond gender — is giftgiving and receiving. If anything, giftgiving is the HUMAN-making logical pattern.

One place which does not have the 'manhood script' is the island of Tahiti. The language of Tahiti does not contain gender terms. To me this seems to bear out my idea that the script is basically written by language itself, causing a problem of miscategorization. Some other hunter gatherer societies, such as the African !Kung live in harmony with nature. They recognize nature as nurturing them, giving them gifts in a 'cosmic economy of sharing'. There the mothering prototype is recognized or projected onto nature, even if the language does have gender terms and misogyny.

The cultural values involved in the socialization of males are similar in many societies and become institutionalized in various ways. Competition, hierarchy and dominance, ego orientation and similarity to the dominant prototype are the manhood values incorporated in capitalism. In contrast to the manhood values are the values of mothering. These include other orientation, the satisfaction of needs, the giving of value, creative receiving, inclusion of the 'other' and the celebration of difference. The struggle between these two value systems or world views accounts for much of the strangeness of our society today because it requires a blindness towards gift giving even by the people who are practicing it. It also requires a blindness towards the human and environmental cost of the manhood script, a concentration on

the immediate picture and an insulation against the wider truth. It requires and facilitates readiness to accept brainwashing by government, business, and advertising. These and other requirements of the struggle between paradigms make it possible and necessary for the giftgiver within all of us to continue giving TO the values of the manhood script as they are incorporated in institutions and in individuals. We are divided within ourselves, maintaining both value systems at once, though women, who are continuing to be socialized towards mothering remain more in the camp of the gift economy while men continue to favor the manhood script. Since the values have been institutionalized as the organizing principles and patterns not only of the market but also of education, science, government etc. the women who participate in those institutions are pushed into embracing those values as well. This fact has also had some beneficial effects for women who have used their participation in these institutions to liberate themselves from the oppression caused by being giftgivers at the mercy of the men to whom they gave. However the negative patterns and values of the manhood script have prevailed, even though the lots of some individual women have greatly improved and some important changes have been made in mores and in legislation. (Though the law itself remains patriarchal)

My hope is to theoretically and practically disentangle the paradigms from each other and to bring forward and validate the values of giftgiving. I believe this can be accomplished by asserting the leadership of the gift paradigm, by re establishing the mother as the prototype for 'human', by understanding and rejecting the exchange paradigm and its patriarchal values, by creating a wider view of needs and nurturing consistent with the mothering human. In this view need-satisfaction would be a category including problem solving and social change as nurturing behaviors along with the satisfaction of material, psychological, artistic and spiritual needs.

Capitalism requires scarcity to function and scarcity for the many is created 'accidentally on purpose' by wasting wealth on such non nurturing expenditures as armaments, and by cornering wealth in the hands of the few. (We are the beneficiaries of this self-perpetuating structural process). As women living in abundance we are among the few who can practice the gift paradigm without the sacrifice that practicing it in scarcity requires. Therefore we are among the few who can provide an attractive model of giftgiving. The fact that giftgiving is usually coupled with sacrifice disqualifies it by making it unattractive, apparently life-denying and therefore out of reach for most people. It appears either saintly or masochistic, while actually, doing it in abundance is or can be delightful, life enhancing and very good for all the people involved. As women of wealth who want social change we are in the right place at the right time to provide for others an example of women practicing gift giving in abundance, of the mothering way liberated into the rest of society at large.

Why should women fund women? Is it because they and we are the victims

of patriarchy? Although it is important to recognize and stand in solidarity with our sisters who are victims (and recognize our own wounds as well), I believe women should fund other women because women are the most capable agents of social change. We are socialized towards values that are in opposition to the system, so from early childhood, like many of our foremothers, we do not 'fit'. We are not the ones who should change our values, it is the system which needs to change.

Urgent needs for social change can be satisfied by moving the public consciousness from one set of values to the other while providing concrete projects that actually accomplish something useful. There are many such needs. The system creates ever larger problems, disasters that need to be stopped before it is too late. One example among many is the nuclear industry. Through it we are leaving a legacy of death for ourselves and for future generations. It is kept in place by an automatically validated short-term profit motive which enlists a cover up of lies and denials in its service. There is a definite need here to uncover, tell and publicize the truth so that the public outcry will make it impossible for the industry to continue. The truth telling needs to be international because the industry is international. For example power plants which are no longer being built in the US because of the public mistrust are now being exported to Third World countries. Some 85 power plants have recently been sold in Asia by companies such as Westinghouse. In order to deal with this situation our attitude must be other-oriented. That is, we must care about what happens to the people in Asia as well as to people of the US and to people of the future. Giving funds to people who are opposing the nuclear industry, joining in and participating in the struggle ourselves, IS nurturing social change.

I would not call this kind of funding 'charity' because it has a multiplier effect and it challenges the system in the practice of its ego oriented values at the expense of the public and the planet. It is also not 'piece of the pie' funding which attempts to integrate women or minorities into the mainstream of the system. It focuses on the bigger picture while affecting the smaller picture. It affirms the value of preserving life on the planet as opposed to the value of economic and informational domination of the many by the few. In that sense social change funding affirms the values of mothering above the values of the manhood script.

Although many people realize that patriarchal values are empty and unfulfilling the message that the mothering values are 'inferior' and not part of 'reality' is being broadcast throughout society all the time. This happens not only through neoclassical economics and its me first ideology but by the capturing of mothering values by patriarchal religions and even by charities which use giftgiving to uphold an uncompassionate system through band-aid approaches. The commercial and other money making behavior that we enter into every day also discounts giftgiving by making exchange the Accepted pattern for the way we gain our sustenance as well as for all other

human relations.

Funding at a 'meta level' means funding a change in the values regarding giftgiving ('giftgiving' is itself a broader term for funding). We need to rescue and reclaim the mothering model as the norm. It seems to me that there is a small logical step here that we do not usually make. It's a question of where to put the parenthesis. Usually the other-oriented logic concentrates on the 'other'. The attention moves from A (the giver) to B (the one with needs). Instead we also need to place our attention now on the process and the ones who are initiating it, the A's, who continue to affirm (A to B) by doing it. In patriarchy we often do not appreciate the A's or the process (A to B) but we tend to validate not the needs of poor people but the needs of patriarchal dominant B's as 'deserving' without acknowledging the process in which they are receiving from others. In order to assert the mothering norm we have to affirm the other-oriented process (A to B). That means as far as funders are concerned that we should validate our own giving process and ourselves as models of social nurturing, practicing women's values with money. (A, women funders, to B, society). It is better not to self efface or stay in the closet because in order to shift the paradigm people need models out where they can see them. Self effacement is a way of denying the process (A to B) and our participation in it as A.

So — asserting the (A to B) model should be a major part of our strategy of funding social change. In every project we should try to implement and validate the values of social other-orientation demonstrating that they are part of 'reality'. They, not the manhood script are the norm. (There is another complication here because being the norm is itself part of the manhood script, so women would provide a less normative norm. But that's too complicated to explain here. Read my book, *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange*.) If for any reason you do not feel like making the commitment to be 'out' as a funder, you can still say that it is a woman who is giving the money. When I started out I used to give money as 'Anonymous Woman' — so that it was public knowledge that it was a woman who did that.

I think there's a kind of question in the collective mind. If women had money what would they do? We need to show them the choices we are actually making. I think it helps to consider the experience of being wealthy on a par with other experiences - like living in a different country (maybe on a different planet) from most people. Somehow wealthy women are a sort of test case for all women. Put in a privileged environment, in that other country, will women just follow their men to the destruction of the earth or will they change paths? Can we affirm the model (A to B)? It's an inclusive process — in giving to the other we include the other. Women are inclusive. But then they let those they have included (the B's) take over when the B's are not themselves acting inclusively. The process (A to B) becomes discredited and invisible. It's a logical problem. Women refuse not to include men. Then the men (with the patriarchal value system) take over so that the giftgiving pro-

cess as well as the givers and creative receivers becomes invisible, subservient, enslaved. The moral here is that we need to do women-to-women funding AS women. That will help to change the world for everyone, men included, by maintaining the importance of the process (A to B).

I remember when I was studying literature in college, the professor told us that so many of the Greek plays were about kings and royal families because they were the people everyone in the society paid attention to. Wealthy people have that same position in our culture. I believe hubris (the defect of kingly pride) is part of the manhood script but for women maybe it consists in something else. For me it consists in the negative vision of myself watching the bombs of the future go off, the environment degrade, masses of people starving and sick with AIDS, and thinking “Gosh, I had millions, I could have done something to stop this, but I didn’t.” Hubris in this case is IN action. All the more so because we are already on stage whether we want to be or not. Even if we are in the closet we are on stage in the closet. Other people are going to imitate us anyway — we are already models of what you do when you live in this ‘country’ that everyone is trying to migrate vertically into. So its not just a question of ‘noblesse oblige’ and we really do have more than money. What we have is a chance to demonstrate an alternative value system by putting it into practice. We already have the potential visibility that is necessary to communicate with the millions of people who need to be validated in their kindness rather than their cruelty. Without that validation, without a shift in paradigms, our system will continue churning out the same silly and pernicious models, Elvis Presley, Madonna, Donald Trump, Joan Crawford, OJ Simpson, Kenneth Starr. Thank the Goddess for Oprah!

I believe that most men have mothering values too, after all they all had mothers, but it is women who need to take the lead in this paradigm shift. When men take the lead in nurturing it looks as if the manhood script can be the basis of mothering, while instead its alienation from mothering is the basis of the problem. On the other hand women can succeed in the manhood script and then it looks like women’s values are no different from men’s. Margaret Thatcher is the person who is always cited as an example in this regard. Many women who succeed in our patriarchal political institutions have to live with extreme internal contradictions in values. All of this discussion at least goes to show that it is values we are talking about not biological determinism.

Lady Diana and Mother Teresa were both models of gift giving women but both were caught within patriarchal institutions. The need for such models is shown by the immense popularity and respect both women were given by millions of people. I am really not suggesting that any of us become a Lady Di or a Mother Teresa, but as a community of giftgiving women — of women giving that major patriarchal instrument, money — we can change what people consider to be reality. We can be Tolstoy. We can validate women’s

caring values by giving an example of practicing them at the 'top'. We can also be an example of using our imagination, intelligence and know-how to address systemic problems. We can be an example of wealthy people not living in denial, but people who want and can stand to hear the truth, and can act accordingly for the good.

Patriarchal funding vs. gift paradigm funding

I have not talked much about the negative aspects of exchange, which unlike giftgiving, is ego oriented and self reflecting, motivated by satisfaction of one's own need through procuring an equivalent good in return for satisfying the other's need. Exchange requires quantification, measurement, calculation of the amounts given and received. It is adversarial and often manipulative since each person is trying to get the most possible from the transaction. We engage in exchange many times every day, and we use it as a basic metaphor for all our behavior while we usually discount giftgiving (Giftgiving is itself a very powerful metaphor and has not been canceled by exchange but only made unconscious. We can still see it filtering through linguistically in such terms as experiential 'data', the 'gift' of language, the creative 'gift', the 'attribution' of value, genetic 'endowment' and other words such as cultural 'legacy' or 'inheritance'. Terms like the 'transmission' of ideas and the packaging and unpacking of messages also 'convey' their meaning through a slightly disguised gift metaphor.)

The self reflecting quality of exchange is seen as the basis of consciousness, while giftgiving seems unimportant even childish. Unfortunately the model of giftgiving that most funders, even women funders, are presently using is based on exchange. We tend to give just enough (if that) and to calculate and pinch every penny, wanting the receivers to reflect back to us everything they have done with the money, putting them through a long and often humiliating process (which usually also means that the donation is not timely) and requiring some kind of quantitative measurement of what are almost necessarily qualitative results. The recipients, who are no dopes, catch on to the drill and in their turn calculate how much they can get and what kinds of projects are 'fundable'. They sometimes even hire consultants who do psychological profiles on prospective funders in order to see what to hit them up for. Trust and community are destroyed instead of created. Giving and receiving become a business like any other. The mothering model is not proposed. Instead women funders are captured by the system even in the act of giving.

A women's way of funding would establish trust, satisfy needs in a timely way, leave the leeway for mistakes to be made, be unbureaucratic, acknowledge qualitative results without measurement, be inclusive, listen to the other, and be collaborative and self-and-other respecting. Receiving is a creative activity. There can be no gift without a creative receiver. The myth of women's passivity has helped to create the myth of the passive receiver.

Instead of creating sisterhood which crosses class and other patriarchal boundaries like nationality and race, an adversarial relation is often established even among women funders and recipients. The way to get beyond this is personal face to face participation and cooperation, problem solving together.

Maybe the way to frame it is to de personalize the differences. We can say to ourselves or to the women we fund “ The patriarchal wheel of fortune has taken me to the top and you to the bottom. It is not our individual faults. However we can collaborate to dismantle the wheel, using my money, energy and ideas and your energy, ideas and experience. We can even be friends.” It may help to remember that capitalism channels the wealth from the many to the few, so in a sense (and through a number of hidden channels) the money we have flows to us from the pockets of the people we are funding. I am not saying this to create guilt (I think guilt is an exchange mechanism anyway which readies us to ‘pay back’) but to say we have a chance. We have a chance together to do something about all this suffering. There is a window here. ALL the caged birds can fly out of it. Sisters, let that blue sky entice you. Leap, take flight!

In our society freedom is not the ability to make as much money as we want or to choose among 50 different kinds of breakfast cereal at the supermarket or the ability to buy and sell stocks from every country or import and export whatever we wish without consideration of anyone’s real needs. It is the freedom we are usually denied, through physical distance, brainwashing, social stigmas and stereotyping, information manipulation and legal, economic and psychological sanctions of various kinds, the freedom to do something to change the suffering that our system is creating on the planet. Our position as women of wealth gives us this freedom. How tragic if we do not embrace it. We risk throwing away the only real freedom we need, the freedom to create long term peaceful systemic change, to be effectively compassionate, the freedom to give and receive free and to base a community on that — as it should be.

The overload that is being placed on the term ‘free’ can be seen in the oxymoron ‘free trade’ - if it’s trade it’s not free in the sense of gratis. Instead exchange and its mores have been free and unconstrained to freely take from those who are already ‘underdeveloping’. The window of opportunity is in the creation of real free gifts and making that the model. (In collaboration with the receivers). It is not in the creation of new niches in the funding market.

I developed this strategy using my own funding ideas and experience as a basis. I have obviously been trying to follow my own advice for many years. This is the only strategy I have so far come up with: to change the system by shifting the paradigm towards giftgiving, that is, to change the system peacefully from within according to women’s values. (Changing it through class

conflict and violent revolution do not work because they repeat the patriarchal patterns and values of the manhood script that are causing the problems). Actually I feel very lucky and blessed to have come up with a philosophy and a strategy at all. As I said above I believe the Goddess gives the ideas to the people who can use and implement them. (But think of the millions of unrecognized geniuses there are out there in third world countries who died or whose brains were stunted from malnutrition or who never had a chance at an education or a chance to be heard. I remember the story of a Filipino man, a ship's cook who spoke 22 languages. He was probably one of those unrecognized geniuses.) So I am here to tell you what I think and what I have done or would do if I were you.

II

Mottoes to disbelieve:

There is no free lunch (Women have been cooking lunch free for centuries)

Those in power never give it up without a struggle (Many of us are doing just that.)

Analysis re-stated:

There are two opposing paradigms in the world today:

Patriarchy (Socio economic system constructed according to the manhood script and exchange) vs. Gift Economy (socio economic systems based on mothering and gift giving)

There is a struggle going on between the paradigms in which patriarchy has been winning and giftgiving has been invisible and yet made to give TO patriarchy. Patriarchy is pathological, and a mistake. Gift giving permeates society though we have been taught to misinterpret and not recognize it. Shifting from patriarchal to giftgiving values would solve the problems patriarchy has created. I believe that this may not be as hard as it seems because 1) there is a great deal of unrecognized giftgiving going on already and 2) patriarchal values are held in place by the giftgiving that is being done towards the men who have them — by women as well as by other men. In fact patriarchy is being nurtured by the giftgiving way.

Reinstating gift values and beginning to see gift giving as a fundamental human capacity can allow us to connect mothering with the rest of life from which it has been isolated. For example, mothering is or could be the basis of economic distribution of goods to needs. It is the basis of communication and community. I believe and have tried to show in my book that it is the basis of language. Male philosophers, psychologists even scientists as children have all been handed the manhood script which alienates them from nurturing. They are socialized towards a gender identity which arises in

opposition to the nurturing mother. It is therefore not surprising that they have become blind to the value of nurturing as an explanatory principle. By reinstating giftgiving as a social principle having a logical pattern of its own, we can connect the many and various other-oriented parts of life with mothering rather than considering them as separate and nurturing as a specialistic and specifically feminine part of life connected with reproduction. In this way we can see that what women have contributed to society is the principle of contribution itself. We can also see that what women continue to do in mothering (what has to be done for children's survival) is only a particularly concentrated example of behavior that already permeates society. It is this shining web of values that keeps humanity alive in spite of the violence, domination, hierarchy and war that are perpetrated and validated by patriarchy. Nurturing men can be seen as practicing mothering values. They are 'throwbacks', somehow with them the 'manhood script' didn't quite 'take' or wore thin.

By revealing the connections between mothering and a wide range of other-oriented behaviors and values we can shift from the patriarchal paradigm that does not work to a feminist gift giving paradigm that does. Feminism can be seen as a socio economic philosophy based on the giftgiving that makes us human (in spite of our false socializations into gender). It is not the freedom of women to embrace patriarchal values that is important but the freedom of women to challenge them.

Patriarchy repeats the same self reflecting logic at many different levels and the reiteration causes its validation. Giftgiving has been concealed and diminished at most levels other than the material. Consciously doing giftgiving at a meta level, according to the gift logic, in social change areas and in non patriarchal ways will validate it for the wider population.

Strategy

If the foregoing is true, what can we do practically to make the changes happen?

First we need to recognize our own importance as women funders. We are gift givers doing giftgiving in abundance with money, the patriarchal norm. If we do it from our otherness as women and asserting our commonality with other women as gift givers, we can be perfect square pegs in round holes. Funding is nurturing and nurturing can be seen not only as caring for our families but as satisfying the need for social change through supporting projects as widely different as anti war demonstrations, anti racist groups, battered women's centers and alternative media. For our own approach as feminist funders and activists, we should therefore try to extend the notion of needs to include needs of all kinds — psychological, political, ecological, spiritual, creative, as well as economic. We can see satisfying those needs as social nurturing. The issues are not territories for male expertise or immov-

able aspects of the system but are areas for problem-solving giftgiving.

In order to validate women's giftgiving one strategy is to assert the female norm (which is less 'normative' than the male norm).

A.) If we can say that nurturing men are following the values that mothers are the bearers of, we can affirm the female model or norm without the confusion of the counter example which appears to show that the 'manhood script' also provides nurturing. (In fact when the nurturing values are filtered through the manhood script they are altered and distorted). For example the protection that men provide for their wives and daughters from other men is only made necessary because all the men are following the manhood script so that the culture allows and to some extent validates predation making protection necessary. Moreover after boys have been alienated from their giftgiving birthright and made competitive, violent and ego oriented, they are re shaped by morality, law and religion to make them giftgiving after the fact. We attempt to force them to do what we do not allow and encourage them to do naturally at an early age.

B.) We should be clear that women can also embrace the manhood script especially as it has been incarnated in our institutions. In fact our political system is such an institution and it is difficult for a woman to get elected without the manhood values. . If we want to assert the women's giftgiving norm we need to insist that the women we fund to run for political office maintain women's giftgiving values and do not embrace the manhood script. I think that women almost always do maintain a certain portion of the nurturing values underneath the patriarchal ones and that possibly, given enough time, they would move the political focus. (Maybe Hillary Clinton fits in here somewhere, though she did not have to run for office herself.) However we do not have enough time. We need to fund women politicians who have and model women's values not just regarding the treatment of children but at every level of society.

Here are some things we can do to fund the restoration of women as the model of 'the human being' in order to create a change in values. I mean this as a list for discussion and additions, please add your own ideas and let me know.

1. Fund the goddess movement, whether in the female image of a monotheistic God or in the pagan polytheistic version. We are witnesses in this century to this very important popular movement, which is already proposing the shift from a male to a female norm and we can help it along. Fund temple building, travel, books etc.

2. Fund feminists who are members of Patriarchal religions, such as Muslim feminists. Fund sisterhood across religious boundaries.

3) Many native peoples have or had some versions of gift giving (for example the Native American potlatch or give-aways) and they honor Mother Earth. Funding Native people's projects is funding societies which already honored their spiritual Mother. (And I think that is one reason why European patriarchy perpetrated genocide upon them). Unfortunately there is a great deal of sexism among native peoples now, perhaps because they have become infected with our own sexist 'virus'. A similar thing might be said about some African groups and some African Americans. By funding a return to pre European and pre capitalist ways we challenge the patriarchal monolith and propose alternative models, even if they are not always based on a female norm.

4) Fund projects beyond the exchange paradigm. That is, instead of funding the Grameen Bank to bring women into the capitalist system by creating micro commerce, fund land which you give back to the people under women's leadership or battered women's shelters or toxic clean ups or natural seeds or tree planting.

5) Fund alternative women's studies projects and meetings. Women's studies and activism, and values, and economics, and science, and peace etc. Anti racist, environmental, goddess oriented, indigenous peoples etc.

6) Fund women's travel inside and outside US. Third World (as well as other First World) women's travel on speaking tours of the US. They will give a different perspective 'from the horses mouth'. The US is very monolithic without knowing it. The women from the receiving end of US government and business policies will tell us why and how they are being hurt by them. Women who travel here can reach a large number of people. For example they could go to Lilith Fairs, Women's Studies Conferences, AAUW, women's clubs, churches, synagogues etc. Women from the US can go on fact finding trips to other countries. It can be arranged for them to meet with women's groups there. Then, when they return they should commit to publicizing what they have learned. Venues for them to speak should be prepared. Fund South to South women's travel and meetings as well.

7) Fund women of color groups to meet with each other. It is a gesture of sisterhood to support their autonomy. Be inclusive. Hire women of color and women from other countries for your own projects. Support organizing by & for women with disabilities.

8) Support women in the arts to present art with gift values. (I just saw a movie by a woman director which dwelt on a woman killing all of her co workers. It was very gory. Even though the director was a woman making her way in a man's business I would not fund her work.)

9) Fund women's land projects. (a sort of re creation of the commons by and

for women). Retreat centers, buildings etc. Physical space is a good and relatively easy gift to give. But do fund the upkeep and staff as well.

10) Woman-led holistic health, with at least some free services.

11) Fund lesbian led projects. Among other things they can show that women can satisfy needs without being heterosexual mothers. That is, nurturing is wider than or goes beyond taking care of children. Lesbian mothers also challenge the family values stereotypes. Lesbian mothers and single mothers prove that mothering can take place without men.

12. Exchange and phallogentrism are pathological. Hire women psychotherapists to study and heal this social malady. (Choose carefully) Fund and validate talking about this social pathology.

13) Fund women who are already in peace and activist organizations to assume leadership. Promote women's values among them.

14) Fund projects that have already been started by women with women's values. For example Bella Abzug's WEDO.

15) Fund alliance building between different projects and currents. For example women in the anti addiction and therapy movements are doing a lot of unrecognized giftgiving. They could be more closely linked with women in the peace and environment movements.

16) Fund feminist projects in other countries. Because of the exchange rate differences your dollars may go a lot farther. Make friends with the international women you fund. Go visit them. Invite them to visit you. That creates a cross-class, cross-nation, cross cultural bond that is important to establish both in reality and symbolically, as a model. Help other women develop these friendships.

17) Fund a movement to cancel the 'Third World Debt' and to give free gifts — not loans — to Third World countries.

18) Create experimental woman led or woman — only giftgiving communities. Perhaps the Beguines in France and Belgium in the Middle Ages could be a model. There women lived together in a community and went out to help the people in the larger society then came back at night or after their travels. They were religious but these could be not religious but feminist and they could do social change work not charity.

19) Create private operating foundations to do your own projects for change, hiring women staff. That is what I did in the Foundation for a Compassionate Society.

- 20) Begin education of boys without gender terms. (See my analysis of masculation in my book) Create (woman monitored) peer groups for boys outside patriarchy.
- 21) Create and validate free experiences for children of various ages.
- 22) Support alternative woman-led schools.
- 23) Create villages based on gift giving and women's leadership.
- 24) Create homes for elderly women, or buy up neighborhood city blocks and use them to house older women, with medical services etc. (Women rightly fear abandonment in old age, a fact which limits their freedom, makes them remain in bad relationships etc.)
- 25) Continue support of anti violence movement, re education of violent men and of law enforcement.
- 26) Support women writers and researchers on activism, alternative perspectives on all issues and changing patriarchy.
- 27) Create brain trusts & think tanks, support already existing ones like Sisterhood is Global Institute.
- 28) Create a free international alternative feminist university (There used to be one in Rome which I attended called Centro Culturale Virginia Woolf. There is still one in Norway.)
- 29) Fund an ad agency to restore the word 'feminist'
- 30) Support men's groups to change their values.

Funding Media in a Different Voice

I think funding media is particularly important (and I was asked to help develop a strategy with a concentration on media). The truth is a gift, lies are part of the exchange paradigm, they serve the liar not the listener. Communication is giving gifts — muni in Latin — together and forms co-muni-ty. In our society, where the manipulation of information forms the 'normal' context, the voice of women telling the truth about their situations provides an important alternative. Funders can co-muni-cate with women communicators in media, forming a cross class community with them and with their listeners and viewers. Patriarchy proposes the same self reflecting patterns at different levels and I believe those co validate each other so it is very important to offer an alternative.

Let me tell you what I did, not to say it's the only way but to suggest A way to go about it. In about 1984 I became interested in trying to do an international women's radio station. It would have been a high powered am station like the fundamentalists have, to be run by women 24 hours a day, located in a country of the South. (Women from the South are more likely to include women from the North than vice versa. I wanted it to be international and I had already learned to be wary of anglo-centrism.) Realizing it was an enormous project, I hired a woman to organize a meeting at the AWID (Association of Women in Development) meeting in Washington in 1984 to make contacts with other women and to see what kind of interest there would be in it. There seemed to be quite a lot. Then at the Nairobi Conference in 1985 I had a meeting on it which about 50 women came to.

Still it seemed too much for me to take on by myself financially and as a 'prime mover'. Perhaps it would have been different if I had been doing media then myself (now I am). At any rate for these and other personal reasons I sort of let the idea drop. Finally in 1987 I had another meeting here in Austin of US women in media. There I met Katherine Davenport and Frieda Werden, producers of WINGS, Womens' International News Gathering Service and many others. I began funding WINGS to some extent back then, and later, after Katherine's death, Frieda moved to Austin and joined the staff of the Foundation for a Compassionate Society. (Which closed in 1998, though WINGS continues with partial support by my family foundations.) The meetings I initiated and supported were helpful because they put me in contact with the women who were doing the media work, gave me an idea of their problems and of their visions of what they wanted to do. The meetings had a second useful purpose in that they put the women in radio in touch with each other. (There were some drawbacks, however, having to do with power games among the US women especially).

In 1985 I began to fund a woman, Trella Laughlin, who was doing a weekly interview show on Community Access television here in Austin, and then gave her a salary to do the show. I paid for tapes so she could give videos to women who were interested and so she could send tapes to Access stations in other towns. I also paid for her to go to many women's conferences to video them. She videoed conferences my Foundation did here locally and interviewed activists I and other people brought to town.

In about 1991 I bought a house which was turned into a center for teaching video radio and computer to women, under the auspices of video professor, Fern Hill. We provided training of local, national and international women as well as the free use of editing equipment, cameras, computers etc. At around the same time I started Feminist International Radio Endeavor, a daily two hour program providing a women's perspective on all issues, one hour in English one in Spanish. The program was on a shortwave radio station in Costa Rica for seven years and is now broadcasting on the internet. Puerto

Rican Maria Suarez and Chilean Katarina Anfossi are the producers of FIRE. I have continued to fund it throughout its lifespan.

Additionally I had my own radio show for two years on Austin's KOOP radio station and have been doing a bi-weekly Community tv show for about four years. I have also promoted and supported other meetings of women in media some of which were international meetings here in Austin and elsewhere. All of this activity has grown up organically through the purpose I had, the women I knew, and our common goals of feminist social change, even when we did not always see eye to eye. When you put an idea into practice it is always going to be somewhat different from your idea of it in theory and when it is filtered through other people's understanding and purposes, it is even more different. However it takes on a reality that is different from the abstractness of your mind's eye. Its like gnarled roots in the ground, and an idea, in order to grow, has to have roots. Maybe if you fund a number of different projects, their differences balance each other out so you get closer to your original idea. I don't know. But it does help to be pretty sure at least about what YOU are doing and why.

By being involved with women in media I became known as a possible funder for lots of other people's projects as well. Women sent me proposals about films, videos, radio programs etc. So I was also able to fund some of those. They came to me, I didn't have to seek them out. A secret of mine is that I sort of believe the Goddess brings to me the people I need to be in contact with. The 'sort of' in that phrase lets me also decide not to support some of them, but I do pay attention.

Generally I think that we should create channels for women's communication at all levels, both mainstream and alternative. Ownership of the channels of communication determines the editorial policy.

- 1) I hear Oprah Winfrey is starting a tv channel. Providing films and shows for it would be excellent. Advertising on it about woman-led social change?
- 2) A women's international AM radio station would still be a good idea.
- 3) A women's international shortwave radio station
- 4) Fund women's groups to use community tv stations.
- 5) Create media training and empowerment houses for women
- 6) Create a women's values publishing house with on line publication as well.
- 7) Women's audio books business.

- 8) Ham radio networks (with solar technology for y2k)
- 9) Provide low cost solar-powered or wind-up shortwave radios
- 10) Buy a satellite or a large block of satellite time for women's broadcasting
- 11) Fund syndicated feminist programs,
- 12) Feminist programs for PBS and public television
- 13) Feminist programs for mainstream television
- 14) Do or fund a feminist video and audio tape business
- 15) Promote radio on the internet (FIRE and WINGS are already there)
- 16) Encourage already existing mainstream stations to use programs taken from the internet, satellite and shortwave.
- 17) Promote distribution of already existing material
- 18) Translate foreign language videos. There is excellent material that we cannot see because of language as well as because of the different video systems in other countries. Fund a search for these.
- 19) Promote these translations on mainstream and alternative channels, and through the internet. Distribute vhs dubs.
- 20) Import foreign English language programs by and about women and about all issues from a women's perspective — even some programs by men if aligned with women's values.
- 21) Export feminist radio and video programs to other countries making contact with feminist groups who can distribute them. Fund an organizer-networker for this project.
- 22) Create libraries and archives of feminist social change material.
- 23) Bring women in media together in meetings, national and international.
- 24) Sponsor women to go to mainstream media meetings.
- 25) Sponsor international and independent women journalists to cover environmental and peace issues from a women's values perspective, help them go to large women's meetings such as Beijing or issue meetings like the Population conference.

26) Initiate and support conferences from local to global on many issues. Conferences not only investigate issues but create community, show something 'other' is possible, provide empowerment, let us learn about other cultures and the effects of US economics and militarism (globalization)

27) Sponsor specific women's interest media projects which can contribute to international networking, e.g. lesbians, indigenous women, women of color, differently abled women, midwives, feminists in education, feminist economists etc.

28) Hire internet activists who commit to sending out and finding important information on the internet.

29) Support media monitoring groups like FAIR.
(The following 3 points were added by Frieda Werden)

30) Fund staff positions/space/materials for women's departments at community radio and tv stations. These are very helpful to get women trained in media, coordinate their efforts, and information and assure that women get a fair(er) amount of airtime on such stations.

31) Create a clearinghouse on the internet for stories by/about women in the various broadcast media.

32) Support and promote analysis of current changes in communications technology and policy, from the point of view of what they mean for women and the grassroots to participate. For example, the micro radio movement, which could be affordable for many women to do neighborhood broadcasting, is on the verge of becoming legalized but might be gobbled up by commercial interests right away. And for example, the changeover from analog to digital broadcasting and cable casting could either increase or decrease the number and proportion of outlets for public access, public media, and community use. We need progressive feminist media voices to be heard and listened to the way the Heritage Foundation gets their message into the policy stream. We can try to get the U.S. and other governments to live up to and even go beyond the faint promises they made about women and media in Beijing.

Other media

Create a new feminist (cooperative?) publishing house.

Publish books on the internet with free access.

Promote women's music for social change.

How about a feminist funders' "label"?

Concerts for fundraising and publicity of issues

Peace Caravans — rv's traveling throughout the country with international women to talk to local groups about issues in their countries, such as US militarism, nuclear and toxic dumping, free trade etc. I have tried this several times, most recently with a mobile anti nuclear museum. It is a media attention getter, and I believe it is effective in changing consciousness at a grassroots level. The Peace Museum was also useful in traveling to Northern Mexico raising consciousness there about the proposed Sierra Blanca Nuclear Dump — which we defeated with the help of Mexican officials.

Performance art in public spaces (Sally Jacques organizes several performance pieces yearly here at the state capitol and in other public venues)
Street theater, parades, murals, sculpture, monuments.

Have a large weekend meeting open to all women every year on "What to do".

III

Using ourselves as models of women giving in abundance to social change.

Until very recently women have not had the chance we now have to use our money for social change and especially to use it together, in a collaborative way. First, women were not allowed to be in control of their wealth and second they were not empowered to use it for social change, that is, against patriarchy. Since gratitude is part of the giving and receiving way, and all the emphasis was given to the gifts of men and the system, women, because of their gratitude towards individuals and their actually very positive lack of the manhood script values, did not want to challenge those they believed had given abundantly to them. The giftgiving we did do was captured by the system's use of our good will, focusing it on charitable giving to individuals while patriarchy marauded systemically in the bigger picture. Remember King Midas' daughter who turned to gold when he touched her? Our compassion has been paralyzed and we have been objectified. But Midas gave up his golden touch when his daughter turned to gold. In order to bring her back to life he had to give up his gold making ability altogether. Of course he did not make everybody in his kingdom give up gold and the use of it in exchange — or he would have changed the system and we would have all lived happily ever after. (Smile)

I think we should be conscious of the important chance we have and the newness of our situation as women with money and (hopefully) a social consciousness. I think as many of us as possible should be public as women living in abundance giving money for social change. As wealthy women we

demonstrate other-orientation because we are able to care about those in other situations than our own without having suffered the same problems. (Though sometimes indeed we do suffer some of the same problems) This demonstrates that other orientation does exist and that it is also relatively normal. We should address systemic change because not only does the funding actually create change but our example focuses attention on the system as the cause of the problem, which our governments and businesses brain-wash the general public not to do.

Do meta funding — that is, do funding about funding — about presenting itself as giftgiving which embodies the nurturing way to peace. Funding from women's 'otherness' can and should actually be practically different from bureaucratic patriarchal funding.

Suggestions for a 'women's way of funding'.

1. Give abundantly. Scarcity is the tool of patriarchy. It keeps those who experience it under the leverage of the ones who have the money as the millions of wives who have been kept 'barefoot and pregnant' could testify. Giving more than enough allows the receivers to make mistakes, which is a necessary process in unleashing creativity. On the other hand realize that the high dollar projects may be following the values of the system. The point is not to make the people you fund rich and yourself poor but to change the system.
- 2) Do funding in a qualitative not quantitative way. Look for qualitative results. Do not expect to quantify everything.
- 3) Get beyond bureaucracy. Streamline proposals so that asking for money is not so daunting. Make it easy to ask for and receive money. Do not humiliate the receivers. Do not humiliate yourself. I find it helpful to have the attitude: "You and I are entering into this transaction because we are working together to end patriarchy which is hurting everyone".
- 4) Be careful about 'donor driving' or altering projects beyond recognition and utility by funding only some aspects of them.
- 5) Create trust and community. Participate personally in the trips, conferences, events, and other projects you fund. If all women are giftgivers, you are a model for all women as a giftgiver with money. The other women will be models of other kinds of gift giving. But do not think money is all you have to give. (see 8 and 10 below) Don't create dysfunctional relations.
- 6) Fund quickly. Give the money when it is needed. Be open to emergency requests.
- 7) Respect yourself. Your take on things is as important as anyone else's even

more so sometimes because you are other oriented, you have the money and you are concerned enough to want to help. You can see something of the big picture and you have connections with other projects and receivers of funding, so a wider and more informed perspective that some of the people you fund probably have. As someone from the US upper class you have been informed about things in a way some of the people you fund have not. Think of it as another country with a different culture. It's not better just different. But by belonging to that country which you might say is dominating the country and culture of your recipient, you may have information about how the domination is happening that the recipient doesn't have. And the recipient may have information you don't have. But in mutual respect and trust you can bridge that gap and make a common plan.

8) It is easy to get in to a dysfunctional relation where all the stereotypes get projected upon you. You also have to beware of projecting stereotypes. Hang in there, and recognize these are social problems, we are all the walking wounded. Maybe it would be better to go into the collaborative giving-and-receiving relation with a written agreement in which the purpose and possible problems are addressed.

9) Network the people you fund with each other.

10) Realize that you have a lot more to give than money. I believe that giving money for social change actually unleashes your creativity. It certainly did mine. (I was a shy housewife until I started doing it). Actually I believe that gift giving, responding to needs, is the way our bodies work as well. Our hearts pump our blood to nurture the cells. Even the electric impulses in our brains leap across the synapses in a gift way. I think doing giftgiving on the social plane probably enhances the activity of similar activity in the brain. At any rate that is my (creative) fantasy though patriarchy gives a more mechanical interpretation.

A Few Specific Suggestions for our group

1) Each woman picks a social change organization (or more than one) to participate in (and perhaps fund) and reports back to the group.

For Example:

Abolition 2000

WILPF

Madre

Reformed Church of the Goddess

Women's International Network of AMARC (Association of community broadcasters)

AWID

WIDE

WEDO

AAUW

Network of East/West Women
New Bridges unlearning racism workshops
ISIS International
World Bank Monitor

There are a very large number of good organizations this is just a small sample

2) I think it would really be important to create women funders for social change panel presentations at NWSA, Michigan women's music festival, women's media meetings, Goddess Festivals etc.