

PART FIVE



**Some
Applications**

Going beyond the rights discourse

Recently it has become common to appeal to human rights as the way to achieve a better world. However the rights discourse is based upon law, which is based upon patriarchal categorization. We have seen how categorization has been infected by over privileging some people because they are in the category 'male' rather than the category 'female' (or the category 'white' rather than those of other races etc). Rights are a variation upon this privileging by categorization. For example, citizen's rights are guarantees, which are supposed to be given to those who are in the category 'citizen'. The rationale for the rights discourse is not based on gift giving even though those championing rights intend to satisfy needs by solving problems and protecting the many from injustice. These are gift-giving intentions but framed as they are within the exchange paradigm they can never go far enough to reach their goals.

The values of Patriarchy that drive the system, continually recreate the violence that the law is called upon to regulate. Meanwhile the law itself derives from the same values and the same system and is functional to the system's continuation. This appeal to something other than violence is necessary for the system to function smoothly. Recently the situation has changed as, with globalization, the North increases its domination upon the South. The rule of law in the North does not impede its perpetration of lawless violence against the South. The logic seems to be that a parenthesis can be put around the lawful activity of countries and corporations of the North, and outside that parenthesis those entities can be lawless. The strongest of them can also be autonomously lawless. Indeed the growing body of international law is being used to frame their violent and exploitative behavior as lawful.⁸⁵ By

⁸⁵ See for example the laws being set by the international TRIPS agreements (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights).

imposing the premise that international law must regulate the internal activities of countries of the South, these countries have been made to accept the Northern patriarchal socio-economic parasite's plunder of their gifts. While the rule of just law would be better than the rule of plunder, the two are linked together because they both arise from the same paradigm.

What we need is a different rationale, a way of justifying, validating and creating kindness, not just a way of (occasionally) containing the systemic violence that continues to be created at all levels. This requires a long-term view because in the short term terrible injustices continue to be perpetrated and our remaining gift values require that we defend against those injustices, using whatever means we have at our disposition. Thus paradoxically it is once again our very practice of gift values within the exchange paradigm that keeps us from recognizing and validating the gift paradigm.

Perhaps the category 'human rights' seems to be broad enough to include gift giving. We might almost paradoxically say that as *homo donans* we have a human right to practice a gift economy.⁸⁶ At present however, legislation seems to be the only appeal for the injured.

As far as rights are concerned, the free uncategorized area (of gifts) is ignored and the battle is fought on the terrain of the legal system of the perpetrators of plunder. Women have often been undefined and ignored. Perhaps we can recognize the value of that external position. Unseen gifts can at least continue to provide sustenance for life unopposed if there is some access to the means of giving. The hazy background in which many of us stand cannot be understood by resorting to the definitions (and the commodification), which destroy it. Instead if we validate and embrace this background we must

⁸⁶ This might derive from freedom of choice, and we could say we have a right to practice a sort of maternal anarchy in which rights are unnecessary because the very patterns of behavior deriving from gift giving and receiving are community oriented as are the subjectivities developed by the participants. On the other hand the issue of freedom of choice serves the market in its concentration on the freedom to choose which products to buy.

leave aside our reliance on categorization and recognize that the gift processes that constitute it are continually creating our selves and our environment as we know it, in that we are all consciously or unconsciously receivers of its givens.

Equality and self-interest

Both exchange and gift giving are processes, which not only distribute goods, but generate human relations and identities. The kind of identity fostered by exchange is atomistic and *self-interested*, denying connection (and denying the gifts it receives). It has no 'essence' but a common lack of connection and it asserts exasperated individualism as a value. Such self interested individualism and lack of connection, as well as relations having to do only with contingent though very common circumstances such as women's oppression by men, appear to be the contrary of a defective and false female essence based on nurturing. The values of individualism and self-interest are not sufficient to form the core of a social movement, which can counteract and change patriarchy on a large scale however. Indeed they are patriarchy's and capitalism's own values.

In fact both essentialism itself and the critique of essentialism come from an exchange paradigm position. Academic and business feminism sometimes propose the same individualistic even atomistic values of self-interest (every man for himself, every group for itself) in opposition to essentialism that Capitalist patriarchy proposes in opposition to gift giving. This is perhaps the limit of liberation *through* the market, that most women who are thus 'liberated' cannot imagine existence *outside* the market. Moreover, the kinder alternative values of women are seen as individual differences or differences coming from different cultures. By seeing these differences as the superstructure of a different economic mode, however, biological essentialism is circumvented and the individualism coming from the market is not proposed as the alternative.

Success in the market and embracing its values are not a good preparation for finding women's specificity. They only encourage women to be 'equal' to men—according to the male standard, the

standard of the standard.⁸⁷ While this may reduce the oppression of many individual women, it does not change structural and institutional oppression. In fact these may evolve and intensify, displacing their parasitism into other areas as is now happening with globalization. The South is giving its gifts to the ‘superior’ North and most of those gifts are fed by the oppression of women.

Equality itself is a market-based criterion, deeply infected by the equation of value in exchange for money, which we establish as important through our incessant daily practices of selling and buying. Women, who cannot be put into the superior category through masculation itself can nevertheless be put into other ‘superior’ categories through having money, degrees and professional positions, or by being members of the ‘superior’ nations, races and religions etc.

The superiority of these categories is now being challenged and the specificity of the “non-superior” categories is being valued so that group identity and qualitative difference is valued. This is positive, like the value that is being given to women. Yet national or class or race self-interest is still masculated self-interest, consonant with market values. And the projection of gender self-interest, as we have been saying, is being acted out in the market.

Instead we need to achieve a point of view outside the exchange paradigm, where the specificity of women may be seen in the fact that they are not masculated. They are not required to give up the gift giving identities, which they originally construct by emulating their caregivers. The processes of giving and receiving form a kind of identity that is different from the identity constructed in opposition to them. The opposed identity has to do with abstraction from gift giving, similarity to the not-mother (the male exemplar) refusal of gift values and their replacement with masculated values of greater force, power-over and becoming the exemplar. In the market, these values are expressed in hierarchies of not-gift value: prices, with the result that the ones with the most money or the most valuable objects become the (exemplar) culture heroes. The gift giving-and-receiving

⁸⁷ And the same applies to races, classes and nations who are equal according to the standard of the dominant race, class or nation.

identity is multifaceted and relational, vital in its connection with others and is not constructed around competition to be the exemplar. Since patriarchal society is based on that competition, gift giving is not recognized as a viable life process. Often those who are doing it can see that it doesn't have anything to do with the competition for power and they may even discredit it for that reason. Then as we have been saying gift giving becomes directed towards the not-givers.

Even the call to define women's rights as human rights contradicts the necessary paradigm shift. Women are the clearest bearers of a paradigm whose logic is constitutive of the human and which goes beyond law and categorization to communication itself and the transitive interactions of gift giving. We are not human because we categorize ourselves as such but because we make ourselves human by the practice of the gift logic at many different levels. We should not be forced to justify gift giving by rights but should satisfy the general social need to recognize that the gift logic is the human logic. It is what works for the good of the individual and the good of all. The patriarchy-and-exchange logic does not. Without the recognition of generalized gift giving, categorization and categorizers are pernicious.

While the call for women's rights as human rights is useful in the present world situation, especially in defining oppression as such, it can be positive in the long term only if it serves as a step along the road to a gift economy and culture rather than an obstacle to it (as the good which blocks the way to the better). In this women's rights as human rights are similar to alternative currencies or barter economies which may also be important as steps towards gift giving but should not be thought of as final solutions. (Again, the rationale, which backs them up is not paradigmatically different from exchange, though those who promote them are trying to give the gifts of solutions to the problems).

A human right is a 'property' of members of the category 'human'. It depends upon our mechanisms of categorization influenced by the market and private property. Rather than describing ourselves in terms of rights, we should re evaluate needs of all kinds. Needs are important as prerequisites for the development of human

life. They are also important as the destinations of gifts, without which gifts would not be given. The idea of 'effective demand' mixes categorization with need-satisfaction, in that only those in the category having the 'property' of money have a right to the satisfaction of their needs. Identifying and describing needs at all levels and making them important in themselves, is part of a shift towards the gift paradigm. Paradoxically, in a context in which gift giving and needs are denigrated, a psychological need arises for respect, which is perhaps better satisfied by the rights discourse than by the gift or needs discourse. Re framing needs in terms of paradigms is necessary in order to shift to gift giving on the basis of the gift logic. While it is important to define situations of injustice so as to make them visible it is not definition and the paradigm of exchange that will satisfy the larger need to change the patriarchal system.

Unfortunately situations in which women (and men) are making great sacrifices to maintain their families through working in the exchange economy are framed only in terms of rights and not in terms of gift giving. While it is certainly true that workers need the protection of rights, only by looking beyond this framework can we see the gifts they are giving and understand the reasons for the scarcity that leverages their oppression. For example the immigrants who come from the South to countries of the North to work, and send back the money necessary for their families' livelihoods are sending home billions of dollars as a gift. In the North many of the immigrants work in menial jobs and particularly women work as nannies and housekeepers, doing for pay what would be free nurturing labor if they were doing it with their own children, or if their employers were doing it with theirs. The employment of women to do nurturing labor is a hybrid situation in which the gift is replaced by exchange for the *purpose* of gift giving, driven by the need for money for the survival of those at home. In fact in what is sometimes called 'the care chain', the immigrant women often have to hire someone in their home countries as a nanny for their own children.

The very alienation that takes place because of a lack of gift giving and a lack of community in a market based economy, causes people to separate to such an extent that they no longer wish to provide care

personally for their family members. Or, even if they might want to, circumstances become more important than their commitment. Because gift giving is not valued, they do not value what they are giving up, and they hire outside careworkers to take their place. A better solution would be to create and live in a mutually caring community, for example an extended family or a conscious community, where caring work could be shared and valued. Such communities still exist in indigenous cultures, especially in matriarchies.

However, with colonialism and the large scale flow of wealth out of the areas in which the indigenous societies are located, there is no longer the abundance there necessary for gift giving or in most cases even survival. Thus leaving the community, immigrating to the North, to fill the caring roles that are necessary there but not valued, disintegrates the caring community while providing care. The immigrants leave in order to provide the necessary means of giving at home. Exchange and the market appear to be a solution to the scarcity that exchange and the market have created. Instead the solution would be to step back from the market and honor gift giving and community in the North as well as in the South, providing abundance for all.

The shift from gift to exchange was important historically as part of the shift from Matriarchy to Patriarchy. However this shift keeps on happening, not only in wars of aggression and colonization but we might say, at the level of the commonplace every time we exchange instead of doing gift giving. We could always say “I’ll just give this to you” but we don’t do it because we are hindered by exchange paradigm thinking and by scarcity. (We need not only an intellectual understanding of this shift, but real—not market-based—self sufficiency as a stair-step for shifting back).

The shift from gift giving to exchange is a strategy for money making which consists in extending the area of commodification. This happened at the end of the age of Feudalism by transforming labor time into a commodity. Now at the beginning of the age of Globalization, we are seeing the transformation of many other kinds of free gifts into commodities: the privatization of traditional knowledge and husbandry practices, life form patenting, the

hybridization and privatization of seeds, the patenting of genetic material, and the enclosure and privatization of water. Large areas of the earth are being swapped to governments and corporations in exchange for debt relief, dispossessing indigenous people of the natural environments in which they have lived for millenia. (Isla 2004) Lacking the gift framework, it seems that such gift areas are being discovered or invented by human ingenuity, brought from nothing to something. Giving things a private (or state) owner and a price in money seems to be the only way we recognize them as existing.⁸⁸

With globalization/commodification a context is being created in which this shift into exchange is the most common and most profitable source of gifts given to the market. It is almost as if the farther the leap and the more extensive the need that used to be satisfied free, the greater the profit. The shift to commodification of the gift commons also has the effect of validating market exchange through self similarity in the wider context once again; and validating the values of patriarchy and masculation again, at the same time making it possible to channel so much from the many to the ones that the 'superiority' of the one over the many seems almost stratospheric. The motivation to succeed becomes a desire to be enormously more powerful than others, and therefore perhaps to achieve a 'permanent' masculation, a (probably illusory) security of male identity. This abundance paradoxically allows those at the top also to live in a world that appears 'free' in that money, which is almost infinitely available to them, can be used to buy anything with little effort, and they can practice gift giving in abundance with their own families and friends (though some of them are actually stingy). Thus they can potentially develop as all round 'good' people, 'cultured' and with a variety of interests and a bent for education. At the same time they deny the source of their abundant gifts.

What is more problematic is their practice of charity, gift giving to satisfy the needs of others in general, which have been created through channeling the wealth of the many towards those very 'ones'. This practice might function as a servo mechanism, diminishing

⁸⁸ See my chapter in *For-Giving \$ = IS*.

the economic distances, as it did in potlatch for example, but it easily becomes a self serving ego trip if it is done from within the exchange paradigm.

For the powerful in the belly of the beast, the view of the system and the needs it creates is limited. Moreover, the presence of many human beings with needs beyond their neighborhoods or their countries is hidden by and for the wealthy behind screens (or veils) of distance, cultural difference, ideology and defective gift-denying epistemology. These screens also place the 'blame' for poverty on individual defects, environmental hazards (like floods or droughts) or bad leaders in anti-capitalist systems, while the 'merit' of wealth is attributed to individual virtue, luck, good leaders and Capitalism itself. Both blame and reward are psychological pay-backs of course, deriving from the exchange paradigm. Actually, as we have been saying, it is the need of the system for a context of scarcity for the many that necessarily channels wealth into the hands of the few, and the personal qualities of those who succeed or fail are usually irrelevant to their success or failure. An aspect of masculination is the denial of emotion in boys and men. They are not supposed to demonstrate pain by crying or to be moved by the pain of others. The emotional response to needs is necessary for the practice of gift giving however. The denial of one's own and others' needs blocks the flow of gifts and decontextualizes the person in denial. Charity as practiced by wealthy masculinated males is usually done from afar, without emotional involvement or knowledge of the needs or the people who have them. In a way it reclaims for the wealthy man as 'virtue', the nurturing stance which he had to give up as a boy, now no longer threatening because it is located within framework of masculinity (Herman 1999).

Charity, by providing local bandaids, maintains the system and prevents its transformation towards gift giving. The paradox of gift giving is that practicing it individually, without strategies for the longer-term goal of changing the Patriarchal Capitalist system, actually maintains the system. The gifts of women have long been channeled into the system in this way. Without an analysis that values gift giving we can never change the system that is based on

exploiting gifts. What remains of gift giving humanity in all of us now has to 'contain' the transformations of gifts into commodities intellectually and practically, while proposing itself as the viable alternative. Another world is immanent in everyone, everywhere, but in women especially.

Summing up

We have been considering three main logical processes:

1. gift giving,
2. exchange
3. processes coming from their co existence and relation between them, which include
 - a. the substitution of exchange for gift giving and
 - 1) categorizing the gift givers as uncategorized,
 - 2) categorizing the exchangers as categorizers,
 - b. gift giving and giving value to the exchange paradigm, to exchange to substitution, to the substitutes, and to the categorizers, which helps maintain them as such through time.
 - c. which is a variation on b.: the establishing of long term property relations.

Other variations:

- on 1. a. the apparent 'gift' of exchange—for example bringing the market to cultures, which did not previously have it. And
- b. the gift of reciprocal independence produced by exchange as it appears to those who are uncomfortably bonded.
- on 2., the exchange of gift givers—as the exchange of women, with marriage as ownership of the gift giver(s).

Both 1 and 2 are made of processes, which include different stages and moments and these sometimes coincide and interact. For example the process of exchange includes the moment of evaluation of the

item to be exchanged according to a standard or exemplar. Value is *given* to this exemplar instead of giving it to an exemplar of gift giving, much as value is given to the Patriarchal father rather than to the mother. The two processes mesh, in this case, to the advantage of the exchange process and the hegemony of patriarchy.

These logical moves can be applied again to themselves in self-similar ways and to each other, and they can be reused in many different ways to bring about the world-view we now hold.⁸⁹ The link between substitution in language and in substitution in exchange creates harmonics between them, fractal resonances, which validate both in an ad hoc way. The creation and recognition of fractal resonances might be seen as a fourth process at the level of the other three. However it is clear that without the ‘incarnation’ of the definition into exchange there would be no resonance of that sort on the economic level. The market validates categorization and patriarchy. Without the market, our values and ideas of categorization would be very different. On the other hand the self-similarity of gift processes in language, syntax, speech, and material communication would remain.

One very simple logical move that we usually do not make would be very helpful in validating the gift economy. That is, we should place a parenthesis around giver and receiver and then give value to the transaction within the parenthesis. When we have a gift transaction such as A gives x to B, value is transferred by implication to B and A often remains invisible. This simple slide of our attention away from the giver distorts our view of the whole transaction which, without the giver does not necessarily appear as a transaction at all or as a gift transaction, but may appear as the second half of an exchange, the pay-back to a deserver, or even something the receiver has created for h/erself. Very often women’s gifts have been given to men who proposed them to others as gifts of their own, which should be recognized as such, for example women’s (and other

⁸⁹ The recognition of similarities and differences taking place at the level of perception underlies all these processes but it is not a logical move in the same way as those mentioned. It is necessary while they are more contingent.

gift givers') ideas have been used by their professors, collaborators or husbands who forget where they heard them and think of them as their own. Thus we need to look at (A gives to B) all together and give value to both terms as well as to the transaction itself as a gift transaction. We should not look at it just as A gives to B because then B easily becomes the main focus. Not using the parentheses has been a big problem in the women's movement because many women have insisted on including men in their gatherings (A includes B) while men often do not include women. B is included but is not inclusive. (A includes (B who is not inclusive)). If we give value to (A includes B) we will have a logical reason not to include men: they follow a principle opposite to the one stated inside the parenthesis. We may decide to include them anyway of course but at least we should be conscious of the contradiction. Similarly if we give to those who do not give to others, we interrupt the circulation of gifts: (A gives to (B who does not give)). In order to affirm the gift paradigm and the circulation of gifts we need to give value to (A gives to B) and hope that B will give value to it also, passing the gift along.

Gift giving bridges private property and common property relations in that one can give from either stance. However gift giving has the potential of breaking down private property, and creating a circulation of gifts and sharing in abundance. In fact in such a community, the human relations created by gift giving can flower. For this reason the market opposes gift giving. It creates scarcity so that gift giving cannot become generalized, so that it can be done only occasionally and with the penalty that the giver has to renounce the satisfaction of at least some of h/er own needs. Nevertheless acts of kindness and caring, mothering, solidarity, philanthropy, volunteerism, spirituality, creating common ground culturally through arts and rituals, activism and truth-telling to satisfy needs for social change continue to take place and to some extent create community even in a system based on private property and the market. Relations coming from the system such as equality, balance (the equation of the scales), temperance, not doing gift practices to excess and not generalizing and systematizing them KEEP acts of

kindness and culture from changing anything. Moreover, using gift giving for patriarchal purposes of dominance and *divismo* discredits other givers by proposing them as examples of ego oriented giving.

Essentialism

All our thinking is influenced by the market but we can make a conscious effort to recognize this influence and offer alternatives. While theories, which are influenced by the market may be anti essentialist they insist upon a kind of diversity, which denies the gift process as the basis for commonality of women or of other groups for a political program. Instead the burden of proof must be put on the market and the exchange economy not on the gift economy, which should be taken as the norm, the basic *process* (not essence!) for all human beings. It is not a good solution to cast gift giving or gift givers into the atomistic, individualistic category moulds proposed and validated by exchange⁹⁰ and subsequently propose or deny common properties. Rather the gift *process* itself can be seen as producing diversity and multiple creative solutions, satisfying the infinitely many different kinds of needs that grow and develop according to previous individually and culturally specific satisfactions. Identifying the gift process mainly with nurturing women, restricting it to the care of families or relegating it to an aspect of morality while denying its fundamental and extensive character, has limited gift giving. It has driven the gift underground and concealed it as a principle that we can and should know, understand, act upon and be grateful for in all aspects of life. The identification of gift giving (mothering) with biological women who are nurturing small children has supported the alienation of men from that role through masculation, while the elimination of gift giving as an interpretative key has given us a world view and a view of humanity which is deeply distorted towards masculation and

⁹⁰The bourgeois subject, the ego centered individual, is a product of exchange² relations and it arose historically in the Renaissance in Europe along with mercantile capitalism. (see Herman 1999)

validates our worst capacities. In this view gift giving remains, like women, uncategorized, the opposite of over-valued categorization.

Recognition

The web formed of the intersections of the two logics at different levels makes it difficult to see how gender is connected with economics and how patriarchal capitalism has become the monolithic power mechanism that it is. Like the patriarchal father, the 'one' of the concept form, the capitalist system takes over and takes from its Other, and validates its similars, those in the category of which it is an exemplar (or the category made up of exemplars: dominant males, dominant economies, dominant paradigms) while denying the logic of the gift, re naming it, and creating a flow of gifts towards itself in a parasitic way. The move towards monocultures and monopolitics is altogether consistent with patriarchal capitalism. In order to understand the connections between gender and economics we must go beneath both to understand commodification not simply as a *sui generis* economic happen-stance nor a moral issue having to do with the excessive greed of some individuals (or corporations or countries) but as deriving from the process of masculation. In order to change the whole picture for the better, we have to understand how individuals (and corporations and countries) acquire the patterns that make them act in greedy and harmful ways and how these patterns connect and replicate themselves in different areas. We must also learn to read gift giving back into the description of the world, thus clarifying who is the parasite and who is the host. Usually the accusation of parasitism or 'dependence' is aimed at gift givers by exchangers, if the gift givers are not also operating successfully themselves in the market to provide the means of giving. Thus it appears that women are dependent on men, poor people on rich people, Southern countries on countries of the North, while actually the flow of free gifts is usually going in the opposite direction.

Commodification does not recognize gifts as gifts but as exchange values. It finds ways of privatizing and re naming previously free goods with money, as commodities to be bought and sold. By re-cognizing

the gifts as commodities it transforms them into commodities. Commodities are things that are seen as relevant to the distorted economic communication that is exchange. In other words the recognition is part of the transformation process. It foregrounds the items from a background of gifts, making them scarce by privatization, giving them a money-name and is completed in the substitution of an amount of money for the ex-gifts. The substitution provides both an assessment of their value in terms of all other commodities on the market and a transfer of ownership, a change of hands. In this, commodification is similar to masculation which names/recognizes the child as a boy while this naming becomes an aspect of his transformation, overtaking his previous free participation in the gift process. (He becomes a member of the category of namers and overtakers). Like re-cognition, commodification moves gifts from one level of attention to another. It moves the ex gift from unknown to (wrongly because only quantitatively) known, from unspoken to spoken of, from irrelevant to relevant. Commodification leaves aside other orientation and takes up the ego-oriented logic. It relinquishes a potential, relation-making transfer of value to another and embraces the layered logic of material definition/exchange in which substitutions of equivalents align the self interest of the exchangers.

In commodification, the original gift aspect of the good or service is paradoxically made irrelevant at the same time that it is materially given away. Even if after the exchange transformation the product may be put into a new gift process as a use value, what is given in exchange is only a material body, a potential though not actual use value, substituted by something material that is only a standardized 'communicative gift' without use value: money. Thus water in a river, which was previously clean and free, is made scarce by pollution and over use, and is then purified and bottled, and sold to people living on the river bank. When this water is used for cooking for example, it enters a gift process but its original free and abundant gift character as river water is completely lost. Commodification makes the gift irrelevant by relating the product to the money exemplar (a contradictory 'communicative gift' which is only used in exchange) in the market abstraction or 'selection process'. It sets

up the polarity in the product between gift and exchange value, while making the exchange aspect occupy the relevant pole and the gift aspect occupy the irrelevant pole. After the exchange when the commodity has become a use value again, we find that the original gift aspect has moved from irrelevant to non-existent and has disappeared. The use of the product in the satisfaction of needs may give the use value a new gift value but any gift value coming from the original source has disappeared.

Commodification also elicits products that are produced for exchange, with the destiny of never being gifts. They are produced only for the market, to achieve as large a monetary evaluation as possible.

In exchange it is as if an interpersonal cognitive process of recognition were taking place in slow motion so that first something is seen as potentially related to others. Then it is related to a price, a name in money, which others have 'recognized' with money as appropriate to it. Then that amount of money is actually given for it, and it actually becomes *for* some other *WITHOUT* our having given it—since it has been exchanged. The recognition is implemented, the potential relation to another as property is activated and achieved without creating a gift relation, or a relation of gratitude between the exchangers. Unfortunately, with exchange as with masculation, the achievement of the relation of something (as belonging)⁹¹ to another means a loss of a gift relation with its previous holder. In cognition and language this loss does not occur as things can be shared perceptually in their relation to others, without losing them and words are given and received without giving them up.

Using gift circles and circulations by which gifts of others come to the givers even if they give up their own, gift economies can be seen as directly embodying verbal gift giving, as well as mothering and other non verbal gift giving, without going through the detour

⁹¹ Regarding the father and the boy, belonging to another is the same as belonging to the category of the other. That is because the father is the concept sample of 'male' and 'human' and he is the owner of his properties and the head of the family so that here these three configurations conflate.

of exchange. On the other hand, the identification of gift giving with exchange, as in the anthropologists symbolic 'gift exchange' splits gift giving from an identification with women and robs it of its capacity as the logic of a paradigm for social change. Indeed, I believe that what is called symbolic 'gift exchange' provides a quasi-linguistic mode of material communication (ie. making of self and community) among the participants. The obligations of such interactions then are a kind of syntax (what can be given to whom and how it may be given) regulating this communication, derived from language.⁹² However, 'Pre Capitalist' societies sometimes follow other harmful and exploitative paths of their own. Masculation even without market exchange drives the manhood agendas of competition, dominance, manipulation and exploitation. These agendas are sometimes carried out *through* symbolic gift giving and the formation of privileged groups and hierarchies. The creation of elites and so called 'Big men' through gift exchanges and reputation shows that men in some pre-market societies also want to achieve the exemplar position.⁹³ However, I believe that the combination of masculation and the market and the complex reiteration of these patterns are the factors that create the overarching negative mechanisms of Western Patriarchal Capitalism.

'Recognition' and commodification happen with the gifts of nature and culture when territories are taken by force by colonialism and made to host the external colonial parasites. The 'discovery' of the 'New World' was the first step of recognition of the gift giving continents of the Americas, which were about to be transformed into property by the Europeans, privatized, commodified, and lost to the populations to whom they had been related in the gift mode. The similarity of colonization and commodification to heterosexual

⁹² While this would be an important direction to follow in order to understand the varieties of material (and verbal) communication, we are committed here to investigating issues that can lead more directly to satisfying the present compelling need for social change.

⁹³ Open source software on the internet, which is considered by its developers as a gift economy contains some of these patriarchal aspects as gifts are 'paid back' in reputation.

penetration has been remarked among others, by Vandana Shiva (Shiva1988) and it is embedded in the collective metaphor of the 'penetration of virgin territories'. The creative source of many gifts (including pleasure and progeny) is 'discovered' and through that discovery related to a male 'one', to the exclusion of other 'ones'. Virgin (unrecognized) lands are penetrated (recognized), their gifts related to property owners, their products and raw materials sold, even when they already were shared by a people, who are ignored, much as the virgin's relation to her own gift giving body is ignored when it is taken over, 'appropriated' by the male exemplar. The non patriarchal relation to one's own body or one's own land is not recognized by patriarchy. The rape and murder of women, the genocide of indigenous people and the plunder of their territories, are a result of Patriarchal Capitalist mechanisms and values.

This book is an attempt to recognize and restore non patriarchal relations and values, not to expose their bearers to new forms of exploitation, but to understand and dismantle the patriarchal mechanisms and change the values so that gift giving humanity, *homo donans* can flower. To do this we have to raise gift giving to a different logical level so that we can see it as a basic human process not just as the host of the patriarchal parasite.

The free land bases of indigenous peoples who held their territory in common or for whom property was not a guiding concept have been completely eroded by European privatization,ss which took place through gradual encroachment, or seizure by treaty or by direct force. This plunder of continents by the powerful and later the discovery and privatization of the earth's immense (though disguised) free gift of oil opened the way for the search for and commodification of other previously unrecognized gift areas now being taken over by globalizing corporations.

The addiction to profit is an addiction of exchangers to free gifts. Actually we all long for the free gift giving and receiving that was our birthright as *homo donans* and that we learned to love in our interactions with our mothers. In itself the longing for gifts is not negative. Rather, capturing free gifts and channeling them to private wellbeing in a world, which is suffering deprivation is what

makes profit addictive and harmful. It may seem that freezing or cornering many gifts as our own property can defend us from the scarcity that is being created by the system, yet as we do this cornering we create more scarcity for others, more needs for gifts, more suffering, more fear.⁹⁴ The longing for free gifts in a society of scarcity and fear is the psychological underpinning of greed. Isolated from each other as we are by market relations, and living in a situation of scarcity, we do not envision or work for total social change but only react in an exchange-based ‘every man for himself’ sort of way, becoming acquisitive and accumulating more in order to ‘take care of ourselves and our own’. Only a shift in the paradigm towards gift giving and away from exchange can provide security and happiness for all, and therefore security and happiness for the individual as well.

Circulation of gifts

Blood, like oil and water, is a fluid element, which circulates. Indeed blood is the quintessential bodily gift in that it is pumped by the heart to bring nutriment to the cells, then returns to have its own needs for oxygen satisfied by the lungs. The commodification of blood and blood products puts this gift into a second circulation outside the body from which profit can be extracted. Douglass Starr, the author of the recent book, *Blood*, noted the similarity between blood products and oil products and supplied the material for the PBS special ‘Red Gold’. ()

Goods must circulate in any economy—whether as gifts or as commodities. Money circulates. When money is performing its function as a means of exchange for commodities, it is useful to the society based on the market and thus it may be seen as having a social use value. Since money’s main function lies in its being given

⁹⁴ In fact the exchange mentality causes the wealthy to think that those whose gifts they are plundering may want revenge. This causes them to turn away from their victims in fear and to try to accumulate still more. Instead if they understand and embrace the gift mode they can try to create community with them and change the system together for the good of all.

away again and again, it has some vestigial gift aspects. However the use of money to create loans and compounding interest sucks off the gift potential remaining in money itself. In this case money is not used as a means of exchange but as a commodity, a means for the creation of debt. The circulation of goods and money, which should take gifts to needs, (like blood takes oxygen and nutrients to the cells), instead again becomes the source of gifts for the few, while the needs of the many go unmet. One might think that charity, gift giving with money, would restore the gift. Unfortunately, like greed, charity only looks for individual solutions to what are actually systemic problems. On the other hand giving money, time and energy to create systemic social change, especially if this is done with a shift towards the gift paradigm as a conscious goal, does make these gifts align with the general good, creating communication, community and an alternative model.⁹⁵

The reciprocally metaphorical character of each of the gift ‘elements’ (water “blue gold,” blood, “red gold,” oil “black gold,” and money, real gold) with respect to the others should alert us to a deep pattern to which they all conform. As they are ‘recognized’ and integrated into the market structure they all become examples of the creation of scarcity in a circulating medium. This is done through commodification, which directs the flow of gifts and value towards an external destination, like a stream of blood gushing out of the body into containers where it can be bought and sold.



Gifts are channeled towards a few who take them out of circulation, de nature them and use them to control the givers, other exchangers and each other. This parasitism is validated and seems natural because

⁹⁵ This is the reasoning I used in donating money for social change and creating the Foundation for a Compassionate Society (1987-1998). It also seemed to me that problem solving is a kind of gift giving, ie. giving the answer to the problem. This answer can be as practical as stopping nuclear proliferation or as theoretical as organizing a conference on alternative values, satisfying the need for new ways of thinking .In both cases the need being satisfied is a social, collective need.

of the ongoing patterns of parasitism of masculated males upon females as well as of other 'superior' upon 'inferior' categories. Scarcity is utilized for leverage and when it does not already exist, it is created. The sharing of seeds and knowledge by traditional farmers in india (documented by Vandana Shiva among others) was a circulation of gifts through time, which has recently been halted by corporations of the North. These corporations create and impose terminator seeds, genetically modified organisms and chemical fertilizers, privatizing and commodifying the gifts of the centuries, denying them to the generations of the future. Similarly life-form patenting seizes species that have been free for the use of all, making them unavailable to people in the areas to which they were indigenous, thus diverting the gifts of nature and husbandry towards Northern corporations. Each of the moments of commodification finds a way of cornering what was a free gift to all and transforming it into a gift to the patriarchal capitalists. Perhaps the most theoretically disturbing of all these transformations is the seizure of our genetic 'inheritance' (notice the gift word). Not only is the character of the genetic gift transformed and privatized but the products of the inherited gifts are altered, in that they are made to address the exigencies of the market, in order to create new channels for profit—which are often disguised as satisfying needs—'feeding the world' for example, with genetically modified monoculture crops while blotting out the diversity and gift value of traditional crops and the variety of needs they satisfied. (Shiva 1997)



By re reading human life on the planet in terms of gift giving and receiving we can identify a theme that establishes continuity between meaning in language and meaning in life. It is upon this continuity that we can build a culture and an economy of peace. The contrary way of reading human life is distorted by the polarized eyeglasses of patriarchy, exchange and the market, which are themselves peculiar variations upon the theme of gift giving. These variations cancel gift giving and make it almost inaccessible.

False ideas about gift giving and about the market itself come FROM the market. As we have seen above, there is no economic “common property” or “essence” among property owners except their relation of mutual exclusion and their ability to exchange using money, according to the quality of exchange value. This market-based situation of anti-community is presently taken as the human norm and the value is given to it that is denied to gift giving. Free gift work is considered inferior, as are those who do it. Since women do large amounts of free work in their roles as mothers and housewives, they are considered inferior.

Nurturing: a process or a common quality?

Seen as the identifying factor of a category, which is formed in opposition to men and the market, the ‘common quality’ of nurturing is a polar reflection of exchange value, which is the ‘common quality’ of commodities. The critique of essentialism rightly rejects this reflection but unfortunately replaces it with values coming from the market and masculation: membership in the patriarchal anti-community of mutually exclusive adversarial individuals (whose main ‘common property’ is that their property is not common). In this light, the commonality of women, who continue to act in caring (gift giving) ways and own little property, appears to be only the commonality of their victimization by freer and more powerful adversarial individuals, most of whom are males. Overcoming this oppression appears to consist in gaining access to the anti-community of masculated autonomous males.

All of this takes place because the market, like the masculine identity, is constructed in opposition to nurturing. In other words the market, like masculinity is a false ‘thesis’ to which nurturing then is posed as ‘antithesis’. It is like a conversation in which the opening gambit is not heard, and the reply is taken as the beginning. The restatement of the opening gambit then appears to be only a reply to the reply, the whole conversation takes place on a false premise, and all the subsequent arguments are vitiated. The result of this is that since the first ‘reply’ is a category: ‘male’ or

‘commodity’, we look at the reply to the reply also as a category with a common property, rather than a moment of a process of communication, which it actually is.⁹⁶ (See Goux 1973 on the penis abstracted from the body.)⁹⁷

Categorization—concept formation—is a process too and, when it is incarnated in the market, exchange value is its result. Masculation involves taking on the categorization process itself as one’s identity and it is parasitic because it creates a need for upward mobility as the members try to become the exemplar. Having more and being the strongest are characteristics of this top position but that strength and that abundance must come from somewhere. The gifts of women feed this masculine agenda and the interactions between women and men provide and confirm the patterns of parasitism, which propagate throughout society. Masculine value, exchange value and their mirror image, the ‘nurturing essence’ are social common qualities. They are not just abstracted or attributed mentally however but those processes of abstraction and attribution are actually incarnated on the reality plane.

My point here is first that we should not be looking at women’s commonality as the common property of a category, which is the result of an abstraction. We are dealing with apples and oranges, two different kinds of things: gift giving, which is a transitive communicative process, *not* a process or a product of a process of abstraction, and

⁹⁶ The linguistic concept of ‘markedness is useful here. A female ‘essence’ is abstracted in opposition to the masculine identity at the moment in which the male is being selected out of the area of the nurturing mother and falsely ‘unmarked’, made standard and superior. (nurturing is the common quality of what he, most importantly, is not).

⁹⁷ The ‘essence’ is arrived at through the use of the same concept form that the market uses, though it is a vision of women without the internal polarity between the phallus and their other qualities, because indeed they lack the phallus. In other words, gift giving appears to be what is ‘left over’ as a role for those who do not have the phallus. Instead if we can see it as a multifaceted creative principle, logic, and value-conferring practice, which has been the host of the parasite of exchange, we can liberate it from its appearance as the reflection of the concept form’s common quality or the market’s abstraction of exchange value.

exchange for money, which is an incarnated abstraction process. Having become used to the predominance of this process of abstraction according to the quantity of the common quality of exchange value, in our daily lives, we project the mirror image of that quality onto women and their free care giving work, saying that nurturing is their biological destiny and the essence of their category and it is consequently their duty to do free nurturing work in the domestic sphere. Women actually do a lot of free work, which seems to confirm the judgment. The categorization of women in this way and the appearance of the common quality of the category is due to the overuse of categorization and abstraction coming from the incarnated abstraction process of exchange. In fact if we must use categorization we would say that women practicing gift giving belong to the category 'human' and masculated men are a subcategory of people who, by not practicing it, deny their own humanity. Since the process of gift giving produces a great variety of subjectivities according to the varieties of the contexts, the needs, and the receivers, the category of the gift giving human is constituted not according to a common quality but according to a deep common practice. Males have a common biological property (their genitals) by which they are categorized as males and assigned to a category that presumably does not practice the human gift giving process. Gift giving is so basic to the human, however, that in order to construct a category in opposition to it, the only contents available are variations upon the gift giving process itself, and upon the process of the construction of categories. Thus the 'non giving' male category is based on categorization and the attempt to become the exemplar, what we have been calling the 'manhood agenda'. In order to carry out this agenda males use substitutes for gift giving such as violent hitting, and variations on gift giving such as exchange, as instrumental sub processes.

Exchange is only a deeply altered gift process, where the gift is turned back upon itself. This altered process becomes more complex when there is exchange for the general equivalent, money, because this kind of exchange incarnates the abstraction process (the categorization or concept forming process). In the incarnated abstraction process, the one to many exemplar has been materialized

and as the general equivalent, it is used to abstract the common quality of the exchange value that is 'in' commodities, and quantify it. Without the material abstraction of exchange value we would certainly not be projecting its (upside down) reflection onto gift giving and gift givers. In fact we would recognize gift giving as the normal process for all and exchange would be non-existent or rare because it would be unnecessary. The process of abstraction would only be used for thinking, not incarnated on the material plane, in masculine identity and in the market. In fact masculine identity would be based on the human gift giving process directly, like female identity, and differences, if they were needed, would be constructed differently.

By looking at gift giving as a pan-human process which is *not* the process of abstraction, we avoid the appeal to or creation of essences when thinking about human beings. Rather we see that humans create themselves and each other through the use of gift processes, at different levels and in different social and environmental contexts. They can create themselves as similar to each other or as different, depending on what they are doing. In satisfying each others' needs they become similarly givers and receivers of a great variety of gifts and in using similar means for the satisfaction of their needs, they create a cultural similarity by which they identify themselves as members of the same community—the same giving-and-receiving circles. Those who belong to a linguistic community are doing precisely this already.

People who are in material giving and receiving circles can align their material with their linguistic subjectivity. They do not need to derive their identities from membership in a category but can create them materially and linguistically together with others in an ongoing way. We do this to some extent already but we do not know we are doing it. At the same time we are all doing a lot of exchange and manipulation, so we are internally divided and conflicted.

There is a psychological advantage for those doing gift giving. The members of a category derive their identity from their membership in the category, implying common qualities, which they may have to manifest in order to prove that they have them (as courage is a quality which is necessary to demonstrate as a proof of masculinity). On the

other hand, gift givers and receivers construct their subjectivities in an ongoing way beyond categorization. Proving it is only necessary if one is trying to be classified as a member of a category. By showing that (most) women, poor people and workers are engaging in the gift giving process we are revealing their agency, the positive side of the 'host' of the negative systemic parasite.

The abstraction process of the market can be seen as a gigantic *selection process* of products having the common quality of exchange value using money as the exemplar. The products or resources that are selected *out*, discarded by this process are free gifts and services.⁹⁸ These are relegated to an invisible or unrecognized area outside exchange but many of them are then turned towards the incarnated selection process itself and made to support it, giving it value by implication, and flowing into (and mixing with) exchange value. Thus in capitalism there is a kind of *de facto* essentialization, a kind of 'processing' of the gift that abstracts it (or extracts it) from its particular concrete transactions and channels it 'upwards' towards capitalists as profit. The value of housework passes invisibly and noiselessly through the surplus value created by the worker into the profit of the capitalist (even when the housewife is herself the worker).

Similarly the gifts of nature and of past and future generations flow into profit unrecognized. These are made up of the gifts of traditional knowledge, which has been handed down and of all the collective care giving of the past, which have preserved the environment and the (physical and spiritual) community up to the present as well as the gifts of the people of the future who will not ever have access to the natural and cultural abundance that is now being used up and flowing to corporations and their investors and stockholders. They also include the gifts the poorer nations are giving to the richer ones due to level of life. The population collectively uses fewer of the gifts of its environmental and cultural context and thus passes on more of them into the profit of the investors from the North. The goods that

⁹⁸ Some free gifts and services are given in order to attract buyers, as happens in sales and advertising gimmicks. The seller thus plays the role of a 'giving' subject who establishes a relation with the 'receiver' through the 'gift'.

are consumed are cheaper to produce than those in the rich countries and of poorer quality. Access to natural and cultural gifts and resources is limited; even expectations of a good life are limited. By restricting the production and consumption available for local use, and by channeling money, products, work and resources out of the country, gifts for the local population are made scarce and the gifts of cheap goods (ie. goods of which a high percentage is a gift to the buyer) resources and labor are made to flow towards the corporations and countries of the North. This process of exploitation 'refines' gifts making them invisible, 'purified' of their local relevance, and 'vital', essential to the functioning of the capitalist machine.

If we look at all the elements that go into profit: the surplus value of present and past labor, the value of gift labor such as housework and other free labor that flows into exchange value and surplus value, the gifts of free and cheap raw materials, the gifts leveraged from the public by high prices, gifts leveraged by inflation, and deflation, gifts given as interest on loans, gifts coming from differences in level of life in the country of origin and in the country of sale, gifts taken by appropriating species and knowledge through patenting, gifts of savings garnered by desecrating the gifts of the environment etc., we realize that profit is a gift made up of many gifts. Any income above the costs of production and capital is free to the capitalist, who also may contribute free work, but whose 'risk' is only that s/he will not be able to leverage these gifts through h/er exchange activities. The common quality of profit is that it is a free gift to the capitalist. That is indeed its essence.⁹⁹

Thus the gift of profit is the actual essential aspect of production for needs *and* for exchange that flows from the unpaid work of the many into the hands of the few in an economy based on exchange and patriarchy. This gift essence is the ownable (common un-common)

⁹⁹ Unions and worker's movements throughout the world have succeeded in regulating work conditions and pay scales to some extent. However, much labor now has been taken out of the workplace and is done in the home without any guarantees and with irregular pay. This is what Maria Mies calls the 'housewifization' of work. If we look at it in gift terms we can see how more gifts are made to flow into profit by reducing the expenses for the capitalist. Because

property of successful capitalists. It is passed on to others not as a gift however but as an exchange, when it is invested as capital in order to extract the gift essence again from other labor. Far from being the common property of women only, the nurturing essence is the internal essence of profit, the invisible motivator of the whole economy. The ideology of the right sees the nurturing essence specifically in women because it is denying its existence in profit.

In Patriarchal Capitalism, masculation seems to have acquired a life of its own, detaching itself from biological gender, incarnating in corporate entities, governments and institutions, privileging non nurturing categories over other categories, whose members are supposed to nurture them overtly and covertly. In this view, racism and classism seem to be justified by masculated categorization, and capitalism itself is a race towards the top, an attempt to achieve superior categorization, being nurtured by many, acquiring and privately owning the (supposedly 'deserved') disguised gifts of profit. The successful capitalist thus becomes the 'one', the exemplar of the masculated human, emulated by all but unsuccessfully, except by the very few.

The 'nurturing essence' that seems to have been denied to the identity of the male child becomes the property of the adult capitalist who then 'nurtures' industry and the stock market with h/er investments, giving or refusing to give as s/he sees fit. Even at the level of salaried labor, men who were not allowed to identify with their mothers as children, become even more powerful than s/he as adults because they 'make' money, which they can then control. They are 'independent' and can give or withhold their money, making their wives dependent (like children) on their decisions. They have achieved a kind of integration of mothering and masculation. (Basically they change or roll back their gender economically).

the house has substituted the factory, the actual care of the house flows directly into profit as a gift rather than going first to the children and adults and then through their work into profit as surplus value. Isolation in the home away from other workers, and irregular and low wages continue to leverage more surplus value as a gift and create a greater dependency of the worker on the capitalist. This precarious situation disempowers the worker and de facto essentializes work, as it makes more and more of it into a gift, which nurtures the capitalist.

What is done early in life and validated by the social institutions that have grown up around it is hard to eliminate or even to address. There is a great deal of childish illogic and psychological baggage involved which still exists in the society at large and appears 'natural'. The category 'male' is the category that gives up gift giving and is therefore (illogically) privileged and receives gifts, which appear to the individual as 'his due'. (Perhaps just because he has given up the nurturing identity, exiled from the garden of Eden). Thus the category 'male' is a cognate or corollary of the market, since the market, which is also a *repudiation* of gift giving, functions according to a theme of 'deserving' by having a valuable identity (for the commodity and for the capitalist as for the male) but where it is also possible to improve one's identity and have more. Both masculation and the market function according to changes of category, from gift to not gift, from relation to the giver and receiver to relation to the 'one' exemplar, and from being property of or belonging, to one to being property of or belonging to another. The fragmentation of society that comes from the adversarial relations of the market is not bridged by the gift giving contained in profit but rather by those gifts that continue to be given in language, in families and in solidarity among individuals. On the other hand this bridge is also constructed in a distorted way by the many gifts, which are used to force or leverage still other gifts, increasing the masculated identity of the capitalist (of either sex). What we call power is the ability to leverage these gifts. The patterns of leveraging gifts and giving "upwards" organize subjects into hierarchies of ones and manies.¹⁰⁰

At the same time the ideology of the market also invents "objective explanations" that accord with the values of masculation and exchange, while creating an ungiving "real world" environment of scarcity and self-interest in which those masculated values are necessary for survival. In this context of scarcity, nurturing is taken as the basis of the female, not-male identity. It is used like charity,

¹⁰⁰ Since these one-to-many hierarchies riddle society it is difficult if not impossible for the manies to districate themselves from their relationships, becoming a multitude, as Negri and Hardt (2000) suggest. The whole incarnated concept forming process needs to be understood and dismantled.

to offset the harshness of the system though at the same time it is restricted to an area of servitude and vulnerability. (The female is seen as *not* not-giving. This double negative diminishes the positive and primary character of gift giving.)

By hypostatizing nurturing, seeing it as a quality rather than a process, and attributing it to women as their identifying common quality, we relegate women to a self sacrificial role of preferentially nurturing males, patriarchy and the market, while denying the gift giving that is the logic of life itself. This denial also extends to the gift character of profit and the agency of workers.

Essential Services

The homonymy of ‘essentialism’ and ‘essential’ services is also a clue to what is going on. In the language of activists ‘essential services’ are those like water and electricity that are necessary for the life processes of the community. Services like these must be to a large extent gifts especially when the capitalist economy is taking the life energy of the givers. Water, electricity, and fuel constitute ‘means of giving’ that are necessary for gift givers to satisfy needs. Without them the gifts of life are very difficult to provide. Because corporations are privatizing and commodifying these services gift sources are made necessary in a ‘new’ way—for mere survival.

Energy from another source becomes imperative when the parasite is taking all the human energy of the gift givers. The plunder of the gift energy of the many creates a need for even cheaper energy sources by which the extenuated gift givers themselves can be supplied with at least some of the means of giving while at the same time allowing the capitalists to have more. Such a source is oil, and the cheap products it can provide now flood the developing world, taking the place of traditional life-giving gifts of nature and human labor, and marketed as commodities, channeling money to the North. The individualized giving of goods to needs that has been the human practice from the beginning of the species, at least from the beginning of language, is being replaced with the giving of standardized plastic and other oil-based imported products, marketed in

the media and paid for with the money of paupers (people from whom large gifts of free labor have already been extracted).

It is not just the natural environment that oil is endangering but the gift giving human environment. It might be thought that, with a large enough supply of free energy, there would be so much abundance that exploitation would be unnecessary because the parasite's needs would be satisfied. However this seems not to be the case. Already so much abundance now accrues that it has to be wasted in order not to change the parasitic system. (In fact with abundance, exchange becomes unnecessary, decidedly unessential). Rather what seems more likely is that the system will cause and/or allow more and more deaths of poor people in the South and in the North as they become less necessary for its profit. No doubt the emotions and attitudes of masculation, racism, classism and nationalism feed the selection process of the market and the market mentality, determining in what directions the system will 'develop'.

Perhaps even the struggle for 'equality' of women with men in the North stimulates a greater need for access to states of superiority and exemplarity in men who continue to be masculated and thus continue to have a created need to be not nurturing and 'superior' to their mothers even when their biological sexual difference no longer automatically provides this classification. They need more than ever now to prove themselves as superior 'haves' and/or to create inferior categories of 'have-nots'. If we continue to socialize half of gift giving human society as not-givers (who then need to receive more) and then we say that the other half is *equal* to them, so they are not-givers as well, gifts must come from somewhere else.

Colonialism and imperialism supply the external gifts that allow the superiority of the 'haves' in the colonialist countries but the discovery and use of oil energy has somewhat altered the need for colonial workers, so that corporations are now assimilating some of them at a very low cost in maquila factories or in even cheaper home labor, using the others as markets while at the same time the gift-commons of all are being commodified and thus made unavailable to them. Unchecked, these developments will probably eventually have

as their perhaps even desired consequence, the extenuation and death of the moneyless population.

The system as a whole, parasite and hosts, has created an artificial need for external sources of energy (which also makes a large number of the hosts unnecessary, dispensable). If the system were not parasitic, with parasitism happening at many different levels and in many ways, and with enormous amounts of gifts and energy being extruded into a black hole of waste, there would be no need for such external energy sources. Natural and cultural free sources together with human endeavor and invention would provide for the needs of all. Subsistence in abundance, where new gifts and new needs would be based on the satisfaction of previous needs, would drive production rather than profit. This is what a gift economy would look like. The healing of human relations that such an economy would provide would allow for the re evolution of the human being along the giving-and-receiving creative lines that are h/er birthright. We can do this. It is not impossible. The earth, our mothers, and language itself, our means of communication, show us how.

Uniting the camps

We need to create a social movement that is wide enough to dismantle and replace patriarchy. An analysis of Patriarchal Capitalism and globalization without the notion of gift giving, the criticism of patriarchy and of the market itself, cannot bring us to the deep changes we need to make. The usual left analysis risks re-proposing patriarchal solutions because it does not provide an alternative structural logic. The gift paradigm and the criticism of Patriarchal Capitalism do provide an alternative logic and a rationale that can unite the movements, while giving leadership to women and to women's values. To this end we must validate women's commonality as opposed to the manhood agenda without being essentialist or succumbing to accusations of essentialism. Without the idea of a common thread that unites women it is difficult to create a movement that can change patriarchy. The self-replicating concept form is too strong, its disqualification of gift giving too de-

structive. Functioning as a parasite on the gifts of women, men, children and the earth, it needs *not* to acknowledge giving in order to maintain its grip. We must not blame the host of this parasite but understand the process and change it. Women can unite and can accept the gift/service of men, to affirm the gift paradigm as more viable than the paradigms of patriarchy. This will lead us towards the creation of a society which uses a gift logic, which, while it is now in patriarchy practiced directly mostly by women, is open to be the basis for men's behavior as well. By connecting mothering to the fundamental and widespread pan-human process of gift giving, we open the way not only to the emergence and leadership of women according to 'women's values' but to the possibility that these values may become the values of all.

As we have been proposing, all humans engage in the gift giving and receiving process but those who have been masculated construct an identity in opposition to it. Masculation has extended itself, investing many institutions especially in areas controlled by white Western masculated males. Those who have not been masculated include (almost) all women as well as many men in indigenous and non-dominant cultures. In alliance with women we can also find those who while masculated, are not in dominant positions: poor men, and men in ethnicities and other groups who have been denied access to or have refused (for example, men in some religious groups) the masculated categories, or who individually refuse to practice male dominance. In opposition to a paradigm shift we can find women who strongly embrace their subservience and 'host' position, and women who have assimilated into masculated institutions to such an extent that they have given up the gift values. However there are many people, especially women, with a foot in both camps, and there are men who, though masculated, understand the defects of the system and work to change it (usually without giving up the more subtle aspects of patriarchy, male dominance and the ideology of the market, however).

While it may appear to us that we use categorization in all our thinking and therefore in gift giving as well, I believe we can say that the gift process uses categorization/selection but is itself a pro-

cess of a different kind. The process has regular elements: giver, gift, receiver, mode of giving, which certainly require the recognition of needs and the gifts which are appropriate to them; however the gift process does not resolve itself in cognition but goes beyond it. Indeed as we said above we can look at perception as reception of experiential data (and non verbal display, whether conscious or unconscious, can be seen as the giving of experiential data). The emphasis in gift giving is not on categorization but on transmission, and on the Other as an internally and externally integrated being, and as receiver and as agent.

Exchange value is abstracted in opposition to free goods and services by the selection process of the market, as commodities are placed in relation to the money exemplar. Both of these 'essences': exchange value and the gift (as essences) are social, not natural, qualities coming from the processes in which the people and their products are engaged. As Marx (1869) says about value, it is not a physical property of the object (and as hard as you look you will not find any value substance in a diamond).¹⁰¹

Abstracting the common quality of exchange value and quantifying it are necessary for the large-scale selection process that is the market but they are much less important for gift giving, a process which involves identifying a need and filling it appropriately. (That does not mean that the process is somehow 'un conceptual' or 'non mental' but that abstracting a common quality is really not very important for gift giving—just perhaps unconsciously, for recognition of a need or the object of a need). Whatever the cognitive processes are that are necessary for us to identify the gifts that will satisfy the needs, and whether or not such identification requires any abstraction of common qualities at a conscious or an uncon-

¹⁰¹ What I am saying is: 1. All humans are gift giving so women are also gift giving. 2. Males are socially falsely identified as not-givers, not female, while women are socially falsely identified as not not-givers, not-males. Concentrating gift giving in women only is socially falsely done in opposition to the male human exemplar. It is this concentration that is a social not a natural product, like exchange value. Thus you will find gift 'substance' in women but we have been socially blinded to seeing it in men and *nel blu dipinto di grigio*.

scious level, this moment is only a minor aspect of the gift process. The gift process includes identifying and attributing relevance to the receiver, identifying the need, identifying something as a potential gift by singling it out from a background, attributing relevance to it as a potential gift, perhaps some modification of the gift (for example procuring, cleaning, and preparing, all of which can be further analyzed into a variety of more particular gift processes—i.e., ‘giving’ the carrots, tomatoes and onions to the soup), transferring the gift to the receiver in such a way that s/he can receive it, and the reception and use of the gift by the receiver. The many elements of this process are present as it takes place at different levels: perceptual, cognitive-linguistic, emotional, material-manipulative, interpersonal, in the experience of the giver and in the experience of the receiver. (Moreover as we have been saying, a sort of epiphenomenon is produced, which is the relationship or bond between the interactors) We may indeed abstract from the elements of this process but since it is a process not a set of similar items, the abstraction does not properly give us an essence, but a logic, the logic of the gift.

Extending the gift

A nurturing human has to first be nurtured as a child and then has to learn a large number of displaced nurturing, gift giving practices such as: language, all kinds of sign behavior, productive work and maintenance of material and immaterial things in the environment, satisfying their ‘needs’, giving care to other people in many different ways, giving loyalty and love to persons and to groups as well as often unfortunately learning the ways of giving to patriarchy such as giving-way, giving obedience to commands, and giving in denial of giving, before she becomes an adult nurturer to h/er children. Being human requires the capacity to recognize and satisfy needs at many different levels and in many different ways unilaterally, and/or with varying responses and consequences, alone or together with others. These numerous ways of giving and receiving create a wider context into which each individual is born. Even if s/

he happens to be particularly selfish, the context provides innumerable examples of transposed functional gift giving, which must be learned and put into practice in order for anyone to be fully human. Nevertheless s/he can also practice gift giving while she believes she is practicing a just exchange, for example when s/he is receiving a supposedly just salary for h/er work.

It is possible that the gift giving of *homo donans* originally derived from the capacity of our ancient ancestors to nurture, but the question of its origin is less important than recognizing that at present gift giving is widely extended throughout human life and behavior. Women, to whom child care is socially assigned as a life role, have to do intense unilateral gift giving when they are involved in mothering or their children will not survive. That is, if they become mothers, there is a period in their lives when they must, as *homo donans*, undertake the specific kind of gift giving that is nurturing children. Perhaps this functions as a sort of ‘refresher course’ on the gift processes women learned as girls from their own mothers (and as an intensification and distillation of the transposed gift processes in society). Perhaps this period of nurturing is easier if they have not been overtaken by the practice and values of the market.¹⁰²

Even those women who do not become mothers have usually been socialized towards that role and more importantly, they have not been masculated—that is they have not gone through the psychological process that makes males reject the maternal identity. Thus women who are not mothers do engage in gift giving of many other kinds as do women who are in periods of their lives when mothering is not required. On the other hand any woman can reject the maternal gift process in favor of the market and its values or she can embrace both the market and mothering. Even women who for whatever reason identify with males or as males often remain nurturing in areas, which are not directly maternal. ‘Butch’ lesbians can be good mothers, whether or not they biologically give birth. Indeed some men do mothering as well, individually contra-

¹⁰² Child care workers are indeed paid, but from the child’s point of view their nurturing is free.

dicting the values of masculation. Whatever their variations upon the gender themes may be, people engage in all kinds of non-maternal as well as maternal nurturing. Moreover everyone must necessarily engage in many material, mental and linguistic gift processes, which, though unrecognized, are constitutive of the human.

Usually it is only when a woman has become an adult that she becomes a mother and nurturer of her own children (though young girls often help in child care) That is, she has to have learned to perform most of the transposed gift interactions that society provides, before she becomes a mother who performs the concentrated and continuous gift giving of child care. Each child that is born comes newly into this intense nurturing gift activity, which is itself a nodal point within a much wider texture of gift practices. Men do not usually go through this 'refresher course'. At the same time, while practicing transposed gift giving in material, mental and linguistic processes men have usually also learned to engage in many anti gift practices upon which their gender identity is based, embellished with negative and perverted gift-derivatives like hitting, killing (giving death), and war (collectively giving death to a collective 'other').

Without mothering, the human species would not exist because children would not survive. However, gift giving is a major human principle, wider than mothering and nurturing, and it is a process which continues to function for adults as well as children. We are the most maternal of species because we have projected mothering into so many other areas of life. Whether or not some particular individual is a mother s/ he is a gift giver in the wider sense. Even Patriarchal Capitalist men (and women) operating comfortably in the market like fish in the sea, practice gift giving in many ways while denying and discrediting it as part of their gender and their economic identities. Male and female exchangers continue to communicate linguistically, for example while they are engaging in market practices. They perform services for each other ranging from the smile of welcome, the pleasantry, to the 'power lunch' to the bar man's sympathetic ear. From this point of view women's commonality comes from their more intense and conscious involvement in the gift process at many levels, an involvement, which men reject as part of their masculated identity.

It is not that women are 'better' but that anyone, male or female, who does not reject the human gift process is better.

Love is really the disposition to maintain a giving and receiving relationship with another person (or even animal or location or spirit or idea or community), whatever the needs that arise may be, and the trust that the person, thing, location, spirit or idea or community will also know and satisfy our needs. Gratitude for their gifts is part of love as well as forgiveness when they fail to give or receive, or collaborate. Human love is the ability to participate in a gift circle with another person(s) without exchange and manipulation, even if there are only two people involved. The giving and receiving of love is done particularly intensely at the sexual level, satisfying each other's needs for pleasure. The needs to which the lovers give their attention also include the need for respect and may even include the need not to be in relationship, which the true lover also satisfies. Love is a noncommercial attitude and I believe it may be just the framing of it as exchange that makes people now question whether it 'exists' at all. The challenge of loving in the time of Patriarchal Capitalism and globalization is that we do have to create a gift economy with our loved ones while all around us there is a context of market-based madness. Our needs become skewed, our gifts inappropriate and we do not know what is the matter. There is also spiritual love, love of God or Goddess(es), love of nature, which also consists of loving the nature and the spirit in others, as well as placing oneself in a giving and receiving attitude. The desire for variety, creativity and meaning in connection can actually be satisfied by gift giving and receiving, while it is satisfied only apparently by the market, and at the expense of compassion and connection.

The Gift of Oil

Where labor was once the main source of value I believe we should realize that there are now other energies, which have to some extent replaced it: coal, electric, and oil energy. Society has created the technological 'ecological niches', which can use these energies to create products and services previously unimaginable. Oil is the most

important of these for several reasons. In paying for its products and services, consumers are not paying for the labor contained in the oil as they would with mined coal for example. Indeed, once oil is discovered, very little labor goes into its production. The oil flows out of the ground by means of a pump operated by minimal amounts of electricity with very little human labor involved. It is therefore almost pure gift energy, requiring only transportation and some refinement to ready it for consumption. Oil is a gift, with which the earth could provide abundance for all if it were distributed free—and if it were possible to use it in an environmentally appropriate way. The economic/technological niches that have been created for oil allow it to enormously potentiate human capacities.¹⁰³ Taking as an example only its use as fuel for automobiles we can see that the speed and mobility, which characterize our society are enormously greater than that which could be provided by human labor alone. (Compare the speed and stamina of a rickshaw puller to that of a Ferrari automobile for example).

The price of gasoline does not cover the gift value of the oil. In fact the price is arbitrarily set by market forces and the corporate and governmental owners of the free gift-energy sources, who play with supply and demand. Because the oil costs so little to produce, the amount paid by the consumers is actually a gift they give to the corporations, extracted from the consumers' salaries, displacing other human-made nurturing goods they might otherwise buy. Thus oil companies reap profits coming from the rest of the nurturing economy (lets re name GNP the 'Gross Nurturing Product'), and those who create new uses for the oil, for example the many forms of plastics, are also skimming off gifts from consumers' salaries.

We have created a situation in which we are de facto essentializing human nurturing energy by practicing gift giving towards exchange.

¹⁰³ Inventions driven by profit seeking are probably different from inventions driven by need satisfaction alone. Thus the kinds of human capacities that have been empowered by oil- fast travel for example- are different from the capacities that might have been developed in a gift based society, using the free gift of oil energy. Moreover attention to needs would have allowed the earlier recognition of ecological damage and altered or stopped oil production.

Redirecting nurturing energy away from human needs and towards masculated ego value and ego oriented exchange value actually creates a situation in which gift giving can itself be substituted by¹⁰⁴ non human gift energy, for example, the oil energy used in machines. This energy servant of 'Man' is aptly called by the French 'essence' in its existence as gasoline. Through the use of this 'essence' in transportation new circulations not of gifts but of traffic on land, sea and air take place.

The masculation of men and the resulting femization, essentialization, and plunder of the gifts of women excavate the channels in the society through which other gifts flow towards the few and away from the many. The flow of the 'essence' into the machine is an analogy with the flow of gifts towards the common mechanisms of the male identity and of the market.

The pumps that take the place of the heart

Machines are analogous both to the masculated identity and the market processes that function according to the appropriation of gift energy. The substitution of verbal for non-verbal gifts is benign and useful in language. However, when it is transposed into the masculated identity or the market or machines, it is invested with long-term values and consequences it does not usually have in simple linguistic acts. When substitution and the change of levels it creates are transposed into machines, they are used to produce goods for others without giving, or to transport goods from place to place in an imitation of gift transitivity. Moreover the transposition of giving which is *hitting* combines with substitution to create violent means of domination, whether this is expressed in wife battering, war, economic and military invasion or the piston repeatedly being driven into the vacuum chamber.

Gift giving is a very creative process and cannot be eliminated. When it is hindered at one level it transposes itself onto another.

¹⁰⁴ Gift labor can also be substituted by or mixed with monetized labor or socially forced labor like slavery.

Thus the analogs of gift giving in our society include the automobiles that are driven from town to town where their contents are deposited, or where their drivers perform some useful personal or commercial action before returning home.¹⁰⁵ The motors of the automobiles focus and circulate energy, which is transmitted to the wheels to move the vehicle. The vehicles are for transportation of goods, services and people from one location to another. All of these levels involve transposed substitution and gift processes. What we need to do is use our machines to create circulations of gifts to needs, not the false and inflated circulations of products and people who are driving and driven by the attempt to surreptitiously capture and bind more gifts.¹⁰⁶

The essence that is oil energy is also reflected in the essence we call 'power', a complex taken as a concept, hypostatized, the compendium of acts of domination or parasitism, the upward movement of gifts, which we do not recognize as such. Since we do not recognize gift giving we do not see that power is not a thing, a property, an entity that can be owned. Rather it is given as obedience by the many to the one who is exercising it and enforcing it.

Since so many uses have been found for its energy, oil is indeed the 'common essence' of many products and processes of production and, like women's labor or like the surplus labor contained in abstract labor and exchange value, it produces—gives—more gifts (profit) than it costs to reproduce or maintain. In the motor, that obedience of the many to the one is transferred on to non-human

¹⁰⁵ To me our busy highways look very much like the sperm race to the egg as all the cars travel along them at their various speeds.

¹⁰⁶ It is interesting that movement of a person from one place to another follows the metaphor of the gift which is transferred from hand to hand. In this case it is the person who is the gift, moving in a trajectory towards a new location which will 'receive' h/er. However we can travel not only to be a gift but to make profit, a gift that is 'made' in order to receive more. On the other hand immigrants are now sending billions of dollars of gift remittances to their home countries. In a more permanent time frame, Levi Strauss's 'exchange of women' shows women given between patrilineal kin groups as meta gifts, the gift of the givers, the gift-sources.

pieces of machinery, which are moved by the essence to carry out various pre-established mechanical processes.

Those businessmen, prospectors who fail to discover oil, like those who lose in the stock market, are simply unlucky, like women and other have-nots, born without the phallus or the money necessary to potentially become the prototype. Even if they have the 'derrick' they do not have, cannot access, the essence. They do not have the power, the ability to make the gifts flow upward towards them from the earth in the form of black gold. This risk of failure to make a profit has been typically compensated in the US however by large tax discounts for those who search for oil, and tax discounts are also given for losses due to the depletion of this non renewable resource.

The gifts that are given to oil companies come from the many who earn their money in the market by selling their labor and giving their gifts of surplus labor. These gifts of profit to the oil producers have become part of the 'cost of reproduction' of the workers who have to buy gas for their cars or heat their houses with oil based fuel. Needs satisfied by oil products have displaced needs satisfied without them, from the need for transportation satisfied by the horse and buggy to the need for heating satisfied by the wood burning stove. By manipulation, brainwashing and price fixing, the oil companies can set a price that has nothing to do with costs of production. As we have been saying, once discovered, oil costs almost nothing to produce. The free gift of fuel given by the earth that oil should be, is transformed into the gift of profit given to the oil companies by the general public in the money they take from their salaries to pay for a good that is virtually free to its producers with only some value added through refinement and transportation. The appeal to the risk of the prospector as justification for the high price is irrelevant. Risk is due to privatization. If the state paid for the prospecting and owned the oil, there would be no risk.

This transfer of gifts from the population to oil companies (producers and refiners) takes place particularly in the first world as opposed to the third world (even when the oil comes from the South, it is most profitably sold in the North), among those who for example own means of transportation and can afford to give gifts of profit

from their salaries to the oil companies. Meanwhile the labor of the third world people, commodified by Northern companies has become as cheap to the corporations—as much a gift—as oil. The transfer of gifts from South to North produces the gift margin in the North to pay for the oil, this gift of the earth, which if taken at all, should have been free. This commodification of a gift of the earth, oil, 'black gold', is like the privatization and commodification of water, 'blue gold' which should also be free, or the commodification of blood, 'red gold', or the patenting of plant species, formerly a common heritage, 'green gold' or of the until recently unexplored genetic inheritance of all, 'gene gold'. Each of these gifts was once a free gift commons, 'virgin' to commerce. These transformations of gifts into commodities follow the path laid down by oil and by the extraction of the gift 'essence' of profit from labor. The presence of oil as a relatively low cost energy source provides the precedent for the re distribution into the exchange economy, of other sources of heretofore undiscovered gifts.

The pump functions by creating a vacuum in a chamber. Similarly, a need is created for the oil energy—gift energy—that is greater than other needs. Nature does not 'abhor' a vacuum after all. This turn of phrase is a translation of 'filling a lack' into negative, patriarchal, probably oedipal 'abhorrence'. In this vein, the family is the chamber where the woman's gifts are channeled by scarcity-vacuum to the needs of the husband and children. She cannot receive from outside it or give to anyone outside it. There is also a vacuum created by scarcity outside, which pulls their work to the capitalist and with it the gifts of housework, then part of it back again in money to the family. Then more scarcity is created in the context by war or antagonism between countries.

The pump could be seen as an imitation of this psycho-economic mechanism and vice versa. The creation of scarcity—of a low pressure space, sucks the oil up to the surface in an oil well or to the chamber of an engine. That low pressure or vacuum is created artificially. Similarly the artificial cornering and waste of a society's wealth creates a context of scarcity of money and jobs and sometimes goods—in each locale, which sucks the gifts of workers and consumers into the bank accounts of the capitalist.

Moreover the new needs based on oil and the general need for the gift of profit also create an economic suction which pulls the oil towards the market without concern for the side effects of pollution and waste, which occur from the use of this pump. By creating scarcity of clean earth, water or air, new zones for leveraging gifts are created, so that those gifts too can be pulled into the market and sold, re named the capitalist's 'just profit', which s/he 'deserves' by performing the 'service' of purification of the earth, water and air. There seems to be no recourse to protect what is free from the capitalist pump. (See NAFTA Chapter 11) Penalty of law now applies to those who *oppose* the profit of the multinationals. Ross Perot was right. There is a giant sucking sound, but its US creating the vacuum and aspirating and swallowing the gifts.

By affirming the gift paradigm and restoring it to view everywhere we can discredit capitalism for the capitalists, the manhood agenda for men, and the acceptance of the victimization of gift giving for women, workers, poor people, everyone. Moreover we can discredit these roles not only for their protagonists but for everyone else, so that people in general will not approve them for others or for themselves. *If it is gift giving that makes us human, the oppressor role cannot itself be satisfying* . That is why it has had to be validated in many other ways to ensure that people continue to practice it. The constructions of patriarchy serve this purpose including the construction of the male identity and the market based 'reality' that accompanies it in the 'West'. The victim role is not satisfying either but it continues because of the parasitism of the oppressor upon it (and because of use of force and disguise as well as systemic mechanisms). The same constructions of reality that validate oppression and parasitism validate the victimization of the gift giving 'hosts'.

A better world is immanent. All we have to do is liberate our selves from masculation and exchange and allow our gift giving humanity to come to the fore, mediating them with the gifts of language. Then we can embrace a world of abundant material gifts and distribute goods to needs without exchange. One day the market will be seen as an obsolete practice, as harmful and incomprehensible as bloodletting appears to us now.