

The Gift, Nurturance, and Human Emancipation.
A Summing Up
by
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Patriarchy and the market have merged into a gigantic self propelling mechanism that is overtaking all other socio economic forms while it destroys the Earth and her people in the process. It has many levels of disguise, of concealing its nefarious patterns so we don't even know what it is we are dealing with.

We think it is reality.

Once we have embraced the disguise we can relax, our feet on the ground. We feel ok, with our consumer products, our news media, religious institutions. They are the coordinates that tell us what is real and fake. News media also. We like to choose our station, dial up our own reality. However we are living this illusion while millions die due to our governments' and corporations' wars upon them, the poverty and pandemics caused by the depletion of their resources, the environment degradation caused by fossil fuel industry plus climate denial. If we remain in the illusion we appear to have no responsibility for all this.

My analysis of this deeply negative situation is predicated on my discovery that *there are two economies in play in the present world*. One practices unilateral gift giving and is based in mothering and the other, which is typical of the market, is based on *quid pro quo* exchange. There are two economic logics that distinguish the two economies and these logics produce corollaries or look alikes in other areas of life.

The gift is transitive, other-oriented, mainly qualitative and it implies the value of the other, while exchange is ego oriented, self reflecting, quantitative and gives value to the objects exchanged and to the self. This simple distinction has not been made in these terms.

The *unilateral gift* has not been seen because it has seemed impractical, saintly or sacrificial and has been claimed as the province of morality and religion. Yet 'free' is a mode of distribution and it begins in the womb and with the first intake of the free breath of life. The exchange of gifts that Marcel Mauss proposed is a *three step process of giving, receiving and giving back*. With young children this is not possible because they cannot give back an equivalent of what they have been given.

In fact the first and second step already constitute a gift and are at the core of all relationships. The mutuality and trust that are established between mother and child are the original human relational bond. The child can respond of course, but there is no obligatory repayment. The pattern is established and propagates by imitation rather than by obligation.

Unilateral gifting constitutes the original relational economy and it is within this economy that the interpersonal neurobiological developments in the brain happen in the first three years, before language, when the right hemisphere of the brain is dominant. The patterns involved are not at the level of consciousness for the child because they are originally non verbal.

Nevertheless I believe the patterns of giving and receiving are transferred into language and I believe that is what language is: verbal giving and receiving and giving again, passing it on. The giving of verbal gifts.

I will skip now to the patterns of exchange (some of which are also found in language)

Making a gift contingent upon a return creates a contradiction of the *altercentrism* of the gift. *The market replays the logic of gift-giving in reverse.* The view of the world coming from the market hides gift-giving/mothering, contradict its and, meshed with patriarchy, further plunder it because the market and money function as conceptual mechanisms that distort gift giving and denature it. In fact one of the corollaries of gifting is other-oriented truth telling while lying is consonant with exchange since it satisfies the others' need to know in a way which will mainly satisfy the need of the liar. Such are the illusions that the market and Patriarchy spin to keep us from taking responsibility to change them.

We need to redefine, rename everything with gift giving in mind.

In Patriarchal Capitalism, gifting is rarely named appropriately and exchange or its cognates are put in its place. This results in a movement of semantic fields as if the one tectonic plate of meaning had been shifted under the other. Thus we see the market at the center with flanking 'externalities' of nature and the domestic sphere. Instead the domestic economy is a gift economy that has been occupied, colonized by the market. The market and the domestic gift economy are locked in a parasitic embrace that seems a symbiosis while both must receive the nurturing gifts from the embrace of Mother Earth, now also raped and forced to give by patriarchal extractive exploitation.

By affirming the free maternal gifting as an economy (similar to indigenous 'pre' market economies) the market no longer occupies the total cognitive reference field. We can roll back the language away from economic man and his priorities, *rename profit as a gift given up the socio-economic ladder from the many to the ever more gifted few*, and make clear distinctions between *exchange and gifting*

The culture of the market has overtaken the culture of the gift just as the colonial cultures have overtaken the colonized ones with the displacement of their languages. They are now reclaiming their languages and we can do so as well, liberating the language of the gift from patriarchal exchange based terminology.

So how do we get these tectonic plates to move?

A shift in consciousness, a shift in what we give our attention to is necessary to open a space for the spring of the gift to well up in our minds. We are all doing gifting without knowing it. We must recognize and validate it.

Indeed I believe that by putting maternal gifting first we can completely eliminate the Patriarchal Capitalist approach constituting most of Euro American academic thought, which excludes the mother and the gift in favor of the mother-dominating male and gift-dominating market exchange.

On this basis we revise our notion of who we are as a species. We are not primarily *homo sapiens* the knowing being, but *homo donans*, the gifting being. Giving and receiving comes before knowing. They are the basis of knowing, and if I am right about language, we do giving and receiving not only at the material but at the verbal level so we are all *doubly* givers and receivers.

The gift mode of social provisioning is how our species began and continued its evolution, before it became entangled in the alienated market structures extant today.

The gift is also the means (and the end) by which we can yet again return to sanity, normalcy, contentment, peace with each other and the environment.

Giftng is, in fact, our perennial condition, the structure and sustaining metaphor for all social life.

It is my faith that we can trace, quite readily, a very practicable route map from here to there.

And I am pledged to do all I can to help the world move in that direction.

Not to some grandiose utopia, but to the simple, yet incalculable, benefice of a caring, nurturing society inspired by the gift-giving propensities of the original, interpersonal maternal process.