

IDEAS FOR OUR TIMES

INTERVIEW: GENEVIEVE VAUGHAN

'The Gift Economy'

[Queried by Professor Rajani Kanth]

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1. Explain what you mean by the 'Gift Economy'.

A Gift Economy is the material interaction of a community based on the *direct* provisioning of *needs* without the mediation of exchange.

I believe that in every life there is an original economic mode that is based on *unilateral giving and receiving* and that is prior to the interaction of exchange, which is giving in order to receive an equivalent return.

Unilateral giving has been made problematic by religions that frame it as extraordinary and saintly and by structures of domination that force one-way giving by the weak to the powerful. There is a very commonplace and necessary area of unilateral giving in every life, however, and that is in the *mothering of little children* who cannot give back an equivalent of what they have received. Someone must give unilaterally to them or they do not survive. This requires the identification of the child's needs and the provision of appropriate goods and services that will satisfy them.

Unilateral gifting, which occurs at the beginning of life, can be practiced by anyone, female or male, family members or even by whole villages, though in our society it is usually considered the work of the birth mother. Nurturing establishes bonds of mutuality and trust between giver and receiver and it is extended (replicated) more by imitation than by obligation.

This giving/receiving need-satisfying mode can be seen as the logical forerunner of all other economic modes and they can be seen as variations upon its theme. For example, bilateral transfers or exchanges are a variation, a contingent doubling, of unilateral transfers.

When there is a time variation the transfers can take place in a mode of debt or obligation - which still maintains a root in the first step of the unilateral gift. Gifting can continue into adulthood as the basic principle of distribution in groups without markets such as hunter gatherers and it also remains as a main mode within family units even in market based societies.

The maternal gift economy is a relational economy. It differs from Maussian gift exchange in that the ongoing relationships are not created by the obligation to give back but by the mutual alignment of the direct need satisfying interaction. There is also turn taking, in which each takes on the role of giver or receiver in turn but without constraint or conditionality and giving forward, passing on the gifts to others in the community, creating mutuality with them as well. Property held in common can appear in the role of giver, which those who use it align together in receiving, sharing and passing on, creating a 'commons'.

The mode of distribution of goods to needs that is embodied in mothering gives rise to strong emotions in both parents and children and these reinforce interactive templates that are elaborated throughout life. Gift based communities maintain positive emotions and high levels of trust while

the ego oriented logic of exchange produces suspicion, defensiveness and exacerbated individualism. Even when market economies have changed or depleted the context, gifting among individuals and groups continues to create positive community bonds.

The gift economy has its unconscious origin in the womb (Jordan) and it is the structure of the early childhood Evolved Developmental Niche (Narvaez). After the child is born, it is thus the economic and social context in which the brain development studied by interpersonal neurobiology takes place, where brain organization is sculpted epigenetically by human relations (Siegel).

The maternal economy is the setting of our mental development, and giving-receiving is the template for basic functions like knowing and communicating. Both in the history of the species and in the trajectory of every life, giving-receiving comes first.

The economy of a community that has retained its continuity with maternal provisioning and its logic, is what I am calling a 'gift economy'. The gift interaction has its own transitive logic which can coexist with the market's 'identity logic'.

Giving gives value to the receiver while exchange gives value to the things exchanged and to the self interested exchanger.

2. How does that differ from the Market Economy that exists today?

The market economy is based on categorization and an equation of value that appears accurate but is actually spurious. First, the interactors categorize their products as not-gifts, removing them from the gift economy at the same time excluding any gift elements as irrelevant for the transaction, transparent, like air (itself a necessary free gift).

In fact, though, there are innumerable unseen gifts that bring the product to its state of saleability (surplus labor) and to the market itself - think only of the free 'work' of shopping, and other work that contribute to the product's utility after the sale. Shopping gives gift value (importance) to the marketplace as well as to the commodities for sale.

The logic of exchange is contradictory to the logic of the gift. It carries an ego oriented implication because the exchanger tries to satisfy her own need by means of the satisfaction of the need of the other. This constrained *quid pro quo* transfer cancels the implication of the value of the other that the gift transmits. The equivalence posed between the products or between the products and money permits everyone to enter into the same sort of gift-cancelling human relation.

The replacement of the gift relation by exchange is facilitated by a common cognitive relation (as happens in the joint attention of early childhood) with the assessment of the exchange value of the commodity in money taking precedence. This process partly consists of naming the product as a value with a quantitative name as a price, in the language of prices (Vaughan 1981).

In the market buyers and sellers, removed from the gift economy, participate in a grand hiatus of the gift where the abstract relations of products with each other and among products and people, take precedence over the exchangers' relations as human beings. As Sohn Rethel showed products as use values and gifts are placed in an abstraction outside of time when they are 'for sale'. In that abstract area they are evaluated with regard to a one to many General Equivalent that has much in common

with the 'one over many' hierarchical figure of Patriarchy and with the exemplar in the objectivist concept formation process.

This one-to-many figure now expresses itself in a condensed form in the figure of President Trump, who combines the aspects of Patriarchal Male at the top with the possession of the ever expanding one to many General Equivalent and the concept model of male dominant humanity.

This template repeats itself in mass shootings in which one shooter takes the lives of many individuals, one nation dominates many, each with its dominant male (or similarly dominant female) in charge. Not understanding this configuration and its connection with money and the market keeps us from addressing these problems in a competent manner though we can all see the world is going insane.

There are many more things to be said about market exchange in this light but I will have to refer you to my books on the subject. (Vaughan 1997, 2015)

Let me add just a couple of other points. The logic of exchange has a number of corollaries or look-alikes in our interpersonal affairs. For example telling the truth is an attempt to satisfy the need of another to know (in order to correctly interpret the world for example) it is therefore other oriented like the gift. Lying is an attempt to satisfy one's own need while giving to the other something not appropriate to satisfy hers. Justice is fashioned along the lines of exchange while mercy follows the way of the gift.

Economics textbooks say that the market is the method of the distribution of scarce goods. However the market actually *creates* the scarcity that allows it to maintain control. If everyone were living in abundance, there would be no need for anyone to work for the powerful in order to survive. In order to maintain its hegemony, the nation or the international body of corporations wastes the surplus wealth on wars and armaments, destroys infrastructure and devastates the environment, creating scarcity for future decades as well as many investment opportunities for rebuilding.

For various reasons giving is often assimilated into the category of exchange, but this is pernicious because it hides the existence of two fundamentally different processes with different logics and consequences. It is also an activity of patriarchy to devalue maternal practice and over value dominance, self interest, individual superiority, being larger, having more.

The market economy that we have today is based on exchange, *do ut des*, that takes over from gifting, and makes an abstract equation of value between products essential for the interaction, meanwhile relating it to all the other products in similar situations at that time period.

The abstract equation of value stands beyond the gift interaction and outside it, exchange is made necessary for procuring the means of gifting by draining the context of free alternatives. The scarcity in which the market distributes goods is created by the market itself. The market is a mechanism for channeling the flow of gifts away from the many and towards the few at the top.

This is done by a sleight of hand in which as Marx showed, the exchange of equivalents forms a mechanism by which gifts are re routed away from needs and taken as profit. Surplus value flows from the portion of the unremunerated labor time of the worker and arrives as a free gift into the bank account of the capitalist. (It is forced or leveraged from the worker but free to the capitalist).

The free domestic labor of the housewife flows through the surplus labor of the worker to the capitalist or if she is herself the worker it is flows as her own gift - and is supplemented to the

capitalist by the comparatively lower price she is given for her labor.[paying a woman less than a man for equal work 'compensates' the capitalist for the free gift labor that would have passed to him through the woman worker to her husband if she had stayed at home].

Gifts continue to affirm the value of the receiver by implication, even when they are unrecognized as such. That is the capitalist appears valuable because he receives the implication of gift value from the gifts that have been given to - leveraged by - him.

The interpersonal value-conferring interaction of gifting is 'superseded' by the impersonal categorizing logic of exchange but the implication of the value of the receiver continues underground. This is why the capitalist appears to deserve his/her profit. The free gifts of labor are also given to or extracted by the capitalist, who does not have to pay for clean up and can place the commodity on the market as if it were largely produced by free (gift) labor.

The gifts of labor and resources of countries of the south are extracted by the north through the difference in (expenditure for) level of life in the different areas, so that what would be ignominious wages in the US provides a low normal level of life in El Salvador, and its products can be sold at high prices in the USA (the gift margin actually comes from the salaries of the US workers).

The commodification of previously free resources such as water and seeds makes clear the gift character of the baseline and the reassignment from gift to exchange through privatization. Once this has happened the needs for those products can no longer be easily filled by gifting outside the market.

The problem here is also one of definition because the good is not seen as valuable at all until it is commodified, that is until it is given a money name that connects it with other commodities on the market. Beyond this categorization it seems not to exist. Gifts, like housework, are invisible in the context of the market, a fact which allows them to be more easily plundered and renamed profit.

Viewing housework as an externality to the market puts it out of sight and out of mind. Naming the domestic economy a gift economy connects it with the non-market economies of indigenous people and displaces market exchange from its position as the only occupant of its conceptual field. In this light we can see the market and the gift economy side by side with equal conceptual dignity, but what is also brought to light perhaps is that the market economy is parasitic upon the gift and cannot survive without it. Although the host could survive without the parasite it does not know what is happening or even that there is a parasite. It appears to be 'just the way things are'.

3. Are these 'gendered' Models?

Presently the market has merged with *patriarchy*, which supplies the individual motivation for competition, accumulation and the denial and predation of gifts. Even when the interactors are non human corporations, the values of patriarchy continue to motivate them to expand, control and dominate (whatever the values of the individual humans involved in them may be).

Nevertheless I believe that the gift economy is not gendered. The nurturing that happens in mothering takes place before the child realizes she or he has a gender, during what Freud called the 'oral phase'. Children develop with the model of their nurturer. Because it is the task of the nurturer to bring the child 'up'to her own adult status, there is not the motivation to belittle the child so the relation between child and mother can be relatively egalitarian.

Most nurturers in our society are female and indeed they are birth mothers. However male nurturers are becoming more common. The indigenous gift cultures do not divide the genders along the same lines as Western Europeans do. We all need to see ourselves as human maternal gift-givers first and then if necessary divide into other categories.

4 What accounts for the genesis of these opposing Archetypes?

The problem is that we have created a *masculine socialization* that alienates boy children away from the female maternal model with which they first identify, placing them in opposition to it. This takes them out of the gift mode and thrusts them into an identity with patriarchal characteristics where competition for power over others is a mainstay.

This identity is not 'natural' but constructed by gender categorization itself and the consequent removal of boys from their original identification with their nurturers. The non nurturing patriarchal identity then becomes the norm, a power over mode ensues and mothering and the gift economy are cancelled, devalued and indeed made to nurture the non nurturers and their normativity. In this context the ego oriented logic of market exchange creates fitness for the survival of the self interested individual while other orientation and nurturing become disadaptive.

The nurturers give to their invented 'others', the exchangers who take as much as possible according to the patriarchal values of individual accumulation and domination. The market is an area of life that is structured to allow this to happen. It gives a home to the patriarchal identity and places nurturers in a separate and subservient domestic sphere.

4.a) How , and when, did you chance upon the Idea of relating the Gift Economy to "Mothering"?

In 1963, I met an Italian philosophy professor and semiotician, who was on an exchange professorship at the University of Texas. We married and I went back with him to Italy. In 1964 he was invited to a meeting of some professors in Bologna to found a journal that would apply Marx's analysis of the commodity and money to language. I went along.

The discussion that day was so intense and illuminating that I was enormously struck. I had an *aha* moment in which it seemed as if I could understand everything. I started working on the idea myself while my husband was writing books about it. I spent more than a year reading the first book of Capital. Not long ago I read that Alfred Sohn Rethel also did that. I had been an English major in college and had learned to analyze poetry so I did a very close reading. In that period our children began to be born and I was taking care of them. I noticed that they were learning to speak long before they understood what exchange or the market was.

If that was the case I thought, language could not derive from exchange. If anything the similarities might be due to exchange deriving from language. Besides I knew many indigenous people had not had markets as such and yet they certainly spoke. So I began to think there must be something else going on. I was taking care of my children without exchanging anything with them *quid pro quo* and I did not like manipulation so our communication was based on satisfying needs, provisioning, and taking turns in the *free economy of mothering*.

5. Are there any Precursors in history for this apparent linkage?

From Marshall Sahlins to Darcia Narvaez, anthropologists have discussed ancient and modern gatherer-hunter societies that have intensely nurturing social parenting practices and economies mainly without markets. Recent work by Heide Goettner Abendroth reclaims the term 'matriarchal' to mean not a mirror image of Patriarchy but an egalitarian society based on maternal values. Some indigenous scholars and activists also use this terminology. (Goettner Abendroth also describes cultures with different social structures, such as visiting marriages and caregiving by mother's brothers.) .

Gift-giving is normal daily practice, but there are also festivals of gift-giving that keep the logic of the gift in function in contexts muddled by the market economy. Since exchange is the paradigm in which anthropologists are brought up they tend not to access the maternal gift paradigm when conducting their studies. Indigenous people who discuss it often continue to affirm the mother and Matriarchy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7SCNuki-Bk> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuTdvDk1cxw&t=398s> even though the US government tried to break the tribal link and maternal power by forcing the children into military style boarding schools in the 19th and 20th centuries. I believe the masculinization of little boys that happens in the Euro American mode does not happen, or at least not in the same way, with indigenous cultures.

For example Jeanette Armstrong of the Syilx of British Columbia recounts her aunt's answer to her question about why their language doesn't have 'he and she'

"Well, it has to do with being a person." I asked, "What does it have to do with being a person?" She replied, "If you were to say 'he' or 'she' in our language, you would have to point to their genitals, you would have to point to what's between the legs, and why would you talk about a person and point between their legs?" She said, "It doesn't make any sense." And it doesn't—people are what they do and who they relate to and how they relate to the world. It has nothing to do with gender, except that there are males and females. So there are words like "maleness and femaleness." (2007)

In other words, children are people before one even notices that they are different sexes. As with Euro-Americans, babies grow up with the model of the *motherer* but then gift-giving remains normal for everyone and is not assigned to one sex in opposition to the other.

6. What is your own primary field of study?

I have been extremely lucky in that I have been able to study one fascinating thing independently for some 55 years. Of course I did not spend all my time studying it but even when I was just living my life many issues and events came up that made me think about it. I tried to use a two and even three pronged approach, the description of maternal gift-giving and the criticism of exchange and of money, applying all three to understanding language.

Gift-giving provided the explanation of transitivity and need satisfaction, while exchange provided definition and categorization with money as the exemplar of the category of value (and money was a particularly salient element in my life). Very little had been written about any of these areas and

nothing using all three together. Using this three pronged approach I worked through the various aspects of the comparisons between these different ways of communicating and was able to get a new perspective on almost anything.

It was as if I were in a mine with an endless vein of precious minerals, or like Alibaba in the cave of the 40 thieves. In 1978 I became a feminist and was able to combine the critique of Patriarchy and the affirmation of 'women's values' with the other 'prongs'. I also began to understand the 'domestic sphere' as a colonized gift economy. I tried to bring out what I was discovering little by little and published two papers in Semiotics but just at that time I moved to the USA in an environment where nobody was interested. So I bided my time and tried to practice the gift economy in a foundation. I wrote some short papers and finally my first book *For-Giving* was published in 1997.

Since then I have continued to work on the ideas and have published other books, among other things, discussing the nature of meaning and value. I have been an activist and have tried to live my life in accordance with my beliefs, proposing the mother-based gift economy as an alternative to Patriarchal Capitalism. Meanwhile, I am still fascinated by the interweaving among the ways of communicating that are language, gift giving and the market.

7. Your critics suggest that you are 'reductionist' in relating all societal phenomena to 'Mothering' .

I believe that mothering, though it seems commonplace, is the great undiscovered principle of humanity. Its early logic, which is clear in childhood, is elaborated in many different adult forms where it is no longer visible. Tracing these back to the original maternal gift interactions provides a different view of almost everything. The maternal norm is the valid one for life, not the patriarchal or the market norm.

I don't believe this is reductionist (but perhaps *reappropriationist*, *rematriationist* as Indigenous women say) because I do not reduce everything to mothering/being mothered. Rather I see mothering/nurturing/gifting as a root from which many trunks and branches grow, an original theme with many variations, many of which are no longer recognizable as having their origin in gifting.

For example, we saw above that exchange is only a double gift, made reciprocal and contingent upon quantification. The logic of the transaction is so deeply altered however, that exchange contradicts the gift itself and creates a hidden level where the gift is open to exploitation (as surplus labor and reproductive labor) because of the strong focus on the equation, that leaves everything else out, as if it were non-existent. Another derivative of gifting is unfortunately, hitting. The transitive trajectory of the gift that passes from one to another to nurture is transformed into the trajectory of the blow. The one reaches out to the other to satisfy needs, the other reaches out to cause harm.

This 'translation' of the gift makes the receiver 'inferior' and thus calls for a 'return blow' to establish equality, initiating an up-down exchange of blows. These patterns, laid down in early childhood, continue into adulthood and function in different dimensions not only between individuals but between nations (see international 'aid' and war). In cognitive psychology these might have a more general and abstract embodiment as an (interpersonal) image schema of 'Path to Goal'.

Once giving and receiving have arrived at this level of elaboration, the root in maternal practice is no longer visible, and this is also due to the co presence of the model of exchange and that of hitting which together overshadow and dominate the model of giving- nurturing.

8 What is your understanding of Patriarchy?

Patriarchy is a relational mechanism with a logical structure that combines with other similar structures to the detriment of women, of children and of less powerful men, animals and the environment. The values of Patriarchy include upward mobility, large size ,individualism, being the center of attention, power over others, conflictuality, competition, dominance of one over many.

The objectivist or classical understanding of concepts in which one exemplar is selected exemplifies this *one to many relation*(Vaughan 1981). It is to be found in the form of the General Equivalent, Money, in its relation to a common quality (exchange value) of relative items, and can be seen in a proliferation of similar figures: the king and his subjects, the father and his family, and up and down the structures of democracy and the hegemonic positions of nations. (Goux1990)

Although this structure seems "natural" to some. confirmed by the instinctive behavior of 'alpha males' in animal settings, there are actually other types of concept formation, for example the 'prototype structure' discovered by Eleanor Rosch (1978). Here there are many different similarities to a 'one' and the prototypes themselves are embedded in wider networks of similarities and differences. When in Patriarchy great power is vested in the 'one' position, tyranny results and overlapping one-to-many configurations compound the problem.

For example, the General Equivalent structure overlaps with the one to many presidential figure, the one nation over many figure etc.In Patriarchy boys are given this ego ideal of success to replace the identity they formed as young children in gift relations with their nurturers, who are mostly women. Since logically not everyone can be at the top, many boys cannot actually achieve this ego ideal. Some men try to achieve it individually through one to many Don Giovanni relations and sexual violence but recently it has also been embodied in the syndrome of one shooter killing many. It can also be found in the figure of one nation making war on or dominating many.

Even if in the Western family many men are stepping down from this one position, the social configurations carry the pattern and people follow them without knowing what they are doing, now especially in consumer behavior where clothes and hairstyles identify the many with the one star Madonna or Michael Jackson.

Women can also follow this pattern acheiving the top position in patriarchal organizations and corporations. Although this may to some extent put the gendered character of Patriarchy into question, it does not alter the basic structure.

9. How, or why, does that arise in history?

I believe that the *one to many* structures have arisen at many different moments in history and that they hang together in a network of cross validation that is somewhat different in each time and location. The shift that is imposed on little boys from the identification with the mother to the rejection of that identity causes the rebirth of Patriarchy in every new generation. Not all societies

do this; many indigenous societies seem to be relatively free from it. However patriarchy imposes itself and eliminates the competition.

Indeed non patriarchal societies are much more liveable and gift economies provide abundance. As far as Western Europe is concerned, there appears to have been a peaceful matricentric society that existed for some 2000 years after the beginning of agriculture in Old Europe (which was preceded by gatherer-hunters).

The work of Lithuanian archaeologist Marija Gimbutas identifies this as a peaceful matricentric society as expressed in numerous female figurines or goddesses. She suggested that it ended with the arrival of the horseback riding Kurgan peoples from the Caucasus who came from afar mostly without women and so captured local women.

Her hypothesis, controversial for 20 years, has recently been vindicated by DNA research. (Renfrew) However it was that Patriarchy began historically though I believe it would not continue if we did not reignite it with the alienation of every male child from his mother and the consequent warping of the socialization of girls and society at large to compensate for this..

10. Does one have to be a 'feminist' to accept your views?

No. In fact there are some currents of feminism like so called "*Post Maternal feminism*" (Stephens) that have a knee jerk reaction to anything about mothering. However this is changing. There is now a 'matricentric Feminism' in academia due to the long and tireless work of Andrea O'Reilly. There are powerful currents of the women's movement outside academia, some of whom call themselves feminist and others who do not. What really matters is their positive belief in concern and care for the other including the heroic example of the Black Lives Matter 'Mothers of the Movement'.

I don't believe I am an 'essentialist'. I have done my best to analyze mothering as interactive work that can be done by anyone and I use the term 'motherer' to include anyone who performs this complex and detailed process. Nevertheless there are biological aspects to mothering that cannot be denied, like lactation, and that are important both materially and symbolically. We should remember however that the mothering process depends primarily on the biology of the baby, not on that of the mother, since the baby would die without the mother's care.

It is in the necessary interaction between mother and child that the gift patterns arise, and they continue into the rest of life with many variations. My answer to this question then is no, one does not have to be a feminist (depending on the definition), but one does need to honor mothers and women in general in order to follow their leadership.

11. Are you a feminist? If so, what does that mean?

Yes I am a feminist, a matricentric, maternalist feminist, if I have to categorize myself (already a patriarchal silo-making enterprise) I stand in solidarity with women everywhere to oppose the forces of destruction and I include men of like mind who try to be non patriarchal. I try to take the elements of maternal practice and generalize them in areas where they have not been generalized, cancelled from view and replaced by patriarchal thinking.

I believe I am contributing one piece of a tapestry woven by many, but an important piece because mothering has been left out of the design or perhaps woven with a transparent thread, so the picture has been distorted and the way forward obscured. It is really impossible that there can be peace on Earth without righting the ancient wrong that has kept mothers and with them all women in a place of servitude and ignominy.

Let women lead the way forward towards a conscious gift economy and a gift economy consciousness. This has been called the century of the newborn because of the discoveries that have been made in neurobiology. I would add it is the century of the mother of the newborn and her economy, our economy in which we all develop as human, the species of homo donans, the species being of the giver and receiver, the identifier of needs, the species of passing it on, giving it forward, laying it down, and implying the value of the other.

Not doing this we have forgotten the implication and condemned ourselves to a tragic terminal egotism which allows us to remove ourselves from the deeds of our patriarchal rulers to such an extent that we do not see or hear the detonation of the drone bomb that explodes in the heart of the man crossing the street in Libya holding his children's hands or the home whose pretty tea equipment and colorful wall hangings were destroyed by the war in Homs so that its inhabitants are making their risky way across the Mediterranean, to find dubious haven in Europe where only child traffickers save them from starvation.

Connect the dots. Who is responsible? why are these immense crimes happening? What evil anti maternal deed of ego orientation started this horrendous chain of events? that we sometimes see excerpts from on the news. Yemen dying of cholera. Say her name! . Syria in rubble! say her name! Afghanistan, these 18 years! say her name! Iraq, the cradle of civilization!

Are all these not then Motherlands invaded, raped by the Capitalist Patriarchy we benefit from? What possible interpretation of events, intentions, business deals could justify any of this? The rape of women and children and the rape of nations is the same.- the individual and the societal level mirror each other in fractal structures of the anti mother, exchange that puts each in egotistic opposition to other. And Mother Earth! Say her name!

The market and patriarchy fit together to create a systemic parasite that feeds on the gifts of all transforming them into stratospheric profits. Many of us are parasites in one of our roles and host in another. We can individually diminish the parasite behavior and free the host whenever possible.

Every child that is born is the citizen of a new earth, a gift economy! let us treat them all as such- boys too - and let the garden of Eden finally flower again, that garden that began before Patriarchy and exchange, the garden that is our maternal human planetary heritage.

12. What political practices flow from adopting your ideas?

Fact is, if we were giving to all these countries instead of enacting the 'hitting' patriarchal imitation of gifting, we could be in a relation of mutuality with them. There is a syllogism of the gift: if A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C. *It is transitive all the way through* and implies the value of the receiver. We would be interested in the receivers, not in denial of the suffering we cause.

The logic of exchange is self reflecting, ego oriented. Our minds hold back, not used to traveling down the path of thought towards the suffering of others. Even if we have caused it ourselves. And we are dying of suspicion and loneliness while the gift economy (that we are exploiting) would bring community and trust.

We need a radical disbelief in the social structures we have now, an understanding of how and why they are mortiferous, a vision of the alternative and plans for getting from one to the other way or ways of life. Realizing that total transformation is necessary will allow us to realign and reinterpret projects that are not enormously radical in that light as moving in that direction. Whatever the degree of radicality all the projects would have the deeply radical final goal of total transformation towards the gift economy. .

Maintaining the maternal value of peaceful revolution will help us embrace a non violent approach even in the most radical initiatives. Volunteers can see the light at the end of their labors as the gift economy final outcome, as can people in the helping professions, urban gardeners, free librarians, tool sharers, eco villages, time banks, coops, all can see the final goal as one of social transformation, while those truth tellers, whistleblowers, those protesting war, organizing marches, lying down in front of nuclear missile transports can also see their work as a social gift, the solution to a problem consonant with the values of the (M)otherworld to come!

13. Have you had success in sponsoring projects that embody your vision?

I tried for about 20 years to create projects for social change according to the philosophy of the gift economy. These projects were all done under multicultural women's leadership according to what I was calling at the time, 'women's values'. Now I am trying to promote the gift economy more by speaking and writing because the theory of gifting is important to making its practice revolutionary. When I started the projects in 1984 in Texas, no one understood the theory, nor were they interested in hearing about it. Now, 34 years later, many gift initiatives have sprung up independently and many volumes have been written about gifting.

I believe that in my case the material gifting had repercussions at a level that simply writing about it would not have had, perhaps preparing the ground in the collective consciousness for some of the practical experiments and theoretical work by others that came later. (Other influences on them were surely also writers on the gift like Lewis Hyde and the MAUSS Journal. They have mainly left out the issues of Patriarchy and the Maternal Gift however.)

14. How would your vision protect us from the unfolding crises of our times?

The crisis has deleterious effects on individuals psychologically as well as materially. I think we can all make internal adjustments affirming the gift paradigm, so see the alternative already within us. Doing this would allow an affirmation of the self outside the trammels of exchange logic, which includes paying for crime, with guilt as its prefigurement.

Learning to think and self evaluate according to the gift paradigm while distinguishing it from exchange would allow us to self-and-other validate while passing through the crises and would allow us to communicate better and bond in communities of trust, providing solidarity for material survival and well being.

I think that what we believe is a moral sense is actually the gift paradigm values emerging from behind the values of the exchange economy. Knowing with clarity and keeping in mind what the problem is (patriarchy + exchange), would allow us to address it much more effectively.

15. Is your 'ideal society' related to classical notions of 'socialism'?

Socialism, Communism and Capitalism are all patriarchal and would all be very different without Patriarchy.

I like to reinterpret the motto From each according to their ability to each according to their need and I add *that the receiver should have the ability to give again*. Abundance in the context should be provided - such shareable commons - as should self-provisioning be encouraged.

16. How do you see the world getting from where it is to where you want it to be?

In order to shift the paradigm to the gift, a lot of renaming and reframing needs to happen. I believe that among the things that need to be reframed in the light of the gift economy, there is also *morality*. I wonder if we do have a 'moral faculty' at all. Instead I think that it is the values and processes of the gift economy shining through the overlay of exchange, that make us act in other-oriented life-affirming ways.

Usually morality is seen as a structure of do's and don'ts carried out almost with force against oneself in order to do good and avoid harm to others. This structure is really no match for the kind of amorality and immorality, the wildly egotistical conduct that is typical of consumer capitalism, corporatocracy, and environmental destruction.

Understanding caring values not just as abstract principles, perhaps supported by laws, but as the values accompanying a kind of behavior and economy that are what establish us as human beings (and what, as I believe also underlie communication and language) would allow us to see ourselves as acting consistently with this gifted core [our '*species being*' (Kanth)] when we are other-oriented, other-tending, and in discord with it when we are following the values of the market and Patriarchy, both of which are artificial and pernicious though they have run rampant.

The values of the gift economy follow the practice of attention to the other's need and the initiative for its satisfaction. This comes from love of the child or at least commitment to furthering her life. Hormones released in the birth process help this motivation physiologically. This process can be more informative than ego orientation. *Other-tending* interest expands to all the surroundings and beyond while self interest is limited to the purview of the individual.

The gift economy brings people together; in fact it is the basis of co -muni-cation and co-muni-ty ('muni' is latin for 'gifts', so I take these words as meaning 'giving gifts together' 'giving gifts together'.) Exchange separates people and rules are necessary to reunite them.

Conscience in the morality of the exchange paradigm functions by appealing to internal modes of exchange and power over, forcing oneself to choose to give, bribing oneself with rewards and punishments for doing one thing instead of another, judging - categorizing - oneself as good or bad, valuable or valueless.

We also experience guilt for wrongdoing, evaluating our misdeeds emotionally and preparing ourselves to pay for them, sacrificing in order to even some imagined score. I believe we can reconceive morality as guided by maternal anarchy in which people follow the path of other orientation because they are following the maternal model that is validated in society at large and has been the core of their childhood development .

The gift economy is the moral economy, if morality is no longer seen as a faculty *sui generis*. If boys are not alienated from the maternal model they can maintain the gift values, and the whole construction of patriarchy will begin to totter, life by life. This must be clarified by theory and connected by analysis to the dismantling of patriarchal structures in society at large.

Women who want to be mothers should choose as fathers men who love children. There could be tests. This could eventually move evolution away from the *one-to-many* bully model that we are seeing everywhere. I believe non-violent parenting and non violent communication (Rosenberg) can also be used to facilitate this transition.

While these changes are being made at the personal level, an effort should be made to change the perspective at other levels of society, in institutions, locally, nationally and internationally. Naming the different elements 'exchange' or 'gift' would help people to identify which elements are part of the economic parasite and which of the host. A widespread understanding of the problem would allow a peaceful transition to a solution or many solutions.

17. Name some of your most important Works .

"Communication and exchange" (1980) Saussure and Vygotsky via Marx" (1981), *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange*(1997) , ed *Il Dono/the Gift* (2004)ed *Women and the Gift Economy: a Radically Different Worldview is Possible* (2007) *Homo Donans: for a Maternal Economy* (2007), *The Gift in the Heart of Language: the Maternal Source of Meaning* (2015), ed. *The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy* (2018 in Press)

18. Is there a website you can refer the curious to?

www.gift-economy.com, genevievevaughan.org

19. What works/authors inspired you in your own journey?

Malinowski, Marx, , Vygotsky Rossi-Landi, de Saussure, Freud, Goux, Sohn-Rethel,Schaff, Jean Baker Miller, Olga Silverstein, Bruno Bettelheim, Lewis Hyde, Carol Gilligan, Lakoff and Johnson, Tomasello, Goettner-Abendroth, Barbara Alice Mann, Trevarthen, Meltzoff, Stein Braten, Allan Schore, Darcia Narvaez, I Ching, Tarot. William Blake, Emily Dickenson, Dylan Thomas, Ursula Le Guinn.

20. Do you see your work as a contribution to science (knowledge) or to advancing human welfare (policy)?

My work points to a revelation of what we already are but did not know it or understand its implications. A maternal species, that has loved its masculinized male children so much it has let them get away with murder, even matricide, genocide, gynocide. So it is a contribution to science but a destabilizing one because it requires a lot of reframing of scientific thought at many different levels.

For example I believe that our perceptions become accessible framed as giving and receiving processes and similarly that language is a construction based on gifting. Such a deep shift in the way we understand ourselves and the world will almost automatically change policy and advance human welfare

21. What do you expect to see in the near future: redemption, along your lines, or a collapse of human civilisation?

We can transition into a gift economy if we come to consciousness and begin turning towards the gift on a personal level now. Lots of people are already doing it without giving it that name. And some are doing it with that name without the mothering aspect. Those in power are still benighted, however and our Patriarchal democratic processes only give us choices between Marauder Capitalism and Capitalism LITE.

We have to see around the corner to the future that we are making as we speak but to do that we have to look through the veil of lies to see the horrible present that our leaders have brought us to create without knowing it for so many people on Earth. Every lie we believe, every exchange based compromise we make or allow our governments to make leads us closer to the final tragedy, which will be all the worse because it will be the end of a beautiful maternal species that never got a chance to know itself .

But perhaps we may take heart. After the last bomb is dropped and the last shot is fired, people - the motherers - may begin again, finally practicing the gift economy.

There is no other way.

But maybe we still have some time. If we don't passively wait for the old patriarchal world to self destruct, we can change the paradigm and begin to restore the peaceful motherworld now.