

Beyond Capitalist Patriarchy: the Model of the Maternal Gift Economy

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Part I

I invite you to suspend disbelief, to focus the microscope at a different level, to connect the dots in a different way. I use the power of naming to call free unilateral gift giving an economy and so to divide the conceptual field of economics between the maternal gift economy and a market quid pro quo exchange economy. This process brings forward free giving and gives it a status at which it can be investigated. At the same time it limits the conceptual hegemony of market exchange. One of the reasons this has not been done before is that patriarchy together with the exchange (market) mentality have made it difficult at every turn so as to hide the exploitative sources of their power.

I consider patriarchy not to be the compendium of macho attitudes that makes women criticize men as a mass of individuals but rather a system of beliefs, misconceptions and motivations that stands behind them, something deep and organized that determines their behavior. I believe this system has merged with the market to create capitalist

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patriarchy, or patriarchal capitalism. Patriarchy provides the individual motivation to accumulate, to compete, to be the one at the top, to dominate that is causing Capitalism to metastasize and expand. Women can participate 'equally' in the patriarchal Capitalist system because these are systemic positions, not just individual roles, mandates and tendencies of one gender. Throughout the centuries the oppression of women and especially mothers by patriarchy, by the market and finally by this merged economic entity, capitalist patriarchy, has discredited free giving while at the same time it has been nurtured by the gratuitous gifts of the many. It is time to reveal the place of maternal giftgiving in all this and to show how its exploitation takes place.

Let me start by distinguishing between giftgiving and exchange. In this I am breaking with the studies that from Marcel Mauss (1921) onward have seen the relation-creating capacity of the gift as debt, the obligation to give a return gift. I submit that unilateral giving and satisfying needs as happens in caring for young children already creates human relations between giver and receiver. The repeated satisfaction of the child's needs by the motherer brings about ongoing relations of positive expectations, mutuality and trust. By calling the gifting unilateral I do not mean that children don't respond but that there is no obligatory exchange. Rather many interactions between care givers and children can be described as turn taking. These interactions are based on *imitation* not *obligation*.

A lot has been written about gift giving in the century since Marcel Mauss's book. The MAUSS review in France has been publishing articles about the gift economy in this vein since the early 80's. I myself started thinking about the gift economy in the 1960's and published my first article distinguishing communication from exchange in 1980.

Now, because of the worsening crisis of Capitalism, people are searching for alternatives and many come up with the idea of the gift economy, books are being published about it and social experiments of various kinds with gift practices are being tried.

However as far as I know no one has broached maternal giving except perhaps the French feminists, Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous whose work, beginning in the 1970's was more psychoanalytic than directly economic. Later feminism has criticized them for essentialism and the theme of mothering has largely been eliminated from the discourse of Euro-American feminism, causing some to call this era of feminist theory "post-maternal thinking". I will talk about essentialism more later.

Derrida (1992) proposed the paradox that the unilateral gift is impossible; he said that in recognizing that one has given, there is an ego boost that pays back the giver for her gift. However this does not take into account that if gifting were generalized and everyone were doing it, there would be no particular ego reward involved. The ego

reward comes from the exceptional character of the transaction in our society.

This is in fact what happens with mothers, or 'motherers' of infants, people who are all giving unilaterally because young children cannot give anything in return. Although there are exceptions, motherers do unilateral gift giving most of the time. It is just part of the job description. Many mothers complain that they are unrecognized and unappreciated, but this just confirms that in a quid pro quo exchange based society, they can see that what they are doing is something different. Of course if they can afford it, the parents can hire a paid caregiver, but for the child the care is free. That is, the model of the unilateral maternal gift is transmitted to the child anyway.

The maternal gift economy is a provisioning economy prior to exchange both phylogenetically and onto genetically. For phylogenesis I refer to the work of Darcia Narvaez (2015) on the 99% of human genus history that was spent in small hunter gatherer groups organized around collective parenting. Additionally the archaeologist Maria Gimbutas' (1992) work on the paleolithic shows there were some four millenia of peaceful matricentric culture at the beginning of agriculture in old Europe. For the contemporary world, the work of Heide Goettner Abendroth (2012) on Modern Matriarchal studies explores still existing matriarchal groups -that are not mirror images of Patriarchy but peaceful egalitarian societies with nurturing values. Among these are the Mosuo in China, the Minangkabau in Sumatra, the

Khasi in India, many Native American groups such as those in the Iroquois confederacy, the Dinè, the Hopi and many others. All these societies had and have gift practices which function very differently from markets. I see these gift practices as extensions and elaborations of the maternal gift economy that is necessary at the beginning of every life.

My own work mainly regards the gift economy in ontogenesis. This economy is a unilateral gift practice that is required by neoteny, the long period of infant dependence on others that is caused by the immaturity of the human infant at birth and the continuing development of the brain after birth. The child must be nurtured unilaterally by someone - whether birth mother, other family members or a whole village. Otherwise the child dies.

I believe the gift economies of matriarchal or mother centered societies can be understood as extensions of the maternal gifting that is necessary to ensure the survival of infants and young children. That is, they are generalizations to the group at large of interactive patterns that are laid down in the nurturing/provisioning economy of early childhood.

This unilateral gift economy has not been recognized in our society because the pervasive frame of exchange and patriarchy have discredited it and perhaps also because it is established through repetition in early childhood in the period of right brain dominance, before linguistic left brain lateralization takes place at around age 3.

Thus the memory of that period is not well encoded linguistically for children. Nevertheless in many contemporary indigenous tribes, ceremonial gifting practices keep the maternal gift alive in the culture and the figure of Mother Earth provides a model of generosity and abundance for all.

Many Native people consciously project the mother child relation onto the Earth. They recognize the gift relation there because many of them are still practicing gift economies, at least ceremonially and in the form of give-aways. Thus the gift values persist in the culture even when its members are immersed in an exchange economy.

Here is a quote from Navajo David Begay

"And so how we express these things and how we try to express the native knowledge is a very, very complicated process. For example, the word land, L-A-N-D, in English, the English definition, it could refer to real estate or soil, or a piece of land. In our language, we say It talks about the moccasin, refers also to that bottom of the moccasin and the connection to Earth. It also connotes a mother infant relationship. This is my connection, this is where I come from. I go back to the earth when I finish existing as a human. So there's a mother-infant relationship. It's ancient, because the Earth is ancient. So it's not just words, it's a feeling that's real and it becomes alive through the consciousness of thought. And nature has the answer."

In fact Nature does have the answer because it functions according to the gift economy too. The creatures are all nurtured by their

intersecting ecological niches. Nature has no market. The human gift economy is economic bio mimicry!

In European American culture our models of gifting have been taken over by patriarchal images, so from Santa Claus to Patriarchal monotheistic gods, while motherers and their unilateral gifts have been eclipsed or distorted and assimilated.

In spite of the barriers erected by patriarchy and the market, the gift economy should be seen as existing at least at the same level of importance as market exchange. It is the first economy and actually exchange is only a variation upon the gift, a doubling of the transfer, contingent upon an equivalent return and making quantification and measurement necessary.

The household economy, which has mothering /gifting at its center should not be considered as an 'externality' to the market economy. Rather we should see it as an alternative and prior economy that runs parallel to the market and has a different process and different values. In 1988 the feminist economist Marilyn Waring began to try to quantify the value of household work. Now one of her collaborators, Duncan Ironmonger, tells us "Household production is now recognised as an alternative or parallel economy to the market. Rather than being

a satellite to the market economy, the household economy is best considered a binary star". (Ironmonger 2003).

In 2012, using time use episode data Ironmonger estimated the USA's 2011 Gross Household Product at 11.6 trillion dollars (as compared to a GDP of 13.3 trillion)(Ironmonger and Soupourmas 2012)

If we add to this free household production the global 'ecosystem services', which have been estimated at some \$125 trillion a year compared to the monetized economy's \$75 trillion GDP, (Costanza et al. 2014) we can see how the market economy actually floats upon a sea of gifts.

Gift and exchange function according to two contrasting logics.

Unilateral gifting is altercentric, concentrating on others' needs to satisfy them. Mothering, at least mothering infants is paradoxically and fundamentally *not* a power-over activity since its purpose is to bring children 'up', to make them grow and finally develop independence. Gifting gives value to the other by implication and this value can be extended in a kind of syllogism - if A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C, creating a circulation of goods in a community of givers and receivers.

Gift giving is other oriented and transitive while exchange is ego oriented and intransitive in that the other's need is satisfied only to procure the satisfaction of each one's own need. This requires quantification and measurement, an equation of value, and eventually

a common standard. Value is not given to the other but to the objects in question, which in their circulation participate not primarily in a nurturing transmission but in a judgement and categorization process regarding equation of quantity of their value and the ability of buyers to pay. In fact in this judgement of value, free nurturing is invisible. Nevertheless it is important to recognize that it is contained in the surplus labor of workers and in the free labor of reproduction that are given forward to the capitalist as gifts...along with the eco system services, the gifts of Nature. These gifts are free to the capitalist receiver though forced or leveraged from the giver.

Since it is the transformation of the gifting transfer into a contingent and leveraging process, that constitutes exchange, I believe we have to say that not only is maternal gifting the basis of the gift economy but it is the basis of exchange and thus of all the economy. Exchange splits off from gifting but then turns back to be nurtured by it - or more precisely exchange redirects gifting towards itself and plunders it.

Gifting is also the core, the kernel from which many ways of people's relating to each other develop. The practice of the maternal gift economy is relational. Nurturing and being nurtured brings about relations of mutuality and trust between motherers and children. This giving and receiving arouses strong emotions even in the smallest children and usually in the motherers as well. It lays down interactive patterns that continue to be used throughout life. These patterns

regard material, emotional/psychological and cognitive interactions and transmissions that are united in a single bundle at the beginning of life but are later separated out and understood as mind and body, consciousness or spirit and matter, and even good and evil.

Masculation

Until they learn language baby boys usually identify with their mothers and participate with them in giving and receiving. When they learn that they are in a gender category which is the opposite of that of their nurturing mothers they have to find – or create – an identity the basis of which is NOT being like their mothers – that is NOT nurturing, NOT gift giving. What they find is the agenda of manhood: independence (as opposed to the interdependence of giving and receiving) competition (as opposed to cooperation) domination (as opposed to communication and nurturing at the same level) stoicism (as opposed to emotion). This false agenda, which I call 'masculation' has been taken as the human agenda instead of maternal nurturing. It has been projected into our institutions and it deeply influences the way we construct reality. The economy of patriarchal capitalism provides a 'home' for masculated boys, who learn to give up the gift economy and the model of the mother and imitate the models of masculinity who have taken that path before them. Since this is not a biologically imposed identity but one caused by the social interpretation - or misinterpretation - of biology, girls can also give up giving. Since the gift economy is not recognized as generalized, this seems a positive

choice on their part, to embrace the freedom not to nurture that is accorded to boys. However what I am proposing is that we realize we are all *homo donans* (the gifting species) not just *homo sapiens* (the knowing species) or *homo faber* (the making species) or worst of all *homo economicus* (the economic species). If we recognize this we can and should create an economy that accords with giving and receiving for everyone.

Even though it remains very influential throughout life, the deep model of the interface between mothers and infants usually falls outside the attention of most adults inside and outside academia. However it is the beginning of a thread that can be elaborated upon in many ways. If we do not recognize the beginning we do not see the elaborations as related to gifting. Nor do we see the distortions like exchange as deriving from the prior gift economy.

There are many corollaries of gifting and exchange that permeate society at large.

Perhaps one of the most unexpected and pernicious of these is hitting (and it seems to be the way little boys express masculation). In hitting, one person reaches out to touch the other as happens in gifting, but in an ego-oriented way to cause harm, not to satisfy a need, and to create a relation of domination not one of mutuality and trust as happens with gifting. This is typical of the backyard brawl

where "boys will be boys", as well as in later expressions of adult male violence. On the other hand a corollary of exchange can be found in the military exchanges, attacks and reprisals of war. I will talk more about these and other corollaries later.

First though I would like to talk about the coexistence and relation between the two economies.

Patriarchal capitalism and its ideology have eliminated mothering and the gift economy from a world view that validates the market. This worldview is partial; it cancels an important part of human life and therefore its products and conclusions are questionable. Indeed in practice it seems that this view and its accompanying motivations are leading us to planetary death. The denial of the importance of the mothering economy is necessary because the market and gift giving are configured in a structural relation of 'parasite' and 'host' that organizes society at many levels and that permeates daily life as well in race, class, national and international relations. If the parasitic relation were visible the 'host' would struggle to be free so it is kept hidden as such to the people involved. What we do see of it is the suffering of women and girl children world wide, which we consider in terms of intersectional oppressions: sexism, racism, environmental injustice, underdevelopment, the seizure of resources, the occupation of territories but which is actually the condition of being, along with the impoverished fathers, sons and brothers, the hosts, the gift 'material' from which the mechanism of capitalism daily draws its

sustenance. Of course it behooves the mechanism to cover its tracks, discount the sources of its success and maintain its own supremacy and self-made semblance.

I do not consider this description name-calling but am trying to make the way the mechanism functions quite clear.

Recent attempts to view the gift economy as a radical alternative to the market have been hampered because they have not shown how the two economies of gift and exchange are interconnected in this parasitic relation; they have not shown that the profits of the few are actually composed of the gifts of the many. They have also not seen the link between the gift economy and mothering.

Not only does the parasite hide its own activity but it discredits the host or shows that it barely exists. One of the ways gift giving is hidden in a society based on market exchange is by recognizing it only in mothering, charity, and in hybrid forms of Maussian symbolic gift-exchange.

Instead the unilateral gift can be used as an epistemological key with which to reinterpret a large number of philosophical questions. For example our society likes to look at the basis of language as biological, a hard wiring of our brains. I have written about gift giving as the basis of language and communication at many levels, as the creation of human relations through the giving and receiving of verbal gifts, the mothering - gifting - tongue. Language is often seen as self expression. Instead since we must always speak in the language of the

other to be understood, it is the other's communicative needs that we are satisfying. Even if we do express ourselves it is by satisfying the others' communicative needs - for a human relation regarding something. Language is altercentric - other centered. We learn it from others being other centered towards us, and reversing the trajectory.

By restoring gift giving to the areas of life in which it has been unrecognized and concealed, we can begin to bring the gift paradigm to consciousness and revise our thinking accordingly. In fact gift giving underlies the synonymy of language “meaning” and the meaning of “life”. The meaninglessness that besets people in the society of advanced or *terminal* patriarchal capitalism is a result of giving up gift giving and replacing it everywhere with exchange.

Profit can be seen as a forced gift given by the poor to the rich, because it is constituted of surplus value, that part of the value of work not covered by the worker's salary. Women's free labor in the home can be seen as a gift from those practicing a gift economy to their family members, to those practicing the exchange economy, to capitalists who do not have to pay for workers' reproduction and to the whole system based on exchange. The gifts of nature which were previously free for the taking such as water and fertile seeds have recently been commodified and rendered scarce with deadly consequences for the many. This transformation has revealed the importance of their previous gift character which before was taken for granted. Additionally the plundering and destruction of eco system

services through pollution deprives the children of the future of the gifts of Nature that have nurtured humanity since the beginning.

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Mothering and other types of free gift work are made difficult or even sacrificial by the scarcity which is necessary for the functioning of the market. The scarcity is artificially created by the appropriation of the gifts of the many by the few, the plunder of the gifts of poor countries by wealthy countries, of the gifts of nature, the past and the future by the few for their profit in the present. When too much abundance accrues it is wasted on wars and other destructive practices as well as on the creation of symbolic excesses and propaganda.

The values of mothering are seen as unrealistic and are devalued by misogyny. They are seen as the cause of suffering while women's protest against the suffering and the lack of satisfaction of their needs is seen as victimism. Rather the scarcity necessary for the efficient functioning of the market and the discounting of the gift paradigm causes the suffering of anyone who is individually trying to practice the maternal gift economy in the market context.

There are of course places within Capitalism that allow or promote collective gifting, such as charities, volunteerism, entities of various kinds for welfare, education, housing etc. Most of these also give to the market system in that they provide free services which the

commercial entities do not have to pay for. Even these gift initiatives are also increasingly regulated internally according to the market values and framework. Fortunately there are also movements for social change that are moving in the direction of the gift economy even if they do not recognize that is what they are doing.

Essentialism

Essentialism, the belief in a common essence of women as mothers that identifies them with a 'non human' and 'inferior' Nature, seems to be a way of explaining or justifying women's oppression or their lack of success in capitalist society. Instead I would say that the market penalizes women as mothers because they are practicing a different economy and their values and approach to life in the period of childcare are aligned with this gift economy. (Thus they unwittingly compete with patriarchal homo economicus to be the model of the human being.) The oppression of gift givers is caused not by defects of their economy but as I said by the context of exchange in which they are forced to operate.

While the mode of distribution of free unilateral gifts continues to exist, the mode of production for the gift economy has been stolen and taken over into the mode of production for the market. Production for exchange is instrumental in channeling free gifts of profit towards the

few and gifters often give to it and to the market as their 'other'. (Look at the free activity of shopping for example). Sacrifice, which has often been seen as a tendency of women, is also caused by the context of scarcity and hostility of the market. Women have been branded as masochistic for sacrificing themselves for others but again I believe this sacrifice is due to their commitment to practicing the gift economy in a context of exchange - where other orientation is made to seem irrational and a liability.

The two economic modes are opposed in a dualistic even binary way but they are actually connected in a relationship of parasitism that is a kind of third configuration and that appears as a synthesis of a previous thesis/antithesis. However this synthesis is the present source of our devastating problems: environmental degradation, war, mass deaths of humans and other species, widespread poverty, displacement and disease and even where these are not in evidence, desperation for lack of meaning and trust, exasperated individualism, egotism, cruelty, ennui, greed, materialism, paranoia, denial.

The gift economy gives to exchange economy structures and actors, who take free gifts. The gift economy is the host and the exchange economy is the parasite. This is

achieved by creating scarcity so that the gifters are dependent on exchange for the means of giving. In abundance no one would work for the capitalists, people would just nurture each other and themselves. Everyone learns to displace gifting into a realm of human interaction that appears to be biological-instinctual, cultural or even moral rather than economic. The paradox of trying to quantify what is basically qualitative makes it difficult to see gifting in traditional quantitative terms. The solution to the paradox as I have been saying is not to exclude gifting as an economic behavior but to extend the conceptual field of the economic to include the unilateral gift economy. After all *free* is a mode of distribution. And the qualitative satisfaction of needs is the promotion and experience of thriving life.

The inclusion of the maternal economy in the conceptual field of economy on a par with market exchange diminishes the monolithic and hegemonic character of the market by making it only one of two or three modes. It is diminished even further by the realization that that the gift economy is primary and that exchange is only a derivative, a variation upon it.

Once this rearrangement of concepts has occurred, we can see other issues in its light. For example essentialism is an

explanation of women's oppression that does not take the gift economy into account nor does it recognize the parasitism and subterfuge of the exchange economy. It seems that a wrong idea of what women are, held by both men and women, keeps women from reaching their full potential defined as succeeding equally with men in a system (which remains radically unquestioned). Instead it is another misconception, the one that sees 'the Economy' as based on exchange only, that hides and diminishes the importance of gifting and women and does not allow a transversally organized rebellion of those in the host position against those in the parasite position and against the parasitic structure itself. Both essentialism and its critique function like the bullfighter's red cloak to distract us from the recognition of the plunder that the market economy is practicing upon gifting on a daily basis to the detriment of all.

Exchange just seems positive and the goal of life appears to be that everyone should succeed in the market. The solution to women's poverty seems to be integrating individual women more thoroughly into the parasitic system. Such initiatives as micro credit function in this way. Instead the only solution is to change the system itself. Money seems to be 'made' or doled out to the deserving and the lucky by the invisible hand, instead gifts are being shifted

surreptitiously by that hand from one place to another, from the many to the few.

Part II

In order to focus on the maternal gift economy I want to look again at infancy where the gift patterns are laid down though they are not recognized as such. In order to see them we have to extrapolate from descriptions of early childhood where gifting is not mentioned but is necessarily the constantly repeated mode of material transaction underlying the development of the child.

Recent research has shown that the newborn baby is a highly social being. As infancy researchers Andrew Meltzoff and Rechele Brooks say "There has been a revolution in our understanding of intersubjectivity...within our lifetimes we have witnessed the overturning of one of the most pervasive myths in social science - the myth of the asocial infant." Proponents of this myth were influential figures like Freud, Piaget and Skinner. For example Freud believed that "the baby is like an unhatched chick, incapable of interacting as a social being because a 'barrier' leaves the newborn cut off from external reality. He likened "the child's situation to the isolation found inside a shell: "A neat example of a psychical system shut off from the stimuli of the external world... is afforded by a bird's egg with its food

supply enclosed in its shell; for it, the care provided by its mother is limited to the provision of warmth"(Freud 1911: 220). Piaget, who saw newborns as "radically egocentric" and even "solipsistic" says the "primitive relation between subject and object is a relation of undifferentiation... when no distinction is made between the self and the non-self " (Piaget 1954: 352–355)." Instead Meltzoff and others of his school propose a highly social infant right from the beginning. Says Colwyn Trevarthen "...it seems that cultural intelligence itself is motivated at every stage by the kind of powers of innate intersubjective sympathy that an alert infant can show shortly after birth. We are born to generate shifting states of self-awareness, to show them to other persons, and to provoke interest and affectionate responses from them. Thus starts a new psychology of the creativity and cooperative knowing and meaning in human communities."

Caring for such a being obviously requires a different skill set than caring for an infant solipsist.

Meltzoff sees the infant as capable of knowledge through kinetic mapping. He says "The recognition of self-other equivalences is the starting point for social cognition, not its culmination. Given this facile self-other mapping, input from social encounters is more interpretable than supposed by Freud, Skinner, and Piaget. Infants have a storehouse of knowledge on which to draw: they can use the self as a framework for understanding the subjectivity of others. .. " Social cognition rests on the fact that you are 'like me', differentiable from

me, but nonetheless enough like me to become my role model and I your interpreter. (Meltzoff 2013:69)”

The study of human interactions through mirror neurons as discovered by Giacomo Rizzolati and his team at the University of Parma shows how we are able to simulate the actions of others and experience them subconsciously. It stands to reason that this applies also to other's giving and receiving. Gifting interactions would thus also be part of Meltzoff's Like Me bridge. Both mother and child would each understand the experience of the other by means of their mirror neurons. The reversal of the giving and receiving roles would also follow from this mirroring capacity.

My point is not to survey the many important aspects of infant psychology but just to repeat that all of the interaction between motherers and children takes place in what is for the child a gift economy. Unilateral giving and receiving are the most fundamental interactions between mothers and infants. They become the model for our understanding and the schemata for our interpretation of the world. From our first moment, breathing in the gift of air and breathing out the gift of our breath, we are engaged in receiving and giving.

Neonatal gift processes are preceded by the placental gift relation.

Nane Jordan says

"Like a grand communicator, the placenta and umbilical cord define the paradox of the two bodies' connection and separation...As a relational interface this is not a fusion of bodies but a unilateral 'gift'

communication from mother to baby

Another step towards a focus on the mother is a shift towards the integration of attachment theory and neurobiology in what is being called ‘interpersonal neurobiology’, as developed by Allan Schore, Daniel Siegel and others. Here the brain, especially the right hemisphere of the brain of the mother is seen as actually interacting with the right brain of the infant. The mother holistically (and mostly subconsciously) regulates the preverbal child’s emotions and the child’s right brain registers and learns from her regulation how to self-regulate. (Schore 2003) Moreover, astonishingly, “the rate of synaptogenesis in the developing infant’s brain is a remarkable 40,000 new synapses every second and brain volume increases from 400 g at birth to 1000 g at 12 months” (Schore 2015:2-3) During this tremendous growth spurt the social experiences the child has with her mother are incorporated into the neural connections (Shore says “neurons that fire together wire together”) while the potential connections that are not used disappear.

Daniel Siegel elaborates

“Given that interpersonal relationships guide how we focus our attention and therefore how our neural firing patterns emerge, our social experiences can directly shape our neural architecture. Put simply our relational connections shape our neural connections.”. (Siegel 2012:15)

This interpersonal neurobiological research shows how *nurture (gifting) becomes nature*. The care given by the motherer is incorporated into

the physiology of the child's brain and giving and receiving *are* the method of mother care.

Most of the interpersonal neurobiological researchers come from the disciplines of psychotherapy, so they tend to concentrate on psychological rather than material interactions. However clearly, the material interactions of giving and receiving are the most fundamental ones. They are the substrata for the psychological interactions.

Since the neurobiological research leaves out the fact of motherwork, nurturework, it is not emphasized that at the level of practice, of daily life, the developments of the brain in early childhood are all taking place in a free gift economy. The growth of the brain, the neuron activations and emotional responses all arise with regard to free unilateral gifts and gifting.

Free giving actually has an important positive character of its own in that the needs of the receiver elicit the gifting initiative of the giver, thereby maintaining the infant's life. No third step is necessary. No return gift is required or expected. By this I do not mean to say that children don't respond or that the mothers don't respond to their responses. However this is not an exchange of equivalents but rather, according to the researchers, a reciprocal relation-creating syntony that happens on the basis of turn-taking. Taking turns in gifting functions by imitation not obligation and the whole interaction is more like a turn-taking conversation than a *quid pro quo* market

exchange. Giving and receiving are the basic relation creating factors, not debt and obligation.

Pre verbal gifting experiences are what create the communication and attention patterns that “form our first relationships and directly shape our neural architecture”. These first free nurture-based relationships are processed in the holistic right brain and are permeated with emotions that mark them as similar in a variety of contexts. The filling of the child’s needs ideally establishes the positive affect that Schore underlines as a most important aspect of the mother child interaction. This produces a “right brain subjective self system” that “unconsciously generate(s) a background sense of emotional well being” in the “early forming emotional core of the subjective self” (Shore 2015). In other words, I would say, nurture – receiving and giving – is important in establishing a (positive) sense of the subjective self.

After birth the motherer's care forms a kind of social placenta, an "Evolved Developmental Niche" (Narvaez) of practices of care in which the child receives the free gifts of her environment mediated by the free gifts of the motherer. Positive human relations are established in this way, together with responses of gratitude or at least of willing creative assimilation of the gift. It is in this period that the basic patterns of interpretation of the world are set up and they too are formed on the model of receiving and giving. We continue to use these patterns throughout life without recognizing them for what they are

however.

A society that elaborates these relation-creating patterns in harmonious ways for adults is likely to be more peaceable than one in which contradictory relations are created. In fact exchange promotes the oppositional logic and competitive attitudes that supercede the gift relations. The abstraction, contradiction and ego orientation created by exchange produce a different kind of communication, cognition and knowledge. Linguistic representation morphs into monetary representation, which creates a new abstract level and eclipses previous gift based interaction and thinking. Obviously, what we do feeds back into the way we think. The commonplace everyday use of exchange and the phasing out of gifting (except for commercial purposes like gimmicks and sales) places people in a validated mentality of ego orientation and impedes spontaneous caring by considering it less viable and less human than exchange.

In European American society unilateral gifting remains mostly in the domestic sphere. Although it is the human formative model in prelinguistic child care, at a certain point it is superceded by patriarchal culture, the market and manipulative gifting. Religions prolong the unilateral gifting mode for adults but under patriarchal control. The domestic sphere is disempowered. The mode of gift production has been overtaken by production for the market. Receiving seems to be dependence and we have interpreted the domestic sphere and gift economies as dependent upon market

exchange which, imbued with Patriarchal motivations of power and accumulation for domination over others, has become Capitalism.

I mentioned Meltzoff's Like Me bridge, and mirror neurons. It is clear that a child who grows up imitating the model of the motherer has access mainly to the gift patterns in her early years. At a certain point, through socialization children begin to use the exchange paradigm in place of the gift paradigm. They are assimilated into the market system and as I said I believe this is particularly important for boys. I believe this is also because the exchange of commodities uses some of the elements of the Like Me bridge in its formulation.

As Marx says, talking about the fetishism of commodities...

"After a fashion, it is with the human being as with the commodity.. Since the human being does not come into the world bringing a mirror with him, nor yet as a Fichtean philosopher able to say "I am myself", he first recognizes himself as reflected in other men. The man Peter grasps his relation to himself as a human being through becoming aware of his relation to the man Paul as a being of like kind with himself. Thereupon Paul, with flesh and bone, with all his Pauline corporeality, becomes for Peter the phenomenal form of the human kind. "(1962[1867]:23)

Marx is partly wrong. The human being does come into the world bringing a mirror with h/er. The mirror is the motherer and the child mirrors h/er as well, simulating her experience with h/er mirror

neurons and Like Me mapping. This is typically a joyful mapping of nurturing, in which each one is altercentric - not an equation of self-identity.

It is an aspect of fetishism that commodities use the Like Me interaction to find their commonality. (The relations between objects take the place of relations between people) Marx's prescient analogy differs from the infant - motherer scenario, in that it places two men - not mother and child - in the roles of the commodities, but it also differs because the relation is used for finding the relative commodity's identity by finding an exemplar of its category in the body of another commodity (No nurturing is taking place!). When the equivalent commodity is the general equivalent, money, this identity is proposed as a specific quantity of money, the exchange value of the relative commodity.

I am trying to show that in our every day transactions in the market we are replaying our early identity-forming interactions projected onto objects as if this were completely normal. Worse, in order to do this we have put the objects in a relation (of exchange) that contradicts gifting. This strange mechanism broadcasts back into our concept of who we are and what we should do. We are a maternal gifting species but we now contradict our basic make-up over and over on a daily basis. We embrace ego oriented exchange and give to it. We are parasitic even upon ourselves.

All this takes us out of alignment with the universe of which we are a part and leads us to create the end of the world scenario in which we are now living.

We are creating a special kind of anti maternal insanity.

In our society as I mentioned, there are many permutations of the gift and of exchange.

Justice as payment for crime is a kind of exchange, while restorative justice is a gift based on satisfying needs, mercy.

Truth telling is gifting because it satisfies the other's need to know.

Lying is exchange in that a false gift is given to the other in order to satisfy one's own need to mislead and deceive.

But also the parasitic relation between the two economies is writ small and large over the face of the Earth in the relation between individual plunderers and gifters, between exploitative men and gifting women, individual billionaires and all those who have nurtured them unwittingly with their work and the gifts of their life force, between Whites and Non Whites, between hegemonic nations and their subordinate nations, between so called first and third worlds, between corporations and populations, and again between the capitalist market and gift giving Nature. Finally there is also the parasitism of the greedy present upon the rapidly depleting resources of future generations. Although all these expressions of the problem should have allowed us to see what is happening, we have not recognized the commonalities because we have not recognized free giving as economic. The parasitism

remains unnamed, unseen and unchallenged at myriad levels because we cannot see the host. I think machismo and mysogyny are useful in this cover up, in that they allow us to deflect the analysis onto individual penchants of women-hating and violence, thus hiding the parasitic structure.

At present a clear picture of the problem and its solutions is made difficult just because of our everyday immersion in the anti maternal parasitic system of the market. But unless we liberate ourselves and satisfy the needs of the people and the planet, our species will not survive to bear the fruit of our maternal heritage. Nor will the myriad species of innocent animals. Some environmental whistleblowers (Guy McPherson and Carolyn Baker 2014) are now talking about irreversible cascading feedback loops that will cause mass extinctions in only 10-20 years time.

We are homo donans non just homo sapiens and certainly not homo economicus. Only by restoring gifting to the concept of humanity and acting in accordance with it can we perhaps begin to carry out the potential of our maternal species-being to protect and restore the life of Mother Earth.

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