

CAPITALIST PATRIARCHY AND THE NEGATION OF MATRIARCHY

THE STRUGGLE FOR A “DEEP” ALTERNATIVE

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In her important book, *For-Giving: A Feminist criticism of Exchange*, Genevieve Vaughan states: “In order to reject patriarchal thinking we must be able to distinguish between it and something else: an alternative” (1977: 23). I fully identify with this statement as I, too, have tried “to think outside patriarchy” although being inside it most of the time. At the “First World Congress of Matriarchal Studies,” held in Luxemburg in 2003, where Vaughan and I first met, she stated, “If we don’t understand society in which we live we cannot change it; we do not know where the exit is!” Therefore, “we have to dismantle patriarchy.” In this article, I would like to add to Vaughan’s analysis of capitalist patriarchy and tackle the task of dismantling patriarchy.

“A Different World is Possible!”

This has been the main slogan of the worldwide civilian movement against globalization for years. I have to add: “A radically different world is possible!”—it is not only possible but also urgently needed. But without a *vision* of this radically different world we will not be able to move in this direction. Therefore we need to discuss, first of all, a radically different worldview. For this purpose we have to analyze what is happening today and why. Only then will we be able to define a really *different* world, worldview and vision.

“Globalization:” An Explanation

A radically different worldview is necessary because today we are observing global social, economic, ecological, and political developments that are completely different from what they should be. “Globalization” is obviously not a movement toward more democracy, peace, general welfare, wealth, and ecological sustainability, as its propagators are pretending everywhere. On the contrary, the opposite is true. Never in history are so many people dying from hunger and thirst, environmental destruction, and war, most of them women and children. Never in history have so many people been confined to poverty, income reduction, expulsion, expropriation, and extreme exploitation, again, most of them women and children. Never in history has technological progress led to such intense and threatening destruction of the environment globally. Never in history has the nuclear threat been so acute. Never in history have the political systems been changing so clearly in the direction of authoritarian, if not despotic rule in many parts of the world. And never in history has such a tiny minority on the globe been so incredibly rich and powerful. For transnational corporations and their “global players” today, we, and the planet, are nothing but their “play material.”

This situation can be called the “development of underdevelopment” (Frank 1978). But this time underdevelopment is not only taking place in the South, but also in the North. It is the result of a “new colonization of the world” (Mies 2004) that did and does not happen inexplicably, but is actively and aggressively promoted by governments as their general and apparently “normal” policy, beginning in the 1980s of the twentieth century. This policy consists in a “continuing process of primitive accumulation” (Werlhof 1988) that leads to a forced economic growth through the direct expropriation of the peoples of the glo-

be and the globe itself. The name of this policy is “neo-liberalism.” This new liberalism serves exclusively the interests of the corporations. For the rest of humanity it means just the opposite, totalitarianism.

Is this “New World Order” (Chomsky 1999; Chossudovsky 1996) the “best of all possible worlds” that western civilization pretends to develop? Or is the current development of western civilization better defined as the peak and turning point towards its final decline (Wallerstein 1974)?

Capitalist Patriarchy: A Historical Concept

Many people have provided descriptions of globalization as global crisis and its dynamics (Chossudovsky 1966; Hard and Negri 2000; Wallerstein 2004; Ziegler 2002). There seems to be “no future”—astonishingly enough even for the global players themselves. I call this situation *west end*: western civilization is in its final decline globally (Werlhof 2002). With the self-given “licence to loot” (Mies and Werlhof 2003; Werlhof 2000), the resources of the earth will come to an end. The decline of resources is already underway. With the resulting “resource wars” (Klare 2001)—the new global wars for oil and water—we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the “modern world system”, as a logical consequence.

But, there is almost no deeper analysis of the causes of this extraordinary situation or the dynamics that seem to exclude any alternative. There is no real, no deeper explanation of the world’s dilemma and its causes. For example, is the profit motive alone sufficient as an explanation? Why do most people believe that human nature is nothing but ego-centric? What about control and domination of nature? In what is it rooted?

I suggest the reason why most people do not really know why this crisis is happening is due to the fact that the left as well as the right, and the sciences in general, have never really analyzed patriarchy. And not having analyzed patriarchy also means not really understanding capitalism, because the two not only share a time of being together on this earth for 500 years now, but are deeply related to each other in a way that has not been understood by most people, even feminists. Therefore, it is time to take the necessary step of analyzing capitalist patriarchy from its roots and as a theoretical concept for the subsequent analysis of society. Only then can it be seen that patriarchy is much more than just a word for polemical purposes. It can instead be understood as a concept that explains the character of the entire social order in which we are living today, socialism included (Werlhof 2007).

Patriarchy: The Development of a “War System”

Recent studies of matriarchal societies and the development of patriarchy (see Göttner-Abendroth 2005) suggest mainly four things:

The Genesis of Patriarchy

Patriarchal society as we know it, did not exist “as such” and independently from, or even before, matriarchal society, but began to develop after the armed invasion, violent conquest, and systematic destruction of matriarchal societies by armed hordes

that had lost their own originally matriarchal culture after having been exposed to “catastrophic migration” (forced migration due to climatic changes and other catastrophes). This process is reported from the fifth millennium B.C. onwards—concerning the “Kurgan” people and the Indo-European migrations in general—and it occurred in China, India, the Middle East, North and Central Africa, Europe, and the Americas as well (see Gimbutas 1994; Mies 2003). As patriarchal society, “as such,” did not exist, we need to examine the conditions that led to its development.

The development of patriarchal society is related to the invention of something that from then on has been called “war,” and patriarchy BECOMES dependent on the ongoing existence of war(s) even in so-called “peace times.” Without war, the people of conquered communities and societies could easily liberate themselves from their conquerors’ rule. The logic of patriarchy is thus the *logic of war*, which means that all the social institutions invented by patriarchy are principally drawn from war experiences.

1) Patriarchy invented a *political system* based on the invention of the state, which meant the hierarchical dominance of armed men over the conquered people and the dominance of men over women, because women were at the centre of pre-patriarchal society and were responsible for the maintenance of its egalitarian principles.

2) Patriarchy invented an *economy* based on the the plunder of other peoples’ property, since then called “private” property (*privare* = to rob), and on an always more systematic exploitation of the conquered, especially the women, because women in matriarchal society had control over the means of production, were the producers and distributors, the providers of concrete wealth—life, food, and security—and were responsible for the integration of everyone into the community (Vaughan 1997).

3) Patriarchy invented a *society* split into social classes, “races,” generations, and “sexes.” This means, especially since then, that women were regarded as being subject to men *by nature*, in order to prevent them from ever again being able to re-establish a matriarchal society.

4) Patriarchy invented a “*God-Father*” or “male creator-religion” based on the “great warrior,” plunderer, proprietor, or “big man” (Godelier 1987), who was considered able to give life and was legitimized to take it. The Great Mother or Goddess was replaced by the idea and the ideology of an omnipotent, violent, and jealous single God, an abstract patriarchal “mother-father.”

5) Patriarchy invented a *technology* based on “war as the father of all things,” namely by beginning to transform the pre-patriarchal philosophy of *alchemy* into a patriarchal one. This means that since then men have systematically tried to use existing (female) knowledge about life and nature in order to appropriate it, to pervert it into a means of control over life and nature, finally, trying to *replace* life, women, and nature themselves through “technological progress” (Werlhof 2004a), the project of a “*second creation*.”

6) Patriarchy invented a *psychology* that defined the ways men could develop their “masculation” (Vaughan 1977), and their competitive, ego-logical patriarchal individuality (Girard 1992), opposing community, women, and nature.

The patriarchal order of society thus involves a total break with the matriarchal or gift giving social rules, traditions, and taboos, which had existed from time immemorial, and the development of a “war system” (Werlhof 2004b). And even if there have been times and places that did not at all fit this picture, the development or “evolution” of patriarchy has, nevertheless, been continuous, and women could not prevent it from happening. This can be seen more clearly today than ever before.

The Negation of Matriarchy

In patriarchal societies we can always find vestiges of former matriarchal societies—matriarchy as “second culture” (Genth 1996)—left over or newly re-organized after the patriarchs had started to deny the reality and quality of matriarchal society (Werlhof 2004b). This matriarchy as second culture can be ob-

served everywhere, for example, in mother-child relationships, and other love relationships, and in gift giving generally (Vaughan 1997). It contradicts the patriarchal order, but also helps it to exist, because a society without *any* matriarchal relations could simply not survive. Therefore, patriarchies are always somehow “mixed” societies, whether to a higher or lower degree, and they are hiding this fact as much as they can—for obvious reasons. But today it is clear that patriarchy is trying to complete its negation of matriarchy in order to replace it with itself, a “pure” patriarchy, as much as possible. This destruction and the fading away of the second culture in patriarchy, and of much of the still existing gift paradigm within it, is one of the main reasons for the depth of the crisis of contemporary civilization.

The negation of matriarchy consists in presupposing that there have never been any matriarchal societies; that patriarchal society has existed from the beginnings of human life on earth; and/or pretending that a violent and evil “rule of women” had to be broken before patriarchal society could develop so-called “civilization” and “progress.” Due to this patriarchal mythology, most people today still think that matriarchy never existed, or that it meant “rule of women” instead of “rule of men,” which indeed was never the case in matriarchal society, but may be so in patriarchal society instead. Most people, therefore, do not understand that the terms “matriarchy” and “patriarchy” are not just referring to men and women, or “male” and “female,” but to the character of the whole social order, so that both men and women living in matriarchy have to be considered “matriarchal,” and likewise men and women living in patriarchy have to be considered as principally “patriarchal” in their thinking, acting, and feeling.

The negation of matriarchy furthermore consists in:

- *Destroying* matriarchal society as a social order on its own.
- *Appropriating* everything from matriarchal society that seems important to the patriarchs, robbing and usurping these things, especially the image and the abilities of the mother (and the goddess), because patriarchy does not have an original culture of its own and can destroy but cannot originate life on its own.
- *Perverting* everything matriarchal into its opposite, which is the way “patriarchal” is defined.
- *Transforming* the original matriarchal society into a patriarchal one by developing policies of “divide and rule,” by dissolving and abstracting the interconnectedness of people, communities, genders, generations, culture, commons, and nature in general; and by
- *Replacing* these and the entire matriarchal order with a “purely” patriarchal one.

The crucial significance of especially this last process of the transformation and substitution of nature and women has almost never been recognized.

The “Gnostic” Worldview of Patriarchy

Peoples’ experiences with patriarchal society, war, despotic rule, and ceaseless violence logically led to a complete change in the general worldview, too. The Gnostic worldview thus appeared (Sloterdijk and Macho 1991). Gnosis means recognition: It is recognized that the world is “bad,” “evil,” “low,” primitive, violent, sinful, and not worth living in. A better, “higher,” more developed, “noble” and civilized world, therefore, is the ideal for people living in patriarchy. However, this “higher” world cannot be found on earth, even less so in the matriarchal past or presence elsewhere. The “higher world” is thus perceived as a metaphysical world that can only be envisioned through the imagination.

A metaphysical world beyond physics was not thought of in matriarchal society. So, the words *mater* and *arché* together do not mean “rule of mothers,” but instead mean, “in the beginning the mother,” life stems from mothers. *Arché* is beginning and “uterus” (Markale 1984: 207). Therefore, life, death, the mother, and the goddess, are always *here* in this world, and they all belong to each other, so that there is neither the need for, nor the

idea of, another (metaphysical) world than the one in which we live every day (Chatopadyaya 1973).

In patriarchal society, on the contrary, another world beyond the existing one had to be invented. So, the words *pater* and *arché* together do not simply mean “rule of fathers,” but, instead, “in the beginning the *father*”—a word unknown in matriarchal times. Or, rather, life stems from “fathers” instead of from mothers; fathers are men with uteruses who are able to give life without needing women at all! (The Pharaoh Echnaton, for example, had himself painted as a pregnant man [see Wolf 1994]). Only on the basis of this fantasy would men be legitimized to rule over those who are not “fathers,” the people, and especially the mothers. The “father,” therefore, is defined as somebody who is a ruling man and as such not only able to take life, but also to give life.

In patriarchy the word *arché* thus did not only mean “beginning, origin, uterus,” but also “rule” and “domination,” too. This second meaning of *arché* did not exist before patriarchy, therefore, in matriarchy *arché* could have never meant domination, much less mothers’ or women’s rule. There simply was no domination, and therefore there was no word for it. Etymology shows that 1) a matriarchal society in which women were in power the way men are in patriarchal society never existed, and that 2) the “father” in patriarchal society has to be related to power as a *system of domination*, at least as long as he cannot replace the mother.

This means that the political system of patriarchal society can be regarded as a first step in the direction of the development of a *pure*, fully elaborated patriarchy, in which the fathers would really be “men with uteruses” or with something like “uterus-machines,” who would then no longer need to dominate, because they would be able to do without nature, women, and matriarchal society. The political system of patriarchy would only be needed for the period in which patriarchy moves toward its final realization, toward a “full patriarchy,” conceived of as the end of history. From this point of view, history is only the time in which patriarchy appeared and “evolved” until it became one hundred percent reality.

The patriarchal usurpation, destruction, and perversion of the mother and the wish to replace her thus led to an early sort of “science fiction”: to the idea that what is only—and absurdly—*supposed*, namely that life stems from the father and *not* the mother, is considered even *more real* than what is experienced every day, namely the opposite. This *credo quia absurdum*—I believe in the absurd—of the early church-patriarchs, began from then on its nearly uninterrupted career on earth.

Gnostic metaphysics and the belief in another, “higher” reality appeared everywhere, in every theological as well as philosophical tradition until today. Since then the belief in metaphysical assumptions has become much more important than knowledge about the world in which we live, even more so in the secularized modern sciences of today, as we shall see below.

The historically new concept of the “father” is a triple fiction: it imitates the fiction of a powerful patriarchal “mother” and/or “goddess” and imagines to have successfully replaced her. This way the “father” is defined as a “patriarchal mother,” the god as patriarchal goddess, who—as a contradiction in itself—could never have been thought of before.

This shows that the father originally is not regarded to be a man who relates to a woman with whom he has a child. This type of a father, as we normally define him today, is much less the “idea” of the father than the early fiction of a man with a uterus. The reason for this “loss” in defining the father is very simple: It has until now really been impossible to have new life without women.

But we know that biotechnology and genetic engineering are working hard to resolve patriarchy’s main problem: the desire that only men should be the creators of life. Having to be born from women seems to be the biggest disgrace for patriarchal men and society (see Anders’ 1994 description of the “shame of being born instead of being made”). Our actual “soft” understanding of the father who is still dependent on a mother proves every day

that patriarchy in reality *does not* yet exist at all the way it is supposed to. The world—at least in this respect—basically still functions in a matriarchal way.

From Idealism to Materialism

But the fiction is the program. The *idea* of patriarchy has become its political and technological project. Patriarchy as a society in which life stems from fathers and not from mothers has to be artificially produced, or it will never really exist. The project is this: life—or what is considered to be life—should be born from or be made by men. And, only what men produce is considered to be “real life” and to have a “value,” *as if* patriarchy had been realized already.

This way patriarchy becomes not only a *theory* (vision of God), but also a *theology* (the logic, the true words of God, his creation by the word that was “in the beginning”), a *theo-gnosis* (proof of the existence of God), and a *theophany* (God is appearing), and structurally *theo-morphical* and *theocratic*. Furthermore, patriarchy seems to prove its *entelechy* (its capacity to evolve its “naturally” given form to its perfection) and its potential for *eschatology* (end and new beginning of the world, death, and rebirth).

Once all this is the case, even the system of domination is imagined to eventually be abolished, because there would *really* be no alternative to patriarchy any longer. (1) Only if/when men become “real” fathers, will patriarchal society—in the long run—not have to fear women and matriarchy or the gift economy as an alternative any longer (Sombart 1991).

Since Aristototele, patriarchs not only pretended that their theory about life was true, even if they could not prove it, but they started to do something about it. This is how the Gnostic view became practical and “materialistic” in the patriarchal sense of the word. From the patriarchal viewpoint material is *mater* (matter), “mother-material,” generally called “raw material,” which is given in order to be transformed into patriarchal “life,” being a “resource” for “value-” or life-production, something like a “mother-machine” (see Corea 1985). From this perversion stems *fetishism* as the confusion between dead things and living beings. This materialistic becoming of the Gnostic worldview, nevertheless, did not mean a return from metaphysical adventures. On the contrary, it meant trying to realize on earth what had been imagined beyond it; Plato’s “ideas,” for example. The Gnostic view, therefore, was not abolished. It became *the* program for patriarchal society, instead.

It is as if today, for example, the electronic production of the “virtual world” were considered to be the only “real world,” and the real world were considered to have already been replaced by the cyber world, continuing its existence as the former real world only in imagination—so to say as a new “metaphysical” world “beyond” the virtual world. But this time metaphysics are no longer welcome. On the contrary, they appear outmoded and old-fashioned, if not reactionary, because they remember the natural world. This would be the real patriarchal perversion! And it has entered the thinking of women as well, even if they did not care much for the invention of machine-technology (Genth 2002). But this form of so called “post-materialism” can be found in many “gender-studies” that criticize, for example, the discourse on “nature” as being “essentialist” which means being metaphysical, because nature is supposed not to exist in reality - any more! (Werlhof 2003; Bell and Klein 1996).

In short, the Gnostic view, which is so typical of all the other patriarchal ideologies until today, did not work against patriarchy, though it correctly “recognized” many of the evils that it brought to the world. For the conclusions drawn from of this recognition were no longer oriented toward a matriarchal world. The evils recognized by the Gnosis were not considered to be those of a patriarchal society. They were considered, instead, to be of society in general, of “the world,” of people, and even nature everywhere. The difference between a matriarchal society and a patriarchal one, or between society and nature, or between the ruling and the ruled, was no longer thought of. At that time, patriarchy was already taken for granted.

The Gnostic view had accepted the State. It did not question it any more, and those who could afford it tried to flee its consequences and its ugliness. In this way, the two main tendencies in thinking about patriarchal society came about: *idealism* and *materialism*. The two should not therefore be regarded, as usual, as pure contradictions, but as two sides of one coin, the “Siamese twins” of patriarchy: the “materialistic” side fighting actively against the lasting importance of “matter,” the mater-mother, nature, the goddess, and life, in order to get them under control, and the “idealistic” side propagating the ideal of a motherless world, a purely patriarchal utopian paradise that seems peaceful because it appears to have finally resolved the contradictions with the material, matriarchal world or what remains of it.

Idealism thus proves to be no less violent than materialism, because it is formulating the *idea* that became the project of a *material realization*, which cannot be other than radically violent.

From then on nature and women were no longer respected in their own subjectivity, beauty, truth, goodness, and strength, their inventions, abilities, products and culture, their *gifts* to the world since time immemorial. They were seen, instead, as representing the “chaos,” the “sin,” and the “evil” that had to necessarily be subjugated *under* and transformed by the socio-economic-political-ideological-religious-technological project of patriarchy. From this point of view, women and nature had to be oppressed, exploited, expropriated, transformed, and destroyed in a way that could be used as proof of male superiority, strength, and creativity.

Capitalism: The Latest Stage of Patriarchy

Having defined patriarchy, what does this mean for defining capitalism? From my analysis of patriarchy it follows that capitalism and modernity, including so-called socialism, far from being or becoming independent from patriarchy, are the latest stage of patriarchy. My hypothesis is that patriarchy crystallizes into capitalism. Capitalism is the period in which patriarchy becomes really serious. *Homo faber* is supposed to be finally replaced by “homo creator,” a sort of secularized God.

This means that with capitalism there is a break as well as a continuation in patriarchy. But both tend in the same direction, namely fostering patriarchy. The logics of patriarchy led straight to the modern epoch, because capitalism is the promise to finally realize the futuristic Gnostic utopia materially and on earth. It consists of the intent to produce a purely patriarchal society, “cleaned” of all its matriarchal vestiges, and propagated as a male-created second paradise, including the invention of a finally “good” patriarchal “mother.”

Metaphysics are to become the new physics. This is the propaganda of modern society as a whole, its politics, economy, religion—especially in the form of Protestantism—and technology.

Gnosticism becomes secularized. The content is the same, but the program has become one of action. The times of mere contemplation are fading away, the *vita contemplativa* is followed by a new kind of *vita activa* (Arendt 1987).

Since the Renaissance, the always increasing numbers of inventors and colonizers, scientists and soldiers, entrepreneurs and explorers, settlers and missionaries, merchants and money lenders are the modern activists on their way to the proposed, second, man-made and final paradise on earth (Rifkin 1998).

This is the beginning of the “Great Transformation” (Polanyi 1978) for which modern Europe became so famous. The new epoch was for the most part *not* seen as a continuation of an earlier one. It seemed, instead, to be the birth hour of a totally new society, not bound to history any more, a society that would be able to solve all the problems of mankind (indeed, not of woman-kind) for ever—like the U.S. today.

From the point of view of patriarchy, capitalism is the epoch in which women, nature, and life in general are finally successfully replaced by the artificial products of industry: gifts by exchange; subsistence goods by commodities; local markets by a

world market; foreign cultures by western culture; concrete wealth—gifts by money, machinery, and capital—the new abstract wealth; living labour by machines; the brain/rational thinking by “artificial intelligence”; women by sex-machines and “cyber-sex”; real mothers and/or their wombs by “mother-machines”; life energy by nuclear energy, chemistry, and bio-industry; and life in general by “artificial life” like genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The only problem that remains today consists in how to “replace” the elements and the globe itself.

Therefore, technological progress, through the development of modern sciences and the invention of the machine as a totally new techno-system, is the logical backbone of the modern patriarchal epoch. Patriarchy itself is progress, and all “progress” today is patriarchal. It serves the project of a materialization of metaphysical images via an industrial “life”-production which I call the “alchemical system” in development, because the idea behind it is as old as patriarchy and its first attempts to progress used the methods of a patriarchally-modified “alchemy” (Werlhof 2001).

The invention of profit that could be drawn from this adventure of the whole world’s transformation convinced always more people, mostly men. But many people, especially women, had to be violently forced to participate in the new game. The political means consisted in processes of “original accumulation” which deprived the peasants of their means of production and the women even of the disposal over their bodies – through the so called “witch – hunt” - by leaving nearly no way to survive beyond capitalism (Federici 2004).

Through all this progress mother earth will be more and more destroyed. Some of these fast growing destructions are already irreversible, especially those due to nuclear and genetic modifications (Anders 1995; Chargaff 1988). Artificial death and artificial wealth—the violent “nothing”—a lot of money, is all that is left. The earth is on the way to being transformed into dead “capital,” full of empty holes on the one side, and trash-hills for the next billion years on the other.

That all this is possible shows that most people believe in the violent nihilism of patriarchy and its dangerous delusion that has become “real.” This astonishing fact can only be understood when one considers that the “alchemical wonders” patriarchy is promising, do not stem just from modern times, but are prophecies already 5,000 years old. Therefore, the destruction and desertification of the global ecology, including the human one, has not led to a general panic. On the contrary, it seems that, at least in the West, it is believed that only when the natural world has gone, can the patriarchal one finally be constructed, in all its glory, instead.

Capitalism—as well as socialism—with its activism, optimism, positivism, rationality, and its irrational belief in patriarchy, world domination, money, science, technology, and violence, is not just capitalism, but has to be defined as “capitalist patriarchy” (and, by the way, not as “patriarchal capitalism” because there is no non-patriarchal capitalism). This epoch is still on the march because it has not yet reached its destination. Therefore, there is no post-capitalist, post-industrial, post-modern or post-materialist epoch in sight—unless capitalist patriarchy is stopped by a breakdown of its resources, technologies, markets, and money systems, by huge natural and or social catastrophes, or by an upheaval of the people who do not want to lose their lives, their planet, and the future of their children. If the “matter” of capitalism, its *mater*, its mothers, its women, and its matriarchal remains do not “obey” any more, and if nature fails to as well, only then will capitalist patriarchy disappear. And as capitalist patriarchy is obviously not a society for eternity, all this may well be happening today already.

The “Deep” Alternative

What Has to be Recognized

The alternative to capitalist patriarchy has to be a “deep” one, or it will fail. First of all, the “roots” of this war system will have to be recognized at all levels of society, individual life, history,

and the globe. This will occur like a huge transdisciplinary research-project of and for the people. Out of this experience, the alternative will be a systematically non-capitalist and non-patriarchal one. It will be based on the remains of the “second culture” of patriarchy and of the gift-paradigm within patriarchal society, because they offer a body of concrete experiences people have been familiar with ever since humankind began on earth. Even though these have been underestimated, hidden and made invisible to most of us, they can be made conscious again, and this is happening already in many parts of the world (see Bennholdt-Thomsen, von Werlhof and Faraclas 2001)

Even if it appears overwhelming to overcome not only 500 years of modernity, but 5,000 years of patriarchal traditions, this is actually very little in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of years of human experiences outside patriarchy that we have to draw upon.

On the other hand, partial change/reform that maintains features of capitalist patriarchy will most probably, and quickly, lead back to the system that must to be overcome if we want to continue life on earth. Whether the alternative/s that can be found on this basis will again be matriarchal ones or not, cannot be foreseen. At least they will be *post-patriarchal*. At the moment it is historically open if patriarchy can be re-invented, and/or what a matriarchal society and a gift-economy would mean today.

What Has to be Done

What is needed is a re-version of a perverted parasitic society and (wo)mankind. The patriarchal “mother-father” as a “cyborg,” which is the alchemical materialization of a metaphysical fiction has to fade away as soon as possible. We can accomplish this in a number of ways, mainly:

- de-constructing patriarchal institutions, policies, economies, technologies, and ideologies;
- making visible patriarchy as the second culture and the gift paradigm and recognizing their importance in every day life;
- giving up the metaphysical Gnostic worldview, including the belief in patriarchal religions and the patriarchal philosophy of idealism-materialism;
- re-gaining a matriarchal spirituality that leads again to a recognition of the interconnectedness of all life;
- not defining technology/progress any longer as having to produce a substitute for life, women, and nature in general;
- not defining economy any longer as having to produce a “value” and a profit;
- recognizing that the paradise which is supposed to be invented, is already here: It is the earth as the only planet in the known universe that is full of life and the only one on which human beings can survive;
- taking action to save the earth from further human destruction;
- liberating ourselves from the idea that “material” [physical] life on earth is unimportant, sinful, humble, and something that has to be overcome;
- liberating ourselves from the delusion and the hubris that there can ever be a substitute for life and nature on earth;
- learning the lessons of nature again, recognizing that the destruction of nature for the purpose of its transformation does not lead to a better world, but to its destruction;
- giving up war, believing in violence, and seeking to rule over others; learning instead to live in commonality and organizing around egalitarian principles;
- taking seriously what we are doing in and to the world, and accepting our responsibility for the maintenance of life on the planet;
- learning to rehabilitate and love life, including our own, and the life of the earth;
- seeking creative ways for the maintenance and culture of life on the earth; acting in favour of and not in contradiction to them;
- giving up “masculation” (Vaughan 1997), “egotism” as the

search for competitive “identity,” and identifying instead with gift-giving and the traditions of men and women in matriarchal cultures;

- learning that women can teach us a lot;
- giving up belief in patriarchy and joining with others in order to stop it; listening instead to the joyful song of mother earth.

We need to be able to perceive an alternative to capitalist patriarchy and see that this alternative is already in the making. Soon we will not be able to understand how or believe that men and women supported and even admired such a destructive delusion for such a long time!

The Struggle

Many alternative movements in the whole world are *already* in this process, for historical reasons most of them initiated by the global South (Kumar 2007) and most of them guided by women. This is the case because the South and women have and had to bear most of the negative consequences of patriarchy and especially capitalist patriarchy. This is why they are at the forefront of the new movements. Additionally, for women it is still much easier to remember matriarchal society and culture, and gift giving, because the remains of matriarchal culture and practices have for the most part been maintained by them. The way into a post-patriarchal society, therefore, is much more logical and visible for women than for men. The thinking, acting, and feeling of women, especially of poor women in the South, often shows a high level of dissonance with western globalization and culture. They defend life on “two fronts” of the conflict: against the war system of capitalist patriarchy and in favour of a new society (Bennholdt-Thomsen, Werlhof and Faraclas 2001; Werlhof 1985, 1991, 1996).

At the University of Innsbruck a new international research project is planned, the title of which is “On the Way to a New Civilization? Examples of...” For this research project, current alternative movements worldwide will be compared. Movements that are active on only one of the “two fronts” we are facing today, or that do not address the most important aspects and dimensions of life under patriarchal attack, will find themselves in crisis, sooner or later. This is still the case with many movements in the North and of those traditionally guided by men (Werlhof 2007).

It seems as if a larger and deeper movement in the North will only be possible when the illusions of moving upward within the system have been lost and the daily conditions of life have worsened further. But, in the meantime, extremists of the far right and religious “fundamentalists” everywhere are preparing their field of action, too.

Nobody knows what will be left of alternative movements and “deep feminism” in North and South when the patriarchal system and order of society is imploding and dissolving itself, and when the conflicts within it become increasingly violent. But if anybody has a chance to move in the right direction, it is the truly alternative *post-patriarchal* groups, communities, and movements worldwide.

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Notes:

1 Compare, for example, the discussion about the “abolition of the state” and the idea of a “communist” society in Marx /Engels 1970: 415-451.

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