

Jacob Wrestles with the Angel by Genevieve Vaughan

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Personal Origins of the Theory

When I was young, the circumstances of my life led me to ask the question, “Why does poverty exist?” and motivated me to do something about it. I was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, into a wealthy family and wondered why people on the other side of town, or on the other side of the border some 300 miles south of us, were poor.

In 1963 I married an Italian and moved to Italy where I lived for 20 years. There I had three daughters, acquired a new culture, and got my political consciousness raised. I learned about economic exploitation- the idea that there is a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich. I learned about social injustice. Rome was the place all roads led to so there were people from many countries living in my neighborhood. I learned from them about situations of international exploitation involving their countries and mine. After I got a divorce in 1978, I became a feminist and joined a consciousness raising group of women who worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, which was located near my home. My feminism was international from the outset.

From the beginning of my time in Italy I worked on a task that had been proposed to my philosopher husband by a group of Italian intellectuals who wanted to start a journal based on the application of Marx’s analysis of commodities and money to language. The journal itself never materialized but I was fascinated by the challenge of uniting economics and language. My husband wrote several books and essays about the idea. He saw exchange as the basis of language. I did not agree with him because among other things, I was bringing up my daughters and the mothering I was doing clashed with his ideas of exchange in something as basic as language. Over the years I spent a lot of time working on this analysis, tinkering with it, turning it in different directions.

Finally I was able to turn his theory upside down — which required me to turn Marx’s analysis at least sideways. In fact, like other patriarchal econo-

mists before and after him, Marx had a blind spot towards women's free labor. Actually the blind spot is a defect of the patriarchal eyeglasses.

Our Stable Psychotic Society: Understanding and Transforming It From Within

The problems I thought were so urgent when I was young have not been solved but have only grown more grievous. In spite of many important changes in the political world — the end of the nuclear arms race, the fall of the Soviet Union, the end of apartheid in South Africa- human suffering and environmental degradation have increased. Under the guise of good business patriarchal capitalist corporations invade, plunder and pollute other countries now with barely a ripple in public opinion. Millions (who are always 'elsewhere' as far as the comfortable classes and first world countries are concerned) die of hunger and disease while we fill our plates with their food, our homes with their cheap products. Our arms industries are so out of control that wars are created to provide a market for their products. Our society is so violent that parents kill their children and children kill each other. Those at the top of the economic wheel often find that their lives are barren while those in the middle pursue the illusion of 'having more' and those at the bottom struggle to barely survive.

When I came back to the US in 1983 I was determined to use my money for social change according to the theory I had developed. Now after 15 years and having used up most of my money, I have finally published the book which contains the theory.

My thesis in For-Giving is that humans have created a stable psychotic society which we usually do not recognize as insane because we are living inside it. I believe that if we can understand how we have created this huge problem, we can find a way out. I ask the readers to forgive me if the book is difficult. I can only say that the problem is complex and tangled and that it has taken me almost thirty years to figure it out to this extent. There is much more there waiting to be explored.

The Two Paradigms

There are today two major paradigms or world views which are locked

in a struggle with each other. One involves giving directly to needs. The other is based on exchange, or giving in order to receive (at least) an equivalent of what was given. One is invisible, the other visible. One promotes the satisfaction of needs, the other promotes the competition to be 'first'. One functions according to the values of care, the other according to the values of domination. The very asymmetry of the paradigms creates a 'fit' which perpetuates the struggle. The exchange paradigm is artificial but, because it is nurtured by the gift paradigm it appears to define 'reality' itself while the gift paradigm and its nurturing values appear 'unrealistic'.

In our society we look at everything through the values of exchange. The equation ' $x = y$ ' seems to be the basis of justice, of understanding, of human dignity. Equal exchange seems to be the standard of right human relations, where we do not want to give more than we can get. From love to law, from education to entertainment we get what we gave, and we insist on our money's worth. Exchange is self-reflecting and spawns images of itself everywhere while in giftgiving there is a transitive movement of the gift which goes from self to other. Giftgiving seems to be an inferior kind of behavior undertaken by those who cannot succeed in exchange. Instead it is exchange that is an artificial and aberrant kind of behavior which could not exist without a flow of gifts from the other paradigm.

For-Giving is an attempt to describe this state of affairs, to explain why it happens and how it works in order to make it possible to change it consciously.

The gift paradigm requires other-orientation and gives value to the other by satisfying needs. The exchange paradigm promotes ego orientation and gives value to the ego by the logic of the kick back- by using the needs of the other as a means for the satisfaction of the ego's own needs. The gift paradigm creates bonding and co operation while the exchange paradigm creates isolation and competition. In the competition between the paradigms, the exchange paradigm is at an advantage because it promotes the values of competition. The gift paradigm is at a disadvantage because it promotes the values of cooperation. In fact those who practice it appear to lose the competition while actually they are simply not competing.

Since the gift paradigm is based on giving to the other it allows or encourages giftgivers to give to those who are practicing the other paradigm — the exchangers. Since the exchange paradigm encourages giving to the self, it

fosters mirroring of the self and re-cognition of the self. A kind of socio-economic narcissism is created in which external images of exchange validate its point of view over and over. This hall of mirrors effect makes it possible for the exchangers to see and give value only to themselves and their own processes while receiving from the giftgivers without recognizing them and without giving back to them. The equation 'x = y' appears to be fair and neutral because we do not see how many gifts are being given to exchange.

The world view of exchange receives a great deal of energy from those practising the gift paradigm, but neither group re-cognizes the importance of what the giftgivers are doing. The gift paradigm encourages us to take the point of view of the other, while the exchange paradigm promotes the ego's self confirming point of view. Thus the exchangers assert their superiority while considering the giftgivers inferior and the gift givers internalize this attitude — because they take the point of view of the exchangers (their 'others') about themselves.

Because of our growing participation in the labor market, many women are now in the situation of maintaining both paradigms at the same time internally. This creates an internal conflict. Although we women may behave in giftgiving ways and feel the emotions arising from others' unsatisfied needs, we discount our own values and motivations, giving credit to the point of view of the exchange paradigm-which validates me-first behavior.

I believe that women are socialized to be mothers. Since babies cannot 'pay back' for what they receive, someone must satisfy their needs free, without an exchange. This functional other-orientation is made necessary not by the 'nature' of women but by the nature of babies who cannot satisfy their own needs. Society reads the biological differences to mean that women must mother. The job is so difficult and time consuming, and its values so foreign to the values of exchange, that we must be encouraged in that direction from childhood, taking our own nurturing mothers as models.

The exchange paradigm has created a large number of interlocking misperceptions which together make up a sort of many faceted fly's eye lens through which we collectively see reality, misunderstand it and act upon it according to our misunderstandings. Then we construct reality in the image of our image of it.

In our society the gift paradigm seems to have many defects, even to be dysfunctional. I submit that its defects are all due to its forced coexistence with the exchange paradigm. For example, giftgiving is difficult, even self-sacrificial in scarcity. However, if we look at it in another way, we can see

that scarcity serves the exchange paradigm by keeping its patterns in place. If abundance existed there would be no need to exchange because giving would become easy. It would be enjoyable for people to satisfy each others' needs directly. Therefore abundance threatens exchange, and it is not allowed to accrue. For example abundant peaches are plowed under when they would flood the market and lower the price. But on a larger scale 18 billion dollars is spent every week on armaments world wide while that amount of money would be enough to feed all the hungry people on earth for a year. The military and the arms business do not produce any nurturing good. Humanity's effort to maintain itself has to come from other sources, doing without the wealth that has been wasted. Over the years a huge drain on the economy occurs through military and other make-waste spending. Because there is also a short cycle of money through a few pockets, the arms business itself (like the drug business) is lucrative for those who engage in it. However because they do not produce any nurturing good, these businesses drain the economy as a whole, causing scarcity and thus ensuring the ability of the exchange economy to prevail.

Another consequence of the coexistence of giftgiving and exchange is that the giftgivers do not see that what they are doing is valuable. The exchange paradigm seems to be the 'human' way to behave. Getting to the top of the heap appears to be the way to survive and thrive in 'reality'. Actually we are creating the heap ourselves. Our validation of patriarchal competitive values only operates because we are inside the paradigm and therefore cannot see the exchange economy for what it is — an artificial parasite which derives its sustenance from the gift economy. If we can understand how the parasite is created we can liberate ourselves and humanity from it. If we cannot we will continue proposing the same wrong solutions to our socio-economic problems until we finally destroy life on earth.

The gift paradigm is simpler than the exchange paradigm and not self reflecting. There is a transfer of goods from one person to another, which can be continued to another person and another, so that a flow is created. 'If a gives to b and b gives to c, then a gives to c' is the gift syllogism. We do not usually pay attention to the many acts of giving that we actually do, perhaps because we feel that the recognition of the processes of our good will might distort them by turning them into exchanges. However, many aspects of life can be interpreted according to the giving and receiving mode, if we look at them from the gift perspective.

Unfortunately the power of definition ('x is y') seems to be in the hands of exchange. By defining and labeling, the exchange paradigm is able to distort our view of giftgiving so that it looks inferior. The equation of a product and money: a pound of coffee = four dollars, and the exchange of one for the other, is a definition played out on the material plane. We have been interpreting human thinking in terms of the equations and self reflecting patterns of exchange. One example of the way this works is that exchange defines receiving as passive (unless it is the part of exchange which is 'giving back'). However we can see from experience that receiving has to be active. For example our children have to be able to use the goods we give them physiologically and psychologically. Otherwise our caring intention would not be realized; our gifts would not be gifts. Receiving is not passive but creative.

Giving and Receiving between Sun and Earth

Usually we think of the sun as the giver of light and life. However the trips to the moon in this century have given us a new perspective by showing us the earth from space. When we look at the moon or Mars we see no life, though the sun shines there, just as it does on earth. It is only our marvelous green and blue planet that uses the sunlight to create countless varieties of life. Somehow the earth has devised creative ways of using the sunlight. Grass captures the light through photosynthesis. Animals' eyes use the light to allow them informed locomotion. Herbivores eat the grass allowing them to incorporate and use its energy creatively, etc. It is not the sun that is special, however evident it is in the sky, but the earth, because of her creative receptivity. The earth receives the light by creating new givers and receivers for its energy. Each environmental niche can be seen as a gift that calls forth a creative receiver. In our perception we receive the 'givens' or 'data' (Latin for 'givens') of our experience. Our minds and bodies are so perfectly attuned to receiving them that they may indeed seem like gifts whether they are actually given to us by someone or not.

The elements of nature function according to gift processes. Fire can be given to others without being lost by the giver. Water with its capacity for downhill fluid motion is used by life in many different ways as the basic substance of bodies. Earth gives a location, the humus of the past, and minerals to living creatures. And air moves from a high pressure to a low pressure area, from where there is more to where there is less (I wonder if this is the answer that is blowing in the wind.) In our human bodies our hearts

pump the blood full of nutrients and oxygen out to our cells which receive them, and then the blood returns to the heart and lungs where it is oxygenated. We breathe in the gift of air and breathe out carbon dioxide which serves the trees. But we also breathe out sounds and words which are heard and creatively received by the ears of other humans.

Co-muni-cation is Based on Giftgiving

The word 'muni' was latin for 'gifts'. To co-muni-cate is to give gifts together thereby forming the co-muni-ty. In fact we can say that we co-muni-cate materially by satisfying each other's needs and in so doing we actually create the bodies (and along with the bodies the minds) of the people who make up our communities.

When we look at communication in terms of the exchange paradigm, we see it as an abstract rule-driven system where humans are different from the animals because our way is more abstract and complex. I suggest that if we look at human language as based on giftgiving, that is, on satisfying each others' communicative needs rather than as an abstract rule-driven system, we can see our difference from the animals as deriving from our being more collectively nurturing not only with material gifts but also at verbal and mental levels. We can also see our human understanding as a process of receiving and embracing experiential 'givens' at various levels. In other words our 'higher mental processes' can be understood not as due to our capacity for abstraction but as deriving from generalized mothering.

In spite of the fact that Language 'sciences' such as linguistics, semiotics, psycho-linguistics, and socio linguistics have developed and proliferated in this century according to the model of abstract rule-governed behavior. It therefore appears that in language, our most human behavior, we are following abstract rules. Believing that this is what happens in our minds and brains makes us believe in law and order as the mainstays of human society. We do not know how to live with each other without harm otherwise, given that we find ourselves in a competitive, even violent environment of every man for himself.

Instead if we can interpret our capacity to think as deriving from language which itself is derived from giftgiving and gift processes — from satisfying communicative needs, rather than from following rules- we can justify a society based on satisfying needs instead of denying needs in favor of law.

Laws are necessary to keep the world safe for commerce-for the ex-

change economy. They protect the market from those with unsatisfied needs. If giftgiving were the norm, the normal way of behaving, everyone's needs would be filled. (New needs would arise and develop in a natural way rather than being altered by advertising). A kind of maternal anarchy would be possible.

In fact giftgiving contains some internal processes and provisos which can look like rules if we are viewing them from the exchange paradigm. For example there is a basic movement 'A gives (something) to B'. B has to be able to receive from A, and what is given has to be something B can use. That means A cannot be a fish blowing bubbles in the bottom of the sea while B is a mountain goat on its mountain. A cannot be my great great grandmother while B is last night's full moon. These impossibilities do not depend on rules but on the lack of relation between the interactors. A certain amount of real world relevance has to go into gift processes. You can't get blood from a turnip but you also can't give blood to a turnip. This fact does not depend on law but on the ability of the giver to give, the receiver to use what is given and the two to interact. I believe that these reality based processes or shall we say limitations are transposed into language as syntax. Adverbs modify verbs and not nouns because they are the kinds of gifts that verbs can use. We say 'a dog' not 'a dogs' because the singular not the plural uses the kind of gift that is 'a'. It has that kind of 'need'.

Our system based on exchange does not look at needs but at profit, at the abstract needs of 'having more'. Our business, university, government, military stick together and uphold each other and rely on the law to protect their control. Their needs and the needs of the market are abstract needs to control, to define, to enforce definition. Their hierarchies function according to rules, command and obedience.

If we can go back to the gift based processes we can find a way of regulating our interactions according to needs having to do with gift processes rather than with needs of the system, both of which have been interpreted as abstract laws or rules we have to follow.

Refocusing our view of language would allow us to reclaim the mother tongue for the mother, taking it away from command and obedience, the law of the patriarchal father. As we begin to get an idea of language as based on giftgiving, which I try to sketch out in my book, we can see the far reaching effects of this fundamental shift in perspective.

If indeed language is what 'separates us from the animals' and language is based on giftgiving, perhaps the way humanity can move out of heart-stopping patriarchal exchange and begin to evolve again is through reinstating widespread giftgiving. Giving value to people's actual needs would shift distribution away from profit-producing 'effective demand' (the needs of those who have the money to buy the products to satisfy them) and towards eliminating the widespread suffering that now exists in the world.

Repeating Patterns in the Exchange Paradigm

The exchange paradigm brings with it many offshoots and look alikes which we validate because we already unconsciously or consciously accept and give value to the patterns of exchange. Systems of rewards and punishments such as the justice system or the attacks and reprisals of war, are exchange patterns transposed into areas of life beyond the market. The justice system is an exchange based process through which those who have been injured can make the perpetrators 'pay back' for the harm they have done. It is of course very difficult to measure harm and in fact those whose loved ones have been murdered or whose countries have been destroyed by war probably find that no amount of revenge or payment could ever restore to them what they have lost.

I believe that we have to address the root of the entire problem from the cradle to the grave. We do not need justice, we need kindness. The root of the problem is the exchange paradigm itself. Its exacerbation creates both the crimes and the justice system we use to correct them. It expands to arms races, escalations and military exchanges. It validates those who 'have' more and bigger missiles and penalizes those who 'have not'. Having missiles does for a country what having a big car or a lot of money can do for an individual. It makes the country or the individual first, the one at the top.

Origin of the Patterns of Exchange

I believe that the patriarchal patterns of exchange, competition and hierarchy come from a misuse of a process we use to form concepts. In this process we compare many items to one prototype or model in order to find the concept of something. In patriarchy, the father is seen as the prototype for the concept of 'human being' while the mother is discounted. The baby boy is told he is 'male' because he has a penis like his father and that he is

not like his mother with whom he has been participating in material communication. By being named 'boy' in opposition to 'girl' the child is pushed out of the mother's category into that of her 'other', her 'superior' opposite. I believe this movement out of the giftgiving category is due to the naming of gender and is the origin of our problems. This simple and innocent linguistic mistake causes the alienation of the boy from his giftgiving human processes.

The boy is told that he has to grow up to be a man like his father and he is forced by society to attempt to construct a gender identity for himself which is outside of the giving and receiving way. In fact his male agenda becomes that of becoming the prototype himself — but of course, this sets him up for frustration and failure because logically only one can be the 'one' at the top. A society is created in which, in order to carry out the mandate of their gender, all the males are competing to be the prototype, or the 'one' to whom the others are related as 'many'.

Different hierarchies are created in different areas of life so that there can be several 'one' positions. These hierarchies support each other and usually together support the dominance of a single one who rules over all. In fact, the role of the 'one' appears to be domination. A flow of commands goes from the top down, while a flow of obedience and the giving of gifts and services goes from the bottom up, from the many to the one. Domination is also often maintained by physical violence.

There is a phallic-symbolic character of being the 'one' at the top because the penis distinguishes boys from girls, locating the boys in a category the members of which will vie to be the prototype. The girls are in the category who will remain like their mothers and (usually) will not vie to be the prototype. We have so over-emphasized the importance of the phallus — the mark of the category 'male'- that having it appears to make a human being superior to others who do not have it. The 'superiority' is necessary to be able to vie for the 'one' position. Thus the category of 'having' also becomes over-sensitized, and it appears that having much money or many things gives a person a high status, bringing him or her closer to the 'one' position. Scarcity also serves the top-down system by making those in the lower positions of the hierarchies need the monetary payments of those in higher positions. 'Having' seems to give those who 'have' a right to control those who 'have not', in deep analogy with having and not having the penis, (the 'mark' of the 'superior' category) giving men a 'right' to control women.

Scarcity also serves to keep exchange in place. If abundance existed there would be no need to exchange because it would become easy and even enjoyable to satisfy each others' needs directly. Therefore abundance threatens exchange, and it is not allowed to accrue. For example abundant peaches are plowed under when they would flood the market and lower the price. But on a larger scale 18 billion dollars is spent every week on armaments world wide while that amount of money would be enough to feed all the hungry people on earth for a year. The military and the arms business do not produce any nurturing good. Humanity's effort to maintain itself has to come from other sources, doing without the wealth that has been wasted. Over the years a huge drain on the economy occurs through military and other make-waste spending. Because there is also a short cycle of money through a few pockets, the arms business itself (like the drug business) is lucrative for those who engage in it. However because they do not produce any nurturing good, these businesses drain the economy as a whole, thus ensuring the ability of the exchange economy to prevail and making giftgiving difficult.

Exchange Floats Upon a Sea of Gifts

If we adjust our perspective to validate giftgiving and invalidate exchange some things which have been both ubiquitous and invisible are illuminated. For example women's free labor in the home can be validated as gift labor. It is now widely known that if women's free labor were counted monetarily more than forty percent would have to be added to the GNP in the US- even more in many other countries. Thus we can say that a gift of more than forty percent of the GNP is being given to the economy as a whole by those who work for free in the home.

If we look at profit as coming from surplus value -Marx's term for the extra amount of work that the worker puts into the product over and above the amount of his or her salary (the going price for that labor on the market)- we can see that 'extra' as a gift from the worker to the capitalist. In fact once we have stopped validating exchange we can begin to see gifts everywhere. Profit is a gift, an extra portion of nurturing given from each of those below to those above. The gift of profit motivates the whole system of capitalism. In fact exchange itself floats upon a sea of gifts.

And so does human life itself. I started by talking about the various levels of gift giving and creative receiving, from the beating of our hearts to

language, from the uses of light to the movement of the wind, from physiological processes to the embracing of the 'givens' of our experience. Communication at the material and the linguistic levels depends not only on our ability to give to needs but on the capacity to receive that comes from having had a mother or caregiver. Because they must be nurtured at length as children humans develop a receptivity towards all of the things that satisfy their needs as if they came from the mother. Thus when we say "Mother Earth" we recognize the great giver as the source because we have been children. If we have needs that the varieties of our experience can satisfy, it is because we have evolved to creatively receive what is available as given.

The Exchange Paradigm Separates Us

In exchange, our gifts return to ourselves — by giving X we get Y in return. The way of exchange separates us by not allowing the flow of gifts and value from one person to the next. It turns the attention of some away from needs and towards profit while the many are kept in a survival mode through scarcity. Exchange creates adversaries, every man for himself, as each person tries to corner the gifts and to 'have more'. The hierarchies spawned by the imposition of the artificially constructed male gender upon the nurturing generic human make a sick and distorted social structure appear to be normal.

Nations held in place internally by such hierarchies make war with one another as each tries to become the 'one' or prototype nation, its leader the necessarily male top 'human'. The US has basically won this battle to be first in this part of the twentieth century. It dominates the community of nations, and uses policies such as embargoes and wars upon other smaller nations with strong 'one' leaders. The attempt to weaken Cuba by creating scarcity there through a decades-long US embargo, is one such case. Another is that of Iraq. (Actually situations of scarcity strengthen hierarchy, while abundance makes them unnecessary. Ironically US embargoes are probably strengthening the hierarchies our government wants to destroy.) It appears that our exchange-based nation applauds making war against a 'one' who might be dangerous as the prototype of another culture, especially of another patriarchal way of being human. The fears of those who participate in our psychotic patriarchy are easily fanned to fury against the missiles of males from other countries who indeed are probably psychotic as well. Symbolic phalluses have taken over the capacity for violence once reserved for

individual dominant phalluses in the home. The missiles' arena is wider than the family and can destroy the 'many' who might oppose the 'one'.

Achieving a Woman-based Socio-economic Order

We must heal this situation by finding and validating a female way of being human, a way which celebrates life and gives to needs instead of acting out or projecting into society the alienation of the boy from the mother. The false and artificial goal of being the 'one' having the most and the biggest, competing and fighting with other 'ones' promotes the psychotic behavior which is bringing the earth to the edge of disaster. We who love life have to stop the behavior, disinvest from its values in order to heal the psychosis now. We can do that by readjusting the focus, by giving attention to giftgiving.

Patriarchy has under valued the mother (or falsely sentimentalized her) because it is threatened by the direct satisfaction of needs. Yet all of us long to return to the giftgiving way. Our hearts cry out with the need to be compassionate. We idolize female 'one' models of charitable action like Mother Teresa and Princess Diana, yet we do not realize that radical social change is the only truly charitable approach. Only by eliminating the patriarchal parasite from our hearts, our families, our economics and our international relations can we stop creating the problems that charity tries unsuccessfully to address. Unfortunately charity itself is not the solution as long as we are living under the reign of the exchange paradigm, though it does point the way. We have to give money, energy, attention, action to cause systemic change. Giftgiving and receiving must be revealed as the norm. The ability to recognize needs and satisfy them must emerge as the basic female and male, institutional and individual human behavior. Shifting the paradigm requires a shift in values. (Let me remind you that value is something we give). Otherwise the problems are continually re created.

Achieving this mothering society will be easier if we realize that we have simply been misinterpreting the many areas of our lives according to the models of exchange. The liberation of women into the labor market has allowed us to demonstrate that it was not our — or men's- biology that determined our economic gender roles, but our socialization.

We can and must change the socialization of our children, but as we are beginning to undertake that enormous task there is something else we can

do. We can re interpret and reclaim the patriarchal disciplines for the gift economy by recognizing that the matter or matrix of all their forms is giftgiving — and that even their forms are complex gift patterns as well. Exchange itself is only a gift which has been doubled, with a proviso of reciprocity so that it cancels the transmission of the gift's value to the receiver. In this re interpretation we can recognize the negativity of patterns of exchange and the dominance of the 'one'. In fact the imposition by slaughter of 'one' religion upon the witches during the Inquisition and the imposition by genocide of the exchange economy on indigenous peoples (many of whom were practicing gift giving) might be interpreted as an expression of the struggle of the exchange economy against the gift economy, that is, of the imposition of the European male gender identity agenda upon the rest of the world. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the armaments, the phallic guns which the Europeans brought with them to the Americas ensured their winning a 'one' position. Now we can say the same about the 'so-called '1st World's' missiles.

Having restored mothering to disciplines from which it has been eliminated by patriarchal thinkers throughout history, we can understand many of the empowering aspects of participation in business and the market not as 'gifts' of the exchange paradigm but as due to changes in our access to complex gift constructs that patriarchy has spawned. The ability to use these constructs then provides limited access to the abundance that allows us to freely give (reclaiming the means of nurturing). The paradoxical promise of the market system is that we will be rewarded by abundance, and the ability to live in individualized, 'pocket' gift economies in our own families. However, the logic of other-orientation does not stop at the borders of any in-group. Instead everyone's needs are important. The possibility of giftgiving-in-abundance must spread to all mothers and their children, to the people of all nations, classes, cultures and religions. Giving and receiving in abundance is the mother-given birthright of every human.

The ego oriented exchange paradigm separates us from one another and destroys our material co-muni-cation. It exacerbates our individualism and makes us think that our problems are due to bad individuals. It hides the forest behind the trees. By making it appear that there is no system, it protects itself from our collective understanding and from the capacity of individuals to join together to change it.

Those of us who have kept our sanity despite the psychotic society are taught that the only thing we can do is to be 'good' people. (As in Kipling's poem 'If you can keep your head when all around you are losing theirs, you'll be a man my son.') Instead the only way to be good is to give up the goal of being good and grapple with the system itself like the angel wrestling Jacob. I say it this way since Jacob was a Patriarch, and we have to engage our highest and best angelic selves in this struggle. Unfortunately, as angels would, we usually hold back our strength because we don't want to hurt our patriarchs or damage their self esteem. These acts of kindness keep us from solving the problem.

As we begin to understand how the exchange paradigm works, its continuous, pernicious and insidious draining of energy from the many to the one, we can and must begin to work together to change it in the big picture as well as the small. As we begin to recognize the exchange paradigm as parasitic upon the more fundamental giftgiving way of the mother which we are all meant to enjoy — and after all each and every patriarchal male was born of a mother — we know that this transformation is not only necessary, it is possible, for it requires only a return to what we have always known.

Fortunately the world wide women's movement holds few illusions about the beneficence of Patriarchal Capitalism. The international women's meetings at Beijing and especially the nongovernmental organizations' meetings at Huairou, Nairobi, Copenhagen, Mexico City, have demonstrated a commonality of approach to problems and solutions that proves the validity of the assertion of the caring values of women everywhere across all the patriarchal boundaries.

Women in the United States have the political and economic power to change the system from within not only to solve our own problems but so that our sisters can be freed to solve their problems in their own areas. We can learn a lot from our sisters about our system and we can learn from each others' struggles with every aspect of patriarchy. We can propose mutually informed and coordinated alternatives. Women are the vanguard of the movement for social change everywhere although we usually are unrecognized and often do not even recognize ourselves. We in the first world need to stop investing our energy in patriarchy and join with our sisters everywhere to create the change in consciousness which will validate the gift para-

digm not only in practice but in theory.

I feel heartened by the fact that when women become conscious of the struggle between the paradigms, they are undaunted and often ask me ‘How do we begin to change this?’ I think the first thing to do is to recognize how much giftgiving women are already doing so that we validate the gift paradigm in ourselves. Giftgiving can be seen at all levels. It can be discovered in the small kindnesses of everyday life: even the phrase “how are you?” is really asking “what are your needs?”. It is visible in our own and others’ unpaid need satisfying work and so called ‘volunteer’ activities. It is present (notice the gift-word ‘present’) in perception and knowing: our creative reception of the givens of experience is not just a mechanical process but a response to the nurturing of our senses by our social and physical environments. It can be seen in nature, in our spirituality and in all our non manipulative love relationships. It can be practiced at many levels, from listening to someone to satisfy her psychological needs to solving a complex problem of social analysis. Even when the exchange economy is the context, gifts can be given. Giving someone a loan or a job can be a need-satisfying gift at one level even though loans and jobs require exchange as their content.

After we re-view the various aspects of life in the light of giftgiving, I recommend that we see whatever giftgiving we are doing in terms of a paradigm-shifting practice rather than as isolated individual choices or quirks. It is only by generalizing the paradigm and recognizing it as an already existing pattern that we can validate it as the way to peace. We must also give our energies to activism for social change while validating giftgiving values. Solutions to social problems are themselves gifts — to humanity, to the future generations, to the planet. If we do not validate our own giftgiving motivation for social change as paradigmatic, our activism seems to have nothing positive to turn towards and stops at denouncing wrongdoing — a dead end if we cannot also offer a positive alternative. I do not pretend to know all of the ways people can assert the gift paradigm — the possibilities are infinite. I do know that if humanity is to survive all of us must assert the gift paradigm soon, following the leadership of women.