

The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy



Twee internationale feministische conferenties in Rome, april 2015

Verslag van Annine van der Meer

Inleiding

Eind april 2015 woonde ik in Rome in het Casa Internazionale delle Donne twee internationale conferenties bij.

1. Als eerste de tweedaagse **Maternal Subjectivities:**

Psychology/Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture and the Arts op woensdag en donderdag 23-24 april, georganiseerd door prof. dr. Andrea O'Reilly van de York University in Toronto in Canada en oprichter/directeur van The Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (MIRCI). Ik woonde eerder op 23-25 oktober 2009 een MIRCI-conferentie bij in Toronto getiteld 'A (M)OTHERWORLD IS POSSIBLE', waarvan ik een uitgebreid verslag maakte ([LINK](#)). Deze Romeinse MIRCI-conferentie bleek een kleinschalige en overwegend door Engelstalige Canadese feministen bezochte conferentie. Twee panels van deze conferentie handelden over de Gift-Economy. Deze panels heb ik bijgewoond en de redes hiervan samengevat.

Andrea O'Reilly hield op de tweede Gift Economy conferentie in Rome 2015 een indrukwekkende rede, waarover hierna meer. Zij nodigde mij uit om volgend jaar op de MIRCI-conferentie in Athene een boekpresentatie te houden over mijn boek *The Language of MA*. Ook bood zij als uitgever van Demeter Press aan distributeur van het boek in Canada en de VS te worden.

2. Als tweede was er de driedaagse conferentie op vrijdag-zaterdag-zondag 25-26-27 april getiteld **The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy** en georganiseerd door Mrs. Genevieve Vaughan, oprichter van The International Feminists for a Gift Economy. Eerder had zij op 17 juli 2010 in Rome een Gift-economy-conferentie georganiseerd; deze 2015 conferentie bleek veel grootschaliger. Sprekers van over de hele wereld waren ingevlogen. In Italië was de belangstelling van met name jonge vrouwen, die het Berlusconi-tijdperk geheel ontgroeid zijn, overweldigend. Honderden Italiaanse feministen woonden deze conferentie bij. Er was een internetverbinding waardoor al degenen die geen gereserveerde plaats voor de gratis toegankelijke conferentie hadden weten te bemachtigen, de conferentie elders in het gebouw of thuis, konden volgen. De voertalen waren Engels-Italiaans. Achterin de

zaal werden de Italiaanse lezingen simultaan in het Engels vertaald en de Engelse lezingen in het Italiaans. Koptelefoon op en luisteren naar de vertaalster! Deze gang van zaken bespaarde enorm veel tijd.

Samenvattend: de stortvloed aan informatie en nieuwe contacten was overweldigend. In onderstaande geef ik een korte samenvatting van de twee conferenties van in totaal vijf dagen.

Onderstaand verslag bevat in het Engels:

- de abstracts en cv's van de sprekers
- korte samenvatting van de panels over de Gift Economie van de eerste MIRCI-conferentie
- de samenvattingen van alle lezingen de tweede Gift-economy-conferentie

Maternal Subjectivities: Psychology/Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture and the Arts. Gift-Economy Panels

Thursday, April 23, 2015. 9.30 am -12.45 pm Panel 1 and 2.

Panel 1. Chair: Letecia Layson. 9.30-11.00 am.

Genevieve Vaughan – The Gift in the Heart of Language

International Feminists for a Gift Economy, Italy/USA

Abstract. Communication between mothers (caregivers) and children is based on gift giving. The free transfer of nurturance is the model for the gift economy *and* for language. Mothering/being-mothered is the core of a redefinition of the human as a maternal species trapped and exploited by the market and its culture.

Bio. Genevieve Vaughan (b. Texas 1939) founded the international activist Foundation for a Compassionate Society (1987-2005), the Temple of Sekhmet in Cactus Springs, Nevada, (1992-present) and initiated a network: International Feminists for a Gift Economy (2001- present).

Summary. There is a huge difference between the gift and exchange. In the gift you are satisfying someone's needs; in the exchange you satisfy your own needs for profit. The first gift of the mother to the baby is breast milk, holding and closeness. There are turn taking interactions between mother and child. After 6 weeks the child and the mother start vocal and gestural proto-conversations which are described as 'musical'. The mother is the nurturer and the child is the nurture-receiver. By imitating the nurturing attitude of the mother, the child begins life as a 'motherer', also the boys.

In patriarchy boys are taught to be the opposite of their mothers. They grow up in macho-groups and are told not to be girlish, not wanted to be touched. They become isolated and grow up in the alien market-based planet of adulthood. This causes motivations towards competition and domination, which serve the market logic. At a certain point girls follow their brothers into patriarchy and capitalism. Children start to understand money and exchange only from their 4-5th year. Before this they live in the gift economy created by their mothers or caretakers and their subjectivity

develops there.

Vicki Noble - The Natural Gift of Female Healing

Santa Cruz, CA, USA

Abstract. I will discuss the hormone oxytocin as the “healing hormone” and link it to female shamanism and women in groups. In an obvious way, the mother is the first healer as she sings to her child, shares language and touch, and provides safety (measurable in terms of oxytocin).

Bio. Vicki Noble is a healer, artist, writer, scholar, and teacher, co-creator of Mother peace Tarot, and author of eight books, including *Shakti Woman* and *The Double Goddess*; her books have been translated and published in several countries. She travels and teaches internationally.

Summary. I will talk about the biological basis of matriarchal social structures. 200.000 years ago the humans came out of Africa. They descended from Lucy, three millions years ago. There is an important book of the anthropologist Nancy Makepeace Tanner, who did fieldwork in Indonesia with the Minangkabau. She wrote the book *On becoming Human*, 1981. She saw primates differently than in the traditional viewpoint. We humans are much related to the Bonobo when becoming human. This has nothing to do with man the hunter but with the relation mother-child. This relation is the actual catalysator in becoming human: the female bonding, while foraging women groups also bond. Bipedalism made the child dependent. The mother shared the food with the youngsters. Offspring nurtured by the mothers had a survival advantage. We separate studying the mother from infant (Jean Piaget gave this bad example). This is no good. When studying the child you must study the mother-child relation. **The hormone oxytocin** becomes available during lactation. It starts to be made in the body of the mother while giving birth and producing breast milk. In the first hour after giving birth the mother and her child(ren) fall in love as an outcome of the production of oxytocin.

The ancient mothers carried the child wherever they went; they lived in mother-centered genealogical groups. According to Tanner the mothers invented stone tools, containers and were busy inventing things in order to survive with their offspring. Not the hunter but the *mother* was the centre of *human humanization*. The female chose male partners, fatherhood did not exist, it was not yet instrumentalized; it was a society without husbands.

Symbolizations lie at the basis of conceptual thought: symbols are the red ochre, the moon calendar, abstract vulva's and venusfigurines. The research of the goddess movement is very rich in the last 30 years.

Oxytocin has healing power and works against inflammation. Dr. Pat Parker tested it and proved this. Today they are injecting artificial oxytocin, which is untested and may cause damage.

In matriarchal societies children were raised by their grandmothers, mothers, aunts etc: a unified and collective raising of children. It guaranteed a sustainability and *peace* for millennia on earth.

Note the book of Shelley E. Taylor: *The Tending Instinct: Women, Men and the Biology of Relationships*, California, 2003. She states that the neo-cortex of the human being is developed by the *intelligent mothering* in a harmonious group and society. Intelligence is related to mothering. Women give life and sustain life.

Peggy Reeves Sanday in her book *Women at the centre* continued Tanner's investigation in Indonesia in the Minangkabau culture. Sanday found out that women in their nurturing gift-giving were responsible biologically and psychologically for giving the world healthy and happy children. Unfortunately, this is all done away in deconstructionalism in postmodern times.

Erella Shadmi – Motherhood as an Alternative to Post Humanism and Post-Gender.
Beit Berl Academic College, Israel

Bio. Erella Shadmi is a radical feminist, peace and anti-racism activist and scholar. She co-founded Kol Ha'Isha - the Jerusalem feminist center and the Fifth Mother - a woman's peace movement, former head of Women's and Gender Studies Program and a senior lecturer in criminology and law enforcement at Beit Berl College.

Abstract. Since Simone de Beauvoir, mainstream feminism devalues motherhood and proposes ways, with only limited success, to liberate women from its burden (women with no children, career, work-family balance, late motherhood). Lately this path to women's liberation becomes realistic by new technologies of reproduction, which disconnect between motherhood, reproduction and parenthood. This crucial turn is of special significance within the broader movement towards post-humanism that opens the possibility to eliminate biological motherhood completely or, at least, restrict its need, thus, successfully bringing patriarchy to its utopian and ultimate stage. This progression is reflected in so-called equality (or liberal) feminism in family, politics, employment and so forth, transforming into gender mainstreaming, transforming into post-gender. Thus, equality feminism, accepting the logic of patriarchy, collapses into itself as it reaches its ultimate goal (full equality). I however believe that feminism as a movement and ideology is capable of critical reflexivity so as to understand the need to stop, contemplate and alter its route. This paper argues that it is in fact motherhood – as understood by motherly gift economy, matriarchal legacy, indigenous thought of the Global South but also the West (Italy, for example) – that draw an alternative path for future progress of humanity.

Summary. Since Simone de Beauvoir motherhood is *disconnected* from humanity. Work is the Promised Land; have no children, only have careers. It is the end of motherhood. Other women take care of the children. Feminists nowadays are deconstructing motherhood and not work. Centrality of work has to do with neoliberalism. We have been pushed out of heaven with blood, sweat and tears for work! We postpone having children or have children from artificial wombs. This is the time of post-genderism, which is no good. New fashion designers create unisex-clothing. This post-genderism and trans-genderism is a general trend; it eliminates biological motherhood. It brings patriarchy to an ultimate state in claiming the human ability to control Mother Nature. In this trans-humanism and post-humanism the body is reshaped in an unisex-body. In going into this, feminism resided itself to a western patriarchal worldview. It eliminates motherhood and gender. Fortunately there are feminists as Barbara Alice Mann and Genevieve Vaughan who give us back the symbol of the mother and show us the way home. We need **rematriasation or rematriation. We need a feminism which includes (themes around) motherhood.**

Note of Annine about Simone de Beauvoir: Simone de Beauvoir states that

motherhood is a trap for women. She sees motherhood as the root of female oppression. She formulates the ideal for women to stay away from her 'fate of motherhood' through which women 'are bound to their bodies like animals'. Motherhood in this view is a pure biological function. According to Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve, *Motherhood in Patriarchy*, Berlin, Toronto, 2013, 65 'This approach still determines a large part of the women's movement today'.

Angela Dolmetsch – Nashira an Ecovillage Built by Women on the basis of the Gift Economy Nashira un Canto de Amor, Colombia

Abstract. On a 3 hectare site in Colombia, 88 women victims of the Colombian conflict and their families built a sustainable eco-village. They produce their own organic food and specialize in activities such as plantain growing, noni fruit products, manufacturing of ceramic ware, a solar restaurant, and different crops and plants as free gifts from Mother Nature.

Bio. Angela Dolmetsch PhD

Education: Ph.D. Government, 2006 at London School of Economics, M.A 1989:

London University, Law Degree 1980: Universidad San Buenaventura, Colombia

Publications "La otra Cara del Dolar", (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo 1985)

"Of Governments and Guerrillas, Terrorism and Torture in Latin America (London: Biddles, 1988)

Summary. Angela presented a beautiful PP presentation, which she gave me to me in order to show it in Holland. I had heard her several times on earlier conferences, with pleasure. What was new to me was that in the direct neighborhood of the eco-village Nashira recently pre-Columbian cultures of the Malagana and Kansaterwa cultures were discovered, which were matriarchal and practiced the Gift-Economy. The Malagana-culture was discovered 17 years ago when a sugar-cane-worker dug up a gold figurine. Angela showed the recent finds of ancient female symbols and figurines, which were impressively beautiful. The eco-village Nashira, where women lead, is built on sacred grounds. There they found as much gold as in the tomb of Tutankhamen.

In the following I use the texts from Angela's PP. It is important to understand that Nashira is self-sustaining. They produce their own organic food and specialize in activities such as plantain growing, noni fruit products, manufacturing of ceramic ware, a solar restaurant, and different crops and plants as free gifts from Mother Nature.

The social organization of these women is most inspiring. Decisions are taken by consensus and the tasks of cleaning, looking after the children and maintaining the eco-village are done through mingas or collective work. By applying the gift economy in their daily lives, the women of Nashira have developed a unique project where solidarity and maternal love generates a happy and sustainable community.

Second talk Angela Dolmetsch (Colombia): Nashira: an Eco Village Built by Women on the Basis of the Gift Economy. Saturday, 25th of April. Gift Economy Conference.

Summary. Angela gave the same wonderful talk with PP presentation as she did earlier. The only thing what was new to me that 'malagana' the name of the refound

culture close to Nashira, means 'bad women' or prostitutes.

Panel 2. Chair Bernedette Muthien 11.15 am - 12.45 pm

Bernedette Muthien – Rematriating the Gift Paradigm and African Ubuntu from Patriarchal Cooptation.

Constitutional Commission for Cultural, Religious and Language Rights, South Africa

Abstract. The majority peoples in many African countries are matrilineal and gift-oriented. Motherhood is a gift that *all* adult members of society engage, irrespective of gender. The gift of these indigenous African social expressions is obscured by the dominance of Western dogma and exploitation, and these societies desire rematriation, reclaiming ancestral resources.

Bio. Bernedette Muthien serves on the Exco of the International Peace Research Association, and its African affiliate. She chairs the special Committee on Human Remains of the Council of Iziko Museums of South Africa. She is part-time Commissioner for South Africa's Constitutional Commission for Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights, and chairs its Research and Policy Development Committee.

Summary. African feminists have another lens. The majority in Africa is of matrilineal lineage originating from the mother. The Khoi-San are matricentric. They are usually called 'bushmen', but the two words together mean 'human person'. There is no gender issue or individualization. It is like the egg, which has no gender. Nature is divine. Khoi-San live in the mountains and took refuge in the Kalahari Desert. 6 countries border in this desert. States closed the borders and when Khoi-San people wanted to visit their relatives over the borders they were put into prison. Bernedette calls the Bantu-speaking people who migrated from the middle of Africa to the south 'angry men'. Then the colonial Dutch came; they removed the original things and brought in the issue of gender. The ancient indigenous Khoi-San had to retreat to the mountains and into the Kalahari Desert.

Eve comes from the Kalahari. It is been proven by Mitochondrial DNA that Eve comes from the Kalahari. The roots of all language come from the Kalahari. Mother's tribe gave birth to people and language.

Bernedette states that she was 'gendered' or 'ungendered' in education. In matri-societies there is no such a distinction. She became victim of gender-violence as many women do. Patriarchy brought divisions on gender, race, wealth and so on.

The Dagara in Burkina-Fasso have a matrilineal egalitarianism. The mother's brothers is very dear in matri-clans. He is a 'motherer' or a 'male mother'. A parent who mothers can be of any gender.

In Africa people know a women-to-women-marriage. The famous female author Ifi Amadiume talks about it. It is not a sexual but a social relation. The older woman marries the younger girl, who inherits the property. Sexual relationships are fluid and bi-sexual. Colonialism designed 'boxes' as 'male' and 'female'.

Concluding: Eurocentric models are not normative. Relook, revisit and look through another lens. Go for **rematriation, return to the uterus.**

Second talk. Bernedette Muthien (South Africa): Rematriating the Gift Paradigm and African Ubuntu from Patriarchal Cooptation, Sunday, 26th of April.

Summary. Unless we free our oppressed mindsets, we will not free our consciousness. Bernedette is of mixed Indian and Khoi-San blood. Khoi-San means 'people'. They love the word Ubuntu, which means 'I am what I am because we all are'. They live in nature. But since Thomas Hobbes stated that life in pure nature is primitive, his view is considered as being true.

South-Africa experienced several ways of colonization. At this very moment 90% of the economy is in white hands and 90 % of the government is in black or colored hand. All Europeans who flooded South-Africa were patriarchal. The original peoples were matricentric. But they went away and have found refuge in the desert. Germans poisoned the wells in the desert; the natives are now trying to get money from the German government in order to repair.

Bernedette repeats that the original DNA of the first Eve is coming from the Kalahari Desert; it is the uterus of the world. The natives have practices that transcend gender. They know 'the male mother', the brother of the mother. They also know woman-to-woman-marriages in order to keep property in the female line. The Germans said that the San were bisexual and promiscuous; the heat must be the cause of this strange behavior!

The only way to be human is to be connected. Being human is a delicate thing: it is thread that connects us and can break.

Coumba Toure - The concept of Teranga - Gift economy in the Sahel

Akosha Africa, Senegal

Abstract. « Teranga » in Wolof commonly translated by hospitality. It refers also to an old tradition of giving. The practice is still strongly surviving and is mainly practiced between in laws or for a guest and strangers.

Bio. Coumba Toure is the coordinator for Ashoka Africa Empathy Initiative. She is co-founder Sogoba Production a social enterprise based in West Africa where she designs education material for children. She is a writer and a storyteller, a feminist. She is a mother, a sister, a daughter, a coach to many.

Summary. We Africans have a different way of thinking about the mother. The word 'Mother' has a lot of meanings. You have 'Wolobá': this is the one that gave birth. But a child in Africa has a lot of mothers. There can be somebody in your family who just likes you as you are; this can be your (spiritual) mother. She recognizes herself in you. You can have more in common with her than with your 'Wolobá'.

Coumba tells us about her children book 'The twins of Bama'; which is rooted in a very old oracular tradition. She wrote it and gives it to us. It is beautifully illustrated. A mother who was not the biological mother, raised twin girls. They wanted to look for their biological mother; at the end they realized that all the women they met on their trip were their mothers. All women were mothering and were mothers.

MU or MA. The name of her second and forthcoming book is MU. It is the name of a clay pot or uterus, which gives the power of balance. The MUSU are the ones who carry the pot. Mangala Ba is the name of the creatrix. She says: I will call you MA, you are the people of the supreme deity. MA-volunteers were called MUSU, carriers of the clay pot with the power of balance, the sense of justice.

New children stories. Coumba advocates a new type of story about being female, about motherhood, about a new sense of community. Go with these into the regular schools and change consciousness.

Coming from Senegal she has in her extended family many 'male-mothers'. They are very important. They are the mothers' brother and the uncles of her children. Coumba's own uncle is like a mother: he provides in everything his cousins need, he made things for us, he cooked for us. He negotiates and puts everything aside to arrange things for us. This is normal. He is like a mother, giving the gift and taking care.

Questions. People who are not mothering do not give, they are not linked. Patriarchy brought a cleavage to the biological mother and the divine Mother. Motherhood is de-biologized. In North-America you only have the nuclear family. The way women give birth is devastating. Everything is mechanized. They de-biologize motherhood. It is about the craziness of the nuclear family. That is our problem: the nuclear family. Africa has big families, who take care of each other. You share your child and they all care. That makes the difference.

Second talk. The concept of Teranga - Gift economy in the Sahel

Akosha Africa, Senegal. Sunday, 26th of April. Gift Economy Conference.

Summary. Teranga means giving graciously. In Senegal people are fond of rituals in which they give everything they have, away. Coumba is criticizing this behavior. They give very precious things; it is too much. People make a point of ruining themselves.

By this they gain respect; it gives them a respected position in society. They love the interactions, it gives them much pleasure. It is an opportunity to have fun.

Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve - The New Motherhood Trap

FIPAZ (Research Institute for Critique on Patriarchy and dealing with Alternative Civilisations), Austria/USA

Abstract. Western motherhood is transformed, perverted and reversed into a duty owed to society and kept on track by the institutions of pedagogy, medicine, psychology and law. Based on my book it will be demonstrated that new technologies as well as the dominant economic and political structures are all parts of the attempt of the patriarchy to eliminate the creative capacity of the world, of life and of nature and replace it with supposedly better and more perfect forms of life. Thus motherhood today is result of the artificial idea of "patriarchal motherhood". My thesis is that motherhood is to be eliminated, both symbolically as well as in reality, in favor of an artificially created motherhood – as an institution or technically by in vitro fertilization. I will describe my understanding of patriarchy and its characteristics concerning motherhood: the gender wage gap as result of motherwork, the German image of motherhood, the state replacing absent fathers, the mother blaming in psychotherapy, the isolation and overload of mothers, the marginalizing of single motherhood and so forth. A labor market changed by neoliberal principles leaves mothers without choices: combining living in dignity, making a living and caring for their children does not "free women" but results in an exhausted generation fallen into the modern "motherhood trap".

Bio. Mariam I. Tazi-Preve teaches at universities in the USA and Austria. She is a

feminist scholar on politics and reproduction and member of FIPAZ. She is the author of *Motherhood in Patriarchy*. Currently Mariam works on a new book and is co-launching the new *Journal of Critique on Patriarchy*.

Summary. Patriarchy breaks unity in parts and sells the parts. This is the characterization of patriarchal motherhood: motherhood is reduced to one person. Motherhood is individualized. Women suffer, children suffer. Look at all the psychoanalysis and therapy which is needed about the mother-child-relationship. Children complain about their mothers who often had to raise their children in a single-family because the fathers left: 'my mother was too.... (Fill in yourself) ...too...even too... close. **They should not complain about the mother but about the system.**

The concept of ego means not being connected. We have 50% divorce rate in nuclear western families. Maternal family life in non-western societies is not defined by marriage.

We in the west live in a vicious circle: there is no freedom with work and there is no freedom without work. The population rate is diminishing. That is why the state is against abortion and stimulates adoption. The whole knowledge of contraception was destroyed by witch hunts.

Note Annine: I bought Mariam's book *Motherhood in Patriarchy*, Berlin, Toronto, 2013. She gives a very sharp and precise analyze of the many lonely, single and overburdened mothers in motherhood. This is not the place to give a review; but the book is a good reading more than worth.

Second talk Mariam Tazi-Preve (Austria/USA):

The New Motherhood Trap on Saturday 25th of April in the Gift-Conference.

Abstract of PPresentation.

Thesis:

- Patriarchal motherhood is a result of a radical transformation towards an normative and artificial creation
- Multidisciplinary approach is necessary – Political Science, Gender Studies, Sociology, Demography, Psychology, Family Studies in a European context
- Interdisciplinary Paradigm of the "Critical Theory of Patriarchy", developed at the University of Innsbruck, Austria

Critical Theory of Patriarchy

- Projektgruppe (2009, 2011, Werlhof 2009 a.o.)
- Transdisciplinary meta-theory
- Epistemological theory
- The illusional idea: The father wants to replace the mother
- Continuous destruction of the existing nature and human beings
- Turning everything into a commodity
- The purpose is to create a new artifical world

The Roots of Patriarchal Motherhood

- An ideological idea
- Implication of violence as normal
- Mothers historically first enemys of politics – do not want to sacrifice their

- children to war
- Roman law decisive for disempowering mothers
- Independent motherhood as a crime: the unmarried mother

The Essence of Patriarchal Motherhood

- The Mother shall not care about her own needs
- She shall follow an ideal of heterosexual partnership which can only fail
- She shall live in pain and alienation
- She shall do her duty in favour of the „family- and work- machine“
- The culture of Mothering shall vanish: emotions, time, the female network, craft etc
- Women shall want to get rid of their maternal potency in favour of technicians creating supposedly „better outcomes“

The Methods: Destroy Motherhood by „divide and impera“

- Teaching mothers the „true motherhood“ (since the „Enlightenment“)
- The mother blaming
- The idealized mother image in psychology
- In the triangle of the nuclear family mothers must fail
- Splitting up maternal solidarity
- Separating the child from the mother to create the „new human resource“

Abolishing the Mother by Technology

- The patriarchal mother is allowed to „carry the child“ until she is replaced by an artificial uterus
- Abolition of motherhood in favour of production of supposedly genetically perfect procreation
- In the name of aid and freedom
- Reproductive technologies divide motherhood in many forms like:
 - The genetic mother who provides the egg
 - The surrogate mother who gestates the fetus
 - The social mother who raises the child

The Perversion of Motherhood

- Patriarchy is the process of transformation
 - From the mutuality to enmity
 - From the unconditional to the conditional
 - From solidarity to individualism/narcissism

Summary. Birth rates decline: abortion is all the time in the news. The definition of patriarchy (given by Gerda Lerner in 1991 and others) is: a system of dominance which takes over all structures and institutions. Then the Gender-issue came along: it was individualized and made subjective.

What is a feminist? Is Hillary Clinton, who makes war, a feminist? Feminism is losing its transformative power. There was a connection with the mothers and the suffering of the earth; but we are living in patriarchy, we are losing the vision of the first feminists.

Motherhood in patriarchy. We must understand that in patriarchy the father wants to replace the mother. There is a destruction of nature going on. There is a drive to create a new artificial world; in this world only the biological mother is responsible for

childraising. It is about being a single mother under difficult circumstances of some being. In the US there is an absence of fatherhood, an ambiguity of fatherhood; still they claim the right to have the children.

Women have three choices:

1. To be only a mother, which makes dependent.
2. To work part time, which makes oneself vulnerable in times of economic crisis.
3. To work full time which means they are three times burdened.

History shows that motherhood-movements are the most dangerous for war.

Roman law established the marriage and it was only allowed in marriage to become pregnant.

In these patriarchal times the culture of mothering shall vanish. Reproductive technology divides motherhood. Genetic mothers provide the egg; surrogate mothers gestate the fetus; social mothers replace the biological ones. Technology takes over. It divides motherhood, splits it up into pieces and sells it, commercializes it. That is how patriarchy normally acts. It destructs.

Motherhood in matriarchy. Motherhood in matriarchy was a collective principle, carried out by many.

*the erotic aspect was separated from family life.

*the mother-brother-relation was very strong. They formed the social family. Here an (extended) family is an organic body; the mother-child-relationship is important in order to raise healthy children and keep the mothers happy and in good health.

Pilwha Chang & Sangwha Lee - Ecofeminist Reconceptualization of Motherhood in the Global Era. Ewha Women's University, S Korea

Abstract. This paper attempts to reconceptualize motherhood going beyond these arguments of motherhood. Rather than seeing motherhood as unique instincts or roles limited to women only, but to rethink it as ethos which everybody can have and ought to have. The vision includes all women and men active in mothering and fostering capacities of motherhood.

Bio.

(i) Pilwha Chang is Professor of Department of Women's Studies, Ewha Womans University, Director of Ewha Institute for Leadership Development and Asian Center for Women's Studies at Ewha and Editor-in-Chief of *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*. Her research areas cover Asian feminisms, Korean Women's Studies, sexuality, health, development, leadership, and empowerment.

(ii) Sang Wha Lee is Emeritus Professor of philosophy, Ewha Women's University. Her special areas are feminist philosophy, ecofeminism, globalization and Asian Women's Studies. She has served as Director of Korean Women's Institute of Ewha, President of the Korean Association of Feminist Philosophy and the Korean Association of Women's Studies.

Note. The following summary is larger than the other ones because Sang Wha Lee was so kind to transmit to me their written lectures.

Summary. Both speakers gave an important talk about Motherhood in South-Korea, past, present and future from a perspective of gift economy and ecofeminism. The short talk was divided in four parts: 1. The beginning before patriarchy; 2. The

traditional patriarchy; 3. Patriarchal capitalism; 4. The future.

1. In the beginning before patriarchy there were strong women called bearwomen; there was a creation story out of a goddess; there were stories about the three mothers; now there is the beloved Buddhist goddess Quan Yin, the female part of bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, a female Buddha.

2. Traditional patriarchy knew the Confucian ideology. In these patrilineal families they preferred the sons above the daughters. There was male superiority above female inferiority. Women were confined to familial roles. The prestige of women consisted of having a successful son. Still the woman was central in family life.

3. Patriarchal capitalism brought growth in South-Korea but also an increased competition.

- *Successful schooling and climbing the social ladder were most important.

- *There are high private educational expenses.

- *Nowadays there is a lack of day care facilities.

- *There is a high divorce rate.

- *Working women's wages rate 66% of that of men.

- *Women are more in irregular jobs facing insecurity and are regarded as nurturers rather than breadwinners.

- *Women are marginalized. There is a feminization of poverty.

- *This has resulted in the world lowest birth rate as seen as caused by 'rational motherhood'.

- *There is 'instrumental motherhood' in the so called 'goose families'. The mothers takes children to study abroad while the father remains in Korea to be an earning machine, separation of couples is justified for the upward mobility.

- *Patriarchal capitalist ideology of motherhood pushes urban middle class mothers to become full time mother-housewife, sacrificing their lives for the child rearing role in order to make children as good commodities. Following the norm, middle class housewives live in social isolation and frustration.

- * Patriarchal capitalist ideology affect working mothers also as they feel guilty by this norm not having enough motherly duties to supervise their children's studies and scores. Because of their low incomes they are not able to pay extra for schooling.

- * There is sex imbalance with excess of males. This made Korea to a country with the largest bride import. Lower class men marry imported women.

For women there is this huge dilemma: self-fulfillment versus motherhood and job-fulfillment.

4. We need to shift the dominant paradigm of competition into an alternative paradigm of the gift-economy and the maternal basis of gift-economy. We need to realize that in almost all the societies in the east and west, the value judgment surrounding mothering, motherhood and maternity has been formulated by patriarchal social structure.

- *We need to think about mothering and find out the needs of children and take actions to satisfy the needs through bodily contacts. This fosters intimacy, sensitivity, sensibility and compassion.

- *We need to theorize about new ethical values and need to envision concrete action for alternatives. We must find out how gift economy can operate in macro-economic dimensions and in a global world economic system in which all life forms are

interrelated en interdependent.

*we need to extend the concept of mothering into the mothering of Mother Earth (ecofeminism).

Pilwha Chang e Sangwha Lee (South Korea): Ecofeminist Reconceptualization of Motherhood in the Global Era. Second talk Saturday 25th April Gift Economy Conference

Summary. Why we need paradigms? We scientists need to theorize and formulate; this is also a kind of activism. The theory is necessary in the process of consciousness raising. In the gift-economy we receive without having to pay. We contrast it with exchange economy of capitalism and globalism. This negative system creates scarcity, negative relationships and leads at the end to war.

Note. To me this lecture gave a special comfort because Prof. dr. Pilwha Chang started to say that theorizing is also a kind of action. It is needed to articulate what is good and not good and from that theoretical basis we are able to come to concrete actions.

I did a lot of theory my whole life and I never was an activist. I did not find time for it. This remark made me understand that by writing books and doing research I am an activist and feminist too, without standing on the barricade or founding a women's refuge as many of my feminist colleagues did!

Susan Petrilli - The Gift in the Heart of Language by Genevieve Vaughan.
University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy

The subtitle of this new book: the maternal source of meaning", expresses content and intent of this book well. Key words: "gift," "language," connected with "heart," and, in the subtitle, to "meaning", "maternal source"; here "meaning" resounds not only in the nude semantic sense, but also as open to the "significant", "bearing value".

Susan Petrilli - Mother-sense in the study of signs

University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy. Second talk on Monday, 27th op April.

Abstract. Victoria Welby contributed to sign and language sciences, placing themother-sense at the centre. Linguistics, semiotics and logic all benefited. Welby influenced great thinkers, firstly Peirce – his logic ("Chance, love and logic") and cosmology (agapism). With Vailati she blunted the sharpest arm of masculine logic: definition.

Bio. Susan Petrilli is Professor of Semiotics, Bari University. Her monographs include: Signifying and Understanding (2009), Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective (2010), Expression and Interpretation in Language (2012), The Self as Sign, the World and the Other (2014), Sign Studies and Semioethics (2014), Victoria Welby and the Science of Signs (2015).

Summary. Victoria Welby published two books in 1903 'What is meaning' and 1911 a book about the significance of language. She came from an English rich and noble

family and travelled all over the world with her mother. She was not educated in a school system, but she was educated by her mother. This must be the reason this intelligent person in so early times saw things completely different than her surroundings.

Welby: the mother sense is the primal sense, the nature sense, the natural instinct; it is the native sense, it is the original or common sense. It is connected with creativity, otherness, nurture sense.

**Kaarina Kailo - Reappropriating the Gifts of the Finnish Welfare State—
Corporate efforts to appropriate democracy and take over Citizen Rights**
Oulu City Council, Finland

Abstract. The Finnish welfare state with its many elements of a “maternal, gift-based economy” is being replaced by the anti-democratic market tyranny. In our joint research with Irma Heiskane and our art, we trace the gendered differences of ethos and values that reveal major differences between ancient gift economies, the welfare state and the neoliberal regime.

Bio. Kaarina Kailo has been professor at Oulu University, Finland, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Montreal, Canada and senior scholar of the Finnish Academy. Her activism, research and work as politician ranges from globalization and the Nordic welfare state, Finno-Ugric traditional ecological knowledge/gift economy, bear ceremonials and ancient models of maternal subjectivity.

Summary. The market behaves on the basis of the logic of masculation. The post-democratic welfare society is increasingly commercialized and masculated. Democracy in Finland is challenged if you have to pay 30.000 euros to get elected in the parliamentary elections. The take-over/appropriation of the concepts and practices of democracy and changing it through mind colonization into a fake-democracy is a major trend also in Scandinavia. Neoliberal capitalism under the guise of EU, Canada and the US is currently negotiating free trade and investment protection treaties (TTIP and CETA) which likely are very harmful for the citizens, because they leave room for suing entire states and can lead to enormous financial ‘penalties’ if corporations claim their rights to make profits have been affected. The multinational companies are a big threat for self-determination and national legislation regarding worker rights and environmental protections, to mention some critical realms.

The threats to the Finnish welfare state. The private sector consists of mainly woman-dominated services that women need as service providers (80%) and those needing them to be able to combine family and work. In Finland especially the elderly suffer in the so called neo-liberal welfare state. Service providers do not have time even to change the elderly peoples’ nappies. The American model of welfare, catering to needs rather than ensuring everyone’s inalienable universal rights is being introduced in Finland, too: it is about individual responsibility which typically falls on the shoulders of women. We have an increasingly technological, motherless society where nurturing or the gift labor on all levels will be robotized. This is a dysfunctional model. It is a system based on the values of competitiveness, economic growth and efficiency; with the GNP it is about money in circulation rather than ethical values. The Northern welfare state is based on financing public services

by *taxation*. Now the government will increase the cuts in public services, claiming to save the welfare state paradoxically by destroying it!. These savings cause many mental health problems; indeed, many elderly people commit suicide. Some are courageous enough to start collective communities based on the Gift. Kaarina pleads for the basic income among many other party claims. The costs for unemployment are the same as the costs the government wants to save. Her colleague Irma Heiskanen cites Bernard Lietaer who stated that any ecosystem falls if *efficiency* is placed above sustainability.

Note: The Belgian economist Bernard Lietaer wrote in 2012 *Geld and Duurzaamheid*, or *Money and Sustainability*, following Dennis Meadows, *Limits to Growth* (1972). It is pioneering new research from the Club of Rome.

Note: As a result of the cut-throat deficit cutting decisions of the right, in power, and with the Left party losing the elections, Kaarina also decided to shift her focus with her colleague Irma Heiskanen on Finnish-Ugric culture and its gift economies. Kailo and Heiskanen have begun to study ancient symbols, already researched by Russian scholars and the American prof. Mary Kelly as evidence of matriarchal societies also in the North: tree of life, birds, deer, bears and the goddess in human form are present in women's arts and crafts. This is important because these are the remnants of a pre-Indo-European culture from gatherers and hunters dating from Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic times.

A Film. Kaarina Kailo, Irma Heiskanen and Kirre Koivunen produced a film called "Finno-Ugric Guardian Spirits and Animal Mothers. Pohjola Mythology and Ecological Knowledge" (Kirre Koivunen as filmmaker). They have an exhibition on Finno-Ugric symbolism and textile art forthcoming in 2015

Second talk Kaarina Kailo (Finland): Reappropriating the Gifts of the Finnish Welfare State. Saturday 25th April, Gift-Economy-Conference.

Summary. After the arrival of the neoliberal/neoconservative politics in 1990s the gap in wealth between rich and poor has increased. Many women have been masculated as a result of the new economy. The feminine is increasingly a taboo as women internalize the devaluation of care and women's work. The model for Kailo is that of Iceland, for it much better than the neo-liberalism practiced in other Scandinavian countries. As a general critique, Kailo finds that you cannot rebuilt the masters house with the masters tools, you need a radically alternative type of politics. It is worth thinking about the meaning of the word 'privare'. In Latin the word 'privare' means 'to rob'. Privatisation means 'robbing'.

Questions. There are many bad things (suicides), but also good things evolving out of this crisis, the last phase of patriarchy. The elderly women live 20 years longer than men and some have the guts to start new women's communities. Slowly, slowly we are heading towards a new world view.

Elena Skoko: The gift of mothers in maternity care in Italy

Abstract. Women chose to give birth in hospitals under the promise of a better

assistance. Today this promise is being unfulfilled. Mothers are subject to continuous abuse in maternity care recognized by the WHO. They are building a network of mutual help putting into practice a tangible gift economy at service of the community and a failing system.

Bio. Elena Skoko is a mother, singer, storyteller and activist for human rights in childbirth. She is author of *Memoirs of a Singing Birth*, member of Human Rights in Childbirth in Italy, International MotherBaby Childbirth Organization, Babies Born Better Survey, and president of CoRDin Committee. She teaches Singing Birth Workshops internationally.

Note: After her talk Elena and I exchanged our books *The Memoirs of a Singing Birth* for *The Language of MA*. On the way home I read her book continuously, while waiting for the airplane in delay, while flying and in the train back to my house in Holland. I was/am impressed by her talk and her book.

Summary. Elena originates from Croatia and left her country in 1991 while the war in the 90ies was starting. Now she already lives in Italy for 24 years; part of the year she lives in Bali in Indonesia. Because I recently have visited this island (November 2014) I knew her town Kuta, the main city Denpasar, where she visited the hospital and I knew the nearby city of Ubud, the place where she delivered her daughter Koko. I even thought to recognize the street of the midwifery led birth center; it was very close to our hotel. I met Koko in Rome, her really beautiful daughter of 5 years old. Elena was 35 when she delivered her one and only child.

Human rights in childbirth. Elena advocates for human rights in childbirth. Birth in hospital has become exclusively medicalized and this doesn't necessarily mean scientific. The dominant 'fable' or in her words 'fabula' is that medicalized birth tends to be the *only* culturally appropriate option, the contemporary story of how babies are born. But this is not how the reality is. Real birth is something different. The most important thing the mother needs while giving birth is somebody she trusts and who trusts her, her body and her baby. In the persisting medical protocol there is no leading place for a midwife, a medical professional trained for normal, uncomplicated births. The doctor's presence is legally implied. The real hero, the mother, is ridiculed. The dominant 'fabula' tells both poorly and highly educated people that birth is always an emergency and a life threatening event where the hospital is the only solution to death, while other options outside the hospitals are horror stories, the "anti-fabula", where death happens as a rule. In the EU state Hungary was condemned by the European Court for Human Rights for not giving women the possibility to give birth at home. Free choice and privacy in childbirth are considered basic human rights in Europe. Nowadays, times are changing thanks to women's birth storytelling.

Second talk Saturday, 25th of April, Gift-Economy-conference. Mothers exchanging birth stories is a very important activity which can take place in women's groups. **Since birth moved to the hospital the delivery-stories have faded away, leaving generations of new mothers without knowledge about childbirth.** In national health-care delivery till now is free in Italy, but costs are rising. 30% are wasted on inappropriate assistance and on frequent examinations during pregnancy. Unnecessary interventions (such as episiotomies) are routine and Caesarean sections skyrocketed during the last three decades. Mothers have to lie on their

backs, a position which is disadvantageous for giving birth, and they may not choose their own birthing position. Sometimes the baby is pushed out with assistant's bodily force. The result is that women and staff do not trust the natural process of the female body anymore. The system tries to exclude women from the actual delivery, however they are active subjects and childbirth is not an illness.

Elena: I am an activist mother. I am dealing with human rights. Storytelling is a gift to the society and produces change both in the culture and in the medical protocols. The over-medicalized birth is systematic and often done without women's consent, but it is not meant to be abusive. The members of the medical team are also humans and in most of the cases they mean no harm. So when women publicly tell stories of their birth where their dignity, integrity and privacy were not respected this becomes a human rights issue that concerns all the parties involved and cannot be ignored. World Health Organization is considering the voices of women and states that 'abuse and disrespect in facility based childbirth' is an urgent issue and it should be prevented and monitored by the governments. Birth storytelling and mothers activism is changing the system, contributing to the economy by cutting on unnecessary costs and building new policies that include women's voices. It is a free gift to future generations and to the society's wellbeing.

More about options in childbirth and about gentle birth in Elena's book; also see the book of Mariam Irene Tazi – Preve, p. 23-24 on childbirth and motherhood issues.

Diem Lafortune - Family Preservation: Revisiting Traditional Adoption Practices

Toronto, ON Canada

Abstract. Patriarchal capitalist adoption regimes violate and destroy the mother/child relationship. Adoption orders often have "custody: no access" directives and are defended as protecting the adopting family. In contrast, the "gift" in the family preservation model supports the natal unit through "fostering" the mother and child together recognizing and building relationships.

Bio. Diem Lafortune, is a Plains Cree feminist, children's advocate, constitutional appellate lawyer, award winning singer/songwriter/poet and intellectual-at-large. She is a survivor/thriver of a North American style patriarchal/capitalist adoption regime. She has been breaking the silence on the buying and selling of human infants (adoption) for nearly twenty years.

Summary. This summary contains both talks Diem gave.

Diem is an impressive women from Canada, who sings and accompanies herself on her guitar (the letters of her first names are D. M., which together formed her name). She started to mention Elisabet Sahtouris' *Earthdance: Living Systems In Evolution*, University Press, San Francisco, 2000 and the medicine wheel; in the circle all aspects of the human being are in balance: the intellectual, emotional, mental and spiritual. Sahtouris wrote about the coming of the Indo-Europeans and the fundamental and negative changes this brought to the world and to women. Nature strives for order and balance rather than chaos.

The personal story. Diem was a daughter of a Cree women, but was adopted because her single mother could not take care for her; afterwards when the mother married and came to take her child, they told her that the child, which was to be

adopted by a family who did not want to tell her that she was adopted, was dead. Her biological mother had three other children but could not mother them out of grief; after 27 years she committed suicide. All this pain was felt by Diem. In 43 years she had 19 psychiatrists! Only the last German one told her that it was the adoption thing that was bothering her for so long; this was not recognized by the 18 earlier ones. Adoption was a non-issue. The earlier psychiatrists told her to be grateful to be adopted but she was not grateful at all. She was belittled and wounded by her adopted family. They kept saying: I don't know what is wrong with you. She had scars. She was not loved, only seen as a troublemaker. Later she found out that the adoption family had sent an earlier adopted child back to where it came from. She compares her situation as being in the deepest of a lake and only seeing water, no coast. Healing is realizing this and piling up stones so that you are going to see the land surrounding the lake. Healing is accepting the sadness. Diem not only felt grief but she also felt a very strong rage. After she found out about the real story, she was able to get a rear photograph of her biological mother. Then she could start to heal and start to appreciate herself.

The collective misery. Diem: adoption is not an individual problem but a collective one. Adoption is commercialized and much, much money is gained by 'selling' children to their adoptive-parents. Many adopted children find themselves as adults in psychiatric institutions; they have a crime record of violence, divorce and many end up in jail.

About mothering in patriarchy. The mother is so important; there is an attachment before birth. But in a nuclear family one mother has to take over all the functions, which the extended family did before. Our brains developed in community; single mothering is not natural. Diem rejects the capitalization of birth: artificial wombs, eggs from surrogate women. You are losing the gift, losing the relationship, losing humanity.

There are no solutions for single mums and bad commercialized adoption in this patriarchal society. We cannot continue with the nuclear family in the centre of society.

Commercializing motherhood. The adoption industry declared 4.8 billion dollars in income in one year in the US. That makes it the **4th largest industry** in the US. Now we understand why abortion is prohibited and the pharmaceutical industry is behind all this. This is capitalism in its last and extinct phase of globalization. The market is only interested in the consumer.

Diem last sentence: The state promises jobs, but we were liberated from work. Rise against the state!

Vicki Noble adds: 45 years ago we wanted to smash the nuclear family and what did come from it?

Second talk. Family Preservation: Revisiting Traditional Adoption Practices.

Sunday, 26th April

Diem: Life is a poem travelling me.

Friday, April 24, 2015 Chair Barbara Bickel Performing Mothering

Session E1 9.30-11.00 am

Barbara Bickel and Nané Jordan: The art of Napping – A Creative Practice in Maternal Space

Bio's. Coming into the Tosi room I found Barbara and Nané making the final arrangements for the labyrinth on the floor and erecting a big tree of life with all kinds of colorful textiles hanging from it.

I knew Nané from the Toronto-conference where she gave a talk about the preservation of the placenta; she has next to midwifery skills, a PhD in education and has degrees in visual arts. Nané and Barbara were with 5 others my fantastic roommates in the dormitory in the Casa Internazionale delle Donne, where men are not allowed to sleep.

Nané's colleague Barbara Bickel is an Associate Professor of Art Education and Director of Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, USA; she immediately placed my book *The Language of MA* in the centre of the labyrinth.

Summary: We started in this sacred space by breathing and taking a little rest, a nap. It was a kind of a Nap-In (compare to Sit-In)! After some PP slides with other Nap-Ins in all kinds of outside and inside places, mostly in the US and Canada, Nané started a visualization. Then we had to put our visions into fabrics which were ready for us on the table. The 20 participants sew the chosen fabrics together, chatted and got to know each other better. At the end the tree of life was decorated with these fabrics.

This workshop brought us back in the stillness of the womb, where you can heal and breath deeply, take a rest and are given a vision. All this motherly gifts were handed over to us.

Museum. In the afternoon of Friday 24th of April I took a break. I visited on my own the Museums on the Capitol Hill and had a wonderful time. Just a few days before I visited the Vatican Museums and the huge Etruscan Museum Villa Giulia and I felt myself Alice in Wonderland. Unfortunately I came this late afternoon too late to enter the temple of Kybele on the Palatine Hill. This must wait for another visit. But I was happy with all the priestesses and priests, also of Magna Mater Kybele, I saw this afternoon in the Capitoline museums.

The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy



the Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy

Rome, Italy 25-26-27 April 2015

Casa Internazionale delle Donne
Via della Lungara 19 – 00165

Organized by Centro Studi Femminista per l'Economia del Dono and by International Feminists for a Gift Economy

Saturday 25 April - Sala Carla Lonzi

9:30 – Introduction to the conference:

Genevieve Vaughan (Italy/USA)

Welcome to the Casa Internazionale **Francesca Koch**:

President of the Casa Internazionale delle Donne di Roma

Song by **Genevieve Vaughan**

10:00 -13:00 [***Feminist Philosophy and Politics Regarding Motherhood and the Gift-***](#)

Moderator Angela Miles

Luciana Percovich (Italy): The Ladies of Gift and Abundance

Mariam Tazi-Preve (Austria/USA): The Perversion of Maternal Gift Giving

Elena Skoko (Italy/Croatia): The Gift of Mothers in Maternity Care in Italy

Questions and answers

Musical interlude: **Julie Felix** (USA/UK)

Pilwha Chang e Sangwha Lee (South Korea): Ecofeminist

Reconceptualization of Motherhood in the Global Era

Andrea O'Reilly (Canada): Ain't I a Feminist?: Matricentric Feminism, Feminist

Mamas and Why Mothers Need a Feminist Movement/Theory of Their Own"

Questions and answers

Elena Pulcini (Italy): Is Care a Gift?

Stefano Zamagni (Italy): Do Women Have a Comparative

Advantage in the Gift Practice? The Experimental Evidence and its Theoretical Interpretation

Questions and answers

13:00 -14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 17:00 [***Practice of the Gift Economy***](#) -Moderator Francesca Lulli

Kaarina Kailo (Finland): Reappropriating the Gifts of the Finnish Welfare State

Anna Cossetta (Italy): The Gift, Women and the Internet

Angela Dolmetsch (Colombia): Nashira: an Eco Village Built by Women on the Basis of the Gift Economy.

Questions and answers

15:30 **Lin Danelis** (USA): Wanderland: Building/Envisioning Sustainable Women's Communities

Frank Bowman (U.K.): Sharing Works, Let's Get Sharing!

Manish Jain (India and Giftival, Italy): Re-imagining Education for the New Gift Culture Movement

17:00 [Gift Giving and Language](#)

Genevieve Vaughan (USA/Italy) and **Susan Petrilli** (Australia/Italy)
Presentation of Vaughan's book *The Gift in the Heart of Language*

Questions and answers

18:00 **Luisa Spagna (Italy)** – Dancing on the Breath of the Yoginis (performance)

18:30 -20:30 - **Sala Simonetta Tosi or in the courtyard**

[Interactive Workshop](#): **VISIONS** and the **GIFT**: **AESTHETICS** and **RELATIONS** by the **Itinerant DeGrowth Laboratory** (Italy)
Reservations necessary.

18.30 - 20.30 - **Sala Carla Lonzi**

Robin McKenna Projection of clips from her film **Gift** and Open Forum. Moderator Francesca Colombini

The opening

Genevieve opened the conference by singing in a heartbreaking way a song about Mother Earth, which made me and many other people shed a tear, our response to her gift. There was this modest and generous clan-mother feeling this deep concern for her green and blue planet and welcoming her children from all over the world.

Mother Earth, Mother Earth
We are grateful for our birth.
Our rainbow loves you to embrace
Shining in the night of space.

For four and one half billion years
You listened to the music of the spheres
While all of life's variety
Issued from your creativity.

Mother Earth Mother Earth
We are grateful for our birth.

You're our planet green and blue
With a heart of fire inside of you.
May your life always increase
May we give you the gift of peace.

Mother Earth, Mother Earth
We are grateful for our birth
Our rainbow loves do you embrace
Shining in the night of space.

There was a welcome to the Casa Internazionale by **Francesca Koch**, President of the Casa Internazionale delle Donne di Roma. Then the panel started.

Elena Skoko: The gift of mothers in maternity care in Italy (see in first conference)

Luciana Percovich - The Ladies of Gift and Abundance
Italy

Abstract: Two groups of images from Paleolithic sculptures and grotto sanctuaries, the bodies of abundant and generous women and a vivid gallery of wild animals, form the alphabet of ancient wisdom and values of the first symbolic human universe: the gift of life, the gift of food. They arise when human and nature are in balance, bringing the promise of abundance.

Bio. During the 1970's Percovich taught at the Free University of Women of Milan; she writes about medicine, science, anthropology, mythology and feminine spirituality. Her books are *La coscienza nel corpo. Donne, salute e medicina negli anni Settanta*, 2005; *Oscure Madri Splendenti*, 2007; *Colei che dà la vita. Coei che dà la forma. Miti di creazione femminili*, 2009.

Summary. The wisdom of our Ancestors is forgotten. We are overruled by technology, severed from our roots. In former times there was a connection between humans and nature that gave abundance.

In the Paleolithic sets of images coming from the Paleolithic we found innumerable symbols of **female bodies** and **wild animals**. These primary symbols of early humanity are **connected**. They show and testify the search for **abundance**.

A female bison is depicted in Altamira, other pregnant female animal bodies are painted or sculpted in cave art as well as many human female naked bodies. The Lady of the Horns, at the entrance of Laussel cave, points out the law of the cosmic cyclic pattern of blood in the womb of women connected to the lunar phases in the sky. Continuation of creation is guaranteed when humans honor this pattern. Among the oldest pictures we find mothers in birthing poses and collective big game hunting, which are seasonal, performed as sacred rituals and shared as a thank you for the gift of food.

This symbolism continues **into the Bronze Age** when it is severely damaged by the arrival of Indo-Europeans peoples. Progressively male gods become dominant. A gap between nature and humans is growing and hybrid figures, formerly represented

by shamans, are now petrified in a dichotomic choice: the relationship between human and animals and vegetables is ending.

In Paleolithic and Neolithic times **shamans** direct group activities bridging worlds and restoring balance among the different reigns: the visible and invisible, the living and the dead, earth and heaven, male and female. When the connection between these worlds is lost, the balance is lost.

In Italy, the “Ciottolo di Tolentino” (Marche) represents an image of a wondrous female shaman with a head of an animal (and a big vulva with several marks on her naked body), at the end of Paleolithic times.

The rupture of balance between the reigns brings the Age of Scarcity and Inequality. We live in a disharmonic society, disconnected from our roots.

Mariam Tazi-Preve (Austria/USA): The Perversion of Maternal Gift Giving (see first conference)

Andrea O'Reilly - Ain't I a Feminist?: Matricentric Feminism, Feminist Mamas and Why Mothers Need a Feminist Movement/Theory of Their Own”

School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at York University, Canada

Abstract. Feminist theory and women's studies have incorporated diverse theoretical models to represent the specific perspectives/concerns of women – global feminism, queer feminism, third wave feminism and womanism. I will present possible reasons for the exclusion of matricentric feminism and why it must be accorded the same legitimacy and autonomy in the discipline of women's studies.

Bio. Andrea O'Reilly, PhD, is Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at York University. O'Reilly is founder/director of The Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, founder/editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Motherhood Initiative and founder/editor of Demeter Press, the first feminist press on motherhood. She is editor/author of 20 books.

Summary. Mothers need a feminism of their own. There are woman studies-books with all kinds of feminisms but you will find **nothing** about mothers. Matricentric feminism is not included. I published a book on it and did 90 pages on matricentric or gynocentric feminism. **Motherhood is the unfinished business of feminism.** The gap between mother en non-mother is larger than between woman and men. Once a woman has a baby, the egalitarian scene is over. Mothers and women in general are repressed under patriarchy.

There is a motherhood movement but it is not incorporated in feminism, in women studies. All kinds of feminisms are included in feminism: race, class, sex, geographical circumstances. But motherhood is a non-issue. There is a revulsion against all things maternal. Andrea cites several feminists who contradicted motherhood. They were talking about birthing a child as 'shitting a pumpkin'.

Motherhood must be an empowerment; we need more mothers in Academia. We need an independent school of thought of matricentric feminism within women studies.

Questions. Andrea elaborates on her talk. Motherhood is trivialized and dismissed as goddess-scholar studies and archaeomythology are. Both have been dismissed too. Woman scholars from these fields have a very big problem.

Motherhood is a practice, an experience and not a biological restriction. It should get more respect. Mothering should be studied around the life cycle. Mothering includes daughtering. What about 'Herstory of Mothers'? **Goddess studies must be included in women studies.**

Elena Pulcini – Is care a gift?

Italy

Abstract. Is care what women give? One can reply in the affirmative on two conditions: that care is rehabilitated and liberated from the rhetoric of altruism and that women can emancipate themselves from their traditional condition of subjected to (liable for) care to recognize themselves as sovereign, as subjects of care. (50)

Bio. Elena Pulcini is full professor of Social Philosophy at the University of Florence. Always interested in the theme of the emotional foundations of social bonds, she recently proposed a *philosophy of care* for the global era. Among her publications: *L'individuo senza passioni, Il potere di unire. Femminile, desiderio, cura*); *La cura del mondo*.

Summary. What do women donate? They give care. In patriarchy giving is seen as a sacrifice. Carol Gilligan pleads for a rehabilitation of care. It is not a deficiency, but a source that needs revaluation. Reciprocity and mutuality make vulnerable. Extreme altruism is usually considered as feminine. It is a question of 'to be *with* the other and not *for* the other'. Care has a universal dimension. We have to move to a new embrace of caring that includes universality and participation. Caring for the other means that we are able to care for ourselves. Caring has to do with bonding; caring is a gift of abundance. We should speak of love. Caring shows the different faces of love.

Stefano Zamagni (Italy): Do Women Have a Comparative Advantage in the Gift Practice? The Experimental Evidence and its Theoretical Interpretation

Abstract. After illustrating the reasons for the cancellation of the principle of the gift as gratuitousness from the horizons of modernity, I will go on to discuss why, in the season of post-modernity, the return of gift practices requires a more massive and significant role of women in the public sphere.

Bio. Stefano Zamagni is Full Professor of Political Economy at the University of Bologna and Adjunct Professor of International Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Europe, president of the Scientific Committees of AICCON and of the Advanced School of Health Politics of Bologna; director of the National Observatory for the Family of Rome.

Summary. Essential reductionalism killed the principle of the gift and the gift-economy. Not all authors share my view. Women are more productive than men. Sweden has the highest percentage of working women with a rise of 20%. The

country becomes wealthier. In Italy only 47% of the women is on the labor market. That's why they say that Italy does not recover from the economic crisis. These arguments about rising the women labor force in order to become wealthier, are seriously considered in the European Union.

When women start to work it gives them a feeling of guilt. Psychotherapists tell us that this gives women a lot of stress.

In doing business the keyword is *efficiency*; it does not leave any room for *care*. The notion of efficiency is alien to the gift and the gift economy.

In 1900 the welfare state was devised. From the caring gift from the individual it shifted to the state and the governmental care. The slogan was: 'from the cradle to the coffin'.

Philanthropy has nothing to do with the gift. My suggestion is: the gift should go into the market again. There is needed a shift from the welfare state to the welfare society.

Questions. The speaker insists that the gift is a part of the market. The market was born before capitalism. I can not see how we can make a market caring while the government is driven by efficiency.

Gen Vaughan and other participants see it different. The gift cannot be integrated in the market; it is a different thing. You must start with the relation mother-child. Younger children must be fed by the mother during childhood; this is a unilateral gift from the mother, although the child interacts with her. Caring is maternal, it is unilateral giving of the mother and receiving by the child. Young children do not understand the logic of the market. We are all offspring of parents, caregivers, mothers and fathers. Educate in responsibility. Primary is more education on responsibility and care. Women have a greater disposition for caring, for concern for the other.

Pilwha Chang: We need to take in the ecological aspect in this debate; we need to expand the concept of mothering and bring it out of and above the gender issue. We all have care for mother Mother Earth.

Kaarina Kailo (Finland): Reappropriating the Gifts of the Finnish Welfare State

Anna Cossetta (Italy): The Gift, Women and the Internet. University of Genoa, Italy

Abstract. The Web would seem for many aspects to represent the ideal context in which to give and participate in new forms of economy of collaboration. It is an area that seemed apparently ideal for primordial cyber feminism but that in reality has had a more complex evolution, which perhaps segregates women once again.

Bio. Anna Cossetta is doctor of research in the methodology of human sciences and teaches Sociology at the University of Genoa, member of the Centre for the Study of Digital Ethnography and Society and national coordinator of Research on the Gift. Cossetta has articles on the theme of the Gift in print and on the web.

Summary. When building the web there was a strong male approach and participation. In the beginning few women were on the internet. The PC was a boy toy and mostly used in order to download movies. Women in the 90ies had to find their way to the internet. The internet has changed since then.

Women started to build communities round certain topics: self-help sites with a strong

feminine content. Of the 3 billion and 40 million users 50% is female. They are not interested in free software (for example Fire Fox); 1.5% of these users is female. Big companies as Google and Pinterest have a staff consisting of 30% women.

I am a strong supporter of free supply of information. Wikipedia we all use. In 2011 the New York Times published an article, numbers were collected by Wikipedia. Only 15% of all users of Wikipedia were female. They decided that in 2012 this had to be 30%. But when you write something on Wikipedia you will be criticized instantly, there is a male aggressive attitude which is not very nice.

The internet is a market ocean; a mythical creature ready to swallow everything....But it is also the place for the gift and free information. Women must use this more. They spend lots of time on Facebook and Twitter. They use it socially but do not built it out. They use it to compare prices and quality and do also others things with it. They want to share their own experiences, for example about pregnancy, about mothering, they are tired of all the hypocrisy of certain institutions. They look for anonymous spaces, find nicknames. They share their emotions deeper and deeper; they should built out the internet more to their own needs.

Angela Dolmetsch (Colombia): Nashira: an Eco Village Built by Women on the Basis of the Gift Economy.(see first conference)

15:30 Lin Daniels (USA): Wanderland: Building/Envisioning Sustainable Women's Communities

Lin Daniels: Wanderland: Building/Envisioning sustainable women's communities

The Women's School, USA

Abstract. In context of the global dismantling of social safety nets and the increasing poverty among the world's women, the examination of The Pagoda, est.1977, is more crucial than ever. It's members were women who spanned the class and economic strata. They pieced together an affordable practice ground for the matriarchy.

Bio. Lin Daniels, a Lesbian Feminist activist for over 40 years, produces events, conferences, and festivals for, by and about women. Board member: Women's School in California. Member: Pagoda: intentional Lesbian Feminist community in the U.S. Lectures on building alternative women's communities and Lesbian/Feminist issues. MA, Women's Spirituality.

Summary. (I also used Lin's written talk in Sankt-Gallen in 2011) The Sanskrit word *Pagoda* means 'divine female'. In the Pagoda (temple of love) community matriarchy was redefined. In 1977, a group of women in St. Augustine, Florida built a lifeboat. We built an intentional community that is matriarchal at its base and intention and, matrifocal in its function. It is a community of Lesbian Feminists who decided to make the personal truly political by immersing themselves in Lesbian culture. Choosing to live in a woman only community, with Women's Spirituality at its base, was (is) nothing short of revolutionary. Exploring the notion of how life could be lived among women, with core feminist ethics and intention, was a cause that was taken up by thousands of women in the 1970s. Most of these communities quickly dissolved,

some lasted through the 1980s, and a few, like the Pagoda Community, lasted into this century. At this moment there are many women's communities in the US; 800 women live on the land in Arizona.

So, in 1977, the original four women persuaded the owner of the cottages to sell the cottages to them for 4,000 dollars each, and the Pagoda Community was established. The first Pagodians invited their friends, and more and more women were drawn there. Having been robbed of our herstory, most women have also lost our matriarchal families of origin. So, from 1977 on more people came in. It was a sheer anarchy and a women only space, that had at a certain moment 350 members worldwide. The monthly meetings to make decisions about all kinds of things sometimes lasted for 12 hours. Lin had very many very happy years in the Pagoda in Florida, it ended as the Michigan Musical Festival now will end.

Frank Bowman (U.K.): Sharing Works, Let's Get Sharing!

Give and Take, Wales, UK

Abstract. Frank will share from his experiences "transitioning to the moneyless Gift economy" from WelhEALTH, a gift economy cooperative association, which operates a 7 acre commons Food forest and from Give and Take, a gift economy community sharing space, free cafe, free library, skills sharing and free shop/free store operating weekly on markets, fairs and festivals for 23 years

Bio. Frank Bowman Cooperator, Neutral Gender. 90's, 00's 10's meme spreader of the exchange economics construct of artificial scarcity. 1992 Founder member of WelhEALTH. Founder member of Give and Take, Director of the Bangor Forest Garden Cyf. Director of the Basic Warmth and Shelter Community Cooperative Cyf., whose objects are to free dwelling for members in perpetuity.

Manish Jain (India and Giftival, Italy): Re-imagining Education for the New Gift Culture Movement

Abstract. The global education system has played a significant role in breaking the gift culture and institutionalizing the commodification of human beings and life. This presentation will share the contours of different learning and unlearning efforts to host young people in remembering and reconnecting to the spirit of the gift culture.

Bio. Manish Jain has been involved in co-founding many initiatives for decolonizing our minds such as Shikshantar: The Peoples' Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, Swaraj University, The Learning Societies Unconference, Families Learning Together (Unschooling), the Swapathgami Walkouts-Walkon Network, and the Giftival. He has edited several books including Reclaiming the Gift Culture.

Summary. Manish is an ex-banker, who thinks that the culture of India is dying. He was wondering: how do we connect to the deeper level of the Spirit; how do we unify head, hart and hands. How we get interconnected. It needs collective mothering. He asked himself: 'which divine gifts can I share'.

He changed banking for the educational field and concluded that the system is not working. Most women are uneducated. Factory schooling is a crime to humanity. He hated competitions; there is one winner and there are many losers. He wanted to

create societies with deep harmony as Gandhi strived for. He wanted to heal the damage which was done by modern education. Everybody is a teacher, everybody is a learner. Learning is about searching for deeper harmony. It is important to understand a gift and share it with the world. He went to bicycle for one week without technical devices and without money. He found out that all the so called undereducated villagers were so kind. Strip everything away and teach people about the gift economy. You need to unplug, you need techno-fasting. Good things in life are realized by communities. The more possessions you have, the more possessed you are. Realize to what things you are deeply attached.

Genevieve Vaughan (USA/Italy) and **Susan Petrilli** (Australia/Italy)
Presentation of Vaughan's book *The Gift in the Heart of Language*

The birthing of the book. Genevieve Vaughan worked (with intervals) 8 years on her latest book '*The Gift in the Heart of Language*' of 484 pages. When asked what changed her while writing this book, she answered the following. I was born into a wealthy family and I always was wondering why we have money and others don't. In the 80ies and 90ies I went into a lot of political activism. I had the theory; I had it buried inside. I published books in 1979 en 2005 but in this book I finally got it out. Let me say that I was trying to say it all my life but now I finally got it out.

About the book. Mothering is a big piece of reality. If you leave that out, reality is distorted. Patriarchal academic terminology excludes half of humanity. Humans give and receive. The mother's interaction constructs the personality of the child; interaction and turntaking is not the same as exchange. The exchange ends up to compressing the other. Diminish the exchange market and recreate a society on a gift-giving model. It is not about controlling: the king controls his subjects, the father his family and the professor his students. It is not about making more money, this is a wrong up-down-stream. We need the flow the other way round, we need a horizontal flow.

We have created scarcity but the gift economy creates abundance. The origin of the gifts lies in the mother. The mother has this symbiosis with the child; When in indigenous cultures mothers carry their child, they know when it has to urinate; so they unbound it and help it. They just feel it when the baby needs a open air toilet stop. The baby has to be placed on the mother's chest. Then the two heart beats synchronize; there is a deep sense of belonging and community. When this bonding does/did not take place, the human being is filled with emptiness, which he/she tries to fill with all kinds of artificial things. (This person will tend more easily to addictions). Gift economy is the basis of language. First the mother and the child communicate in a nonverbal way; in six weeks children start proto-conversations with their mother. Then the mother teaches the child the motherlanguage; language is an instrument in the communication.

We also need to recreate the Mother-child relationship with Mother Earth.

Questions. We live in a time when certain (overstressed and traumatized) mothers kill their children. Bodily contact between teacher and pupils is forbidden. Elderly are totally neglected. How we bring the human aspect back into society?

18:00 Luisa Spagna (Italy) – Dancing on the Breath of the Yoginis (performance).

Outside in the courtyard of the Casa and later on, inside the hall on the first floor, the much rewarded dancer Luisa Spagna danced yogini-dances. I enjoyed her dancing very much and recognized her Indian dancing education.

We sang together OHM YOGINI MATRI SHAKTI SHANTI OHM which means: 'I call on you as my mother, as never ending blessing'. Luisa had a vision of the yogini's while being in the 64 yogini-temple in Hirapur; they told her they wanted to come back on earth and asked her to be the one who would bring them into the world. She consented.

After the dance was finished we talked together about the yogini's; I recently gave a lecture about them in a Dutch yoga-institute and had enjoyed the subject – after visiting a yogini exposition in New Delhi and the yogini-temple in Khajuraho in India – very much. Luisa insisted on giving me her yogini oracle-card-set with 64 yogini-pictures she had drawn in meditation. Next morning I brought her my MA-book. Love, Inspiration and Success, Luisa, with you beautiful yogini-art.

Interactive Workshop: VISIONS and the GIFT: AESTHETICS and RELATIONS
by the Itinerant DeGrowth Laboratory (Italy) Reservations necessary.

Film. Robin McKenna Projection of clips from her film *Gift* and Open Forum.
Moderator Francesca Colombini.

Abstract. GIFT is a creative essay documentary inspired by Lewis Hyde's classic *The Gift*. Chronicling gift-based cultures, both traditional and emerging, it explores the questions and contradictions involved in giving and receiving - and asks what it might mean to "share our gifts" in more meaningful ways.

Bio. Robin McKenna is an independent filmmaker based in Montreal. She is currently finishing *The Jungle Prescription*, a feature-length documentary about the visionary Amazonian medicine ayahuasca, and a short animated film *Crow*, about a girl's search for her older sister, and the crow-magic connecting them. Her film *GIFT*, inspired by Lewis Hyde's *The Gift*, will premiere in 2016.

Film. Camila Martinez. Very impressive film made by Camila Martinez about the **seed woman**, who keeps warning: 'Keep the seed, Keep the seed, Keep the seed'. She means 'keep en guard *the pure not genetically modified seed*'.

Camila Martinez - The Great Gift of Indigenous Sacred Medicine
Maya Seed Ark Project, Central America

Bio. Camila Martinez, M.A. is a curandera, traditional native medicine doctor in the Mazatec tradition of Oaxaca, Mexico. First westerner with graduate degree in Tibetan and Ayurvedic medicine, 40 year eco-warrior on indigenous issues, translator, author, filmmaker, poet, Buddhist Lama. Founder and director of the Maya Seed Ark Project, Central America.

Summary. This film was shocking. The tacid Camila in her long Mayan dress with her long her plaited hair, told us about the consequences of using genetically

modified seeds for the native peoples in Oaxaca in Mexico.

Young girls get breasts on their 9th year and start to menstruate. In older times this happened much later. According to the ancient ritual tradition they have to be initiated after the first menstruation. 9 years of age is much too young for this. They cannot handle this physically and mentally. This deconstructs the whole indigenous society.

People get all kinds of illnesses. That's why seed woman in the film repeats and repeats and keeps repeating: 'Keep the seed'; 'Keep the seed'.

Elena Skoko asserts that in Bali much more women died in childbirth after starting to eat genetically modified rice and soya.

Film. Finno-Ugric Guardian Spirits and animal Mothers. Kirre Koivunen filmed and the script was written by Kaarina Kailo and Irma Heiskanen. Unfortunately only a small part of the film was showed because of lack of time. We saw beautiful Finnish landscapes. We exchanged our books and films and I promised myself to have a thorough look at the film at home.

Sunday April 26 - Sala Carla Lonzi

9:30 – 11:00 [***The Gift in Communities with Maternal Values***](#)- Moderator Linda Ruffman, Canada.

Francesca Rosati Freeman (Italia): From Traditional Values to the Real Gifts of Mosuo Society

Bernedette Muthien (South Africa): Rematriating the Gift Paradigm and African Ubuntu from Patriarchal Cooptation

Coumba Touré (Senegal): The Concept of Teranga – The Gift Economy in the Sahel
[*Questions and answers*](#)

11:00 - 12:30 [***The Gift in Native American Communities***](#) - Moderator Pilwha Chang

Barbara Alice Mann (USA Native American - Seneca): The Mother Side of the League: Gifting as the Iroquoian Paradigm

Diem Lafortune (Canada-Native American-Cree): Family Preservation: Revisiting Traditional Adoption Practices

Pat McCabe (Canada Native American - Diné): Native American Science of Right Relations: Economics

[*Questions and answers*](#)

12:30 **Heide Goettner-Abendroth** (Germania): Matriarchal Studies and the Gift Economy

via Skype - Moderator Genevieve Vaughan

13:00- 14:00 Lunch

Musical interlude: Elena Skoko

14:10 - 15:00 **Philosophy of the Gift** - Moderator Bernedette Muthien

Daniela Falcioni (Italy): The Ability to Give Ties us to Others

Francesca Brezzi (Italy): Philosophy of the Gift

Questions and answers

15:10 **Gifts, Money and Activism** - Moderator Bernedette Muthien

Jodie Evans (USA): Giving is the Gift

Tracy Gary (USA): Redesigning the Future: The Grace of Women's Giving, Feminist Teamwork, and The Gift Economy as Alchemy for Social & Cultural Stagnation.

Questions and answers

16:10– 18:00 **Spirituality and the gift** Moderator Luciana Percovich

Erella Shadmi (Israel): Motherhood as an Alternative to Post-Humanism and Post-Gender.

Camilla Martinez (USA): The Great Gift of Indigenous Sacred Medicine

Letecia Layson (Philippines/USA): The Gift of Kapwa

Morena Luciani (Italia): The Gift of Ritual and Female Shamanism

Questions and answers

18:00 **Vicki Noble** (USA): The Natural Gift of Female Healing

18:30 **Mini concert** **Julie Felix** (USA/UK)

19.00 **Celebration and Healing Ritual** led by **Vicki Noble**

9:30 – 11:00 **The Gift in Communities with Maternal Values-** Moderator Linda Ruffman, Canada.

Bernedette Muthien (South Africa): Rematriating the Gift Paradigm and African Ubuntu from Patriarchal Cooptation. See above.

Coumba Touré (Senegal): The Concept of Teranga – The Gift Economy in the Sahel. See above.

Francesca Rosati Freeman - From traditional values to the real gifts of Mosuo society. Italy.

Abstract. Collective solidarity, sharing and reciprocity, unconditional love, protection and veneration of nature, the connection between these and women are among the maternal values of Mosuo society that translate into gifts allowing a harmonious life. Comparing rural areas with tourist areas today provides a view of living a gift or a market economy.

Bio. Francesca Rosati Freeman - Teacher, documentarist and author of *Benvenuti nel Paese delle donne* (XL Editioni) and *'Sur les rives du lac Mere. Un voyage aux confins du Tibet à la rencontre du peuple Moso'* (Tensing Editions, 2010, 2015). She co-directed with Pio d'Emilia the documentary, *Nu Guo. In the Name of the Mother*, which received the 2015 Audience Award at the International Festival of Asian Films in Vesoul, France.

Summary. Francesca gave a very interesting talk about the Mosuo, with for me new information. Afterwards we talked and she could tell me much more. She gave me her DVD *'Nu Guo. In the Name of the Mother'*; I gave her my MA book and she promised to send me the French version of her Italian book on the Mosuo.

The Mosuo live in unconditional love for each other. There is an absence of violence. Leadership is in the hands of women. They live in matrilineal extended families. The family is owner of the land, which is worked by women. The collective property is passed through the daughters. Women are considered to feed the family from A till Z. Men are building houses and fish. The whole group is mothering. All adults do all kinds of activities: care for the children, take care for the elderly. There is no exchange of money.

She has been there 7 times; next august she is going for the 8th time. She normally stays for one month; one time she stayed two months. She was there in 2012 and was present at a funeral. So all people waited for three weeks till the funeral was held. All took care for each other; it was giving the gift.

In 2012 there was an earthquake. They had to live in tents: the women cooked; nobody was in despair. They knew that they could count on the community. They like to dance and to have fun. But they also defend their traditions. They will be able to preserve these; there is serenity in these people. Recently a company introduced motor boats who went faster over the Lugu-lake than the traditional rowing boats. They opposed in peaceful non-violent action against the arrival of these motor boats, they feared that these boats would pollute their sacred lake. They succeeded. For them the lake is their mother. The mountain behind the lake is for them the most important; the lake is an emanation of the mountain.

Francesca: I had to get rid of western ideas about marriage and exchange. I was received well; I stayed there several weeks, wrote a book and made a film. It was easy to communicate; I used body language; I could not understand their language and did not have a Chinese interpreter with me, but still I could communicate non-verbally. We understood each other perfectly well.

A spiritual ritual. The following Francesca told me in a personal conversation. Later I found this oral information in her book *'Sur les rives du lac Mere. Un voyage aux confins du Tibet à la rencontre du peuple Moso'*, 2015, 179. Once a year the Dabu's (clan mothers) of Luoshui leave for a spiritual retreat of five days in order to pray for their ancestors and the divinity of Nature. In the middle of the Lugu Lake there are five islands. They go to one of these islands. The whole island is considered to be the eternal house of the ancestors. They go by boat, the 24 Dabu's of Luoshui, all of them, some go together, some go alone. Only the ones who are sick or too old, stay at home. They are accompanied by three men who are the guardians of the island for the ancestors. On the top of the hill of the island there is a temple, where the lama's say their prayers and mantra's. Here in the company of the Buddhist lama's the

Dabus's introduce their shamanic rituals in honor of their Mother Goddess, the Divine Mountain. Their religion is a mixture of shamanism and Buddhism. They pray for a good reincarnation in a new life to come, for their ancestors and for the divinity of nature.

The first day in their retreat on the island they prepare the wooden huts, the fire, the bed, the mosquito-net, etc.

The second day they go up on the hill to the little temple on top of it, the eternal house of the ancestors. Here a Buddhist lama is serving, for this occasion more lama's are present. Now the prayers begin: at 6 am, at 11 am and at 18.00 pm.

The third day. This day is dedicated to fasting, silence and meditations. They make prostrations, say prayers and recite mantra. There is no food, no drink, no talk, they only turn the prayer mills in their hands. Because they use no food, they feel lighter; in their view they can more easily communicate with their ancestors.

The fourth day dabu's daughters come from the villages to the island; they row their boats. They take with them all kinds of prepared food. They take with them their little children; when the dabu's see the little children their joy is overwhelming. They are so glad to see them as if they never saw them before.

They keep on praying three times a day.

The fifth day they return home. There is a big feast with lots of food. Branches of the pine tree are put on a big pile and then burned; this is to purify. They pray for the divinity of nature, they pray for the ancestors, for the people, animals and plants. For Life in Nature itself.

11:00 - 12:30 [**The Gift in Native American Communities**](#) - Moderator Pilwha Chang

Barbara Alice Mann (USA Native American - Seneca): The Mother Side of the League: Gifting as the Iroquoian Paradigm

Diem Lafortune (Canada-Native American-Cree): Family Preservation: Revisiting Traditional Adoption Practices

Pat McCabe (Canada Native American - Diné): Native American Science of Right Relations: Economics

Barbara Alice Mann (USA Native American - Seneca): The Mother Side of the League: Gifting as the Iroquoian Paradigm, University of Toledo, USA

Abstract. Indigenous North America is primarily matriarchal, particularly in social customs. Because of the Twinned Cosmos, out of which all else spins, not one, but two, "sides of the League" exist, the "Mother" and "Father" sides. Both operate on a complementary paradigms of mutual giving, with the Mother side underpinned by The Gift and Agriculture. .

Bio. Barbara Alice Mann, Ohio Bear Clan Seneca, is Associate Professor, University of Toledo, Ohio, USA. Author of twelve books, aside from an international examination of colonial massacres, 1780–1820, she has a book forthcoming from Oxford on Indigenous American spiritualities. Her internationally renowned *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* is in its third printing.

Summary. I come from Ohio where a beautiful river streams. We have a worldview

that is two sided: our cosmos is twinned in a mother and a father side.
Purple is the color of the blood and this in our view is considered as female.
We honor the water and the blood, the female elements.
We honor the air and the fire, the male elements.
I want to tell you some of our stories.

The origin of the sweat lodge. Women are very powerful. We have the power to bleed and not die. Men do not bleed; they cannot make another being. Men provoke death and then they see blood, dead blood. We, women, have a cycle with living blood and men don't. We feel sorry for them. How we can help the men to have their own cycle? We have our own lodge. How can help them to have theirs? We gave the men the sweat lodge in a 15 day cycle. In order to bleed and to simulate menstruation they hurt themselves and make scars. But they have something which was given by the women.

The origin of the drum. Women when are expecting a child they can spend 10 months with two heartbeats. This made the men very sad. The women did not want their sons, uncles and grandfathers to be sad. They invented the drum; it makes a heartbeat out of the air. Now they are not sad anymore.

The three sisters. Women have a special relation to the earth. They work with the three sisters:

1. corn: this is a strong plant.
2. beans: weak and climbing up to the cornplant.
3. squash: this takes all over de mountain when you don't cut it.

Mounds. Women built the wombs of the earth; they built the mounds who peak over them.

Canals. Women dug canals and irrigated the land. Barbara shows a big map with many small blue lines, the canals which come from the Ohio river. Women dug the watersystem in the form of the constellation Cygnus, because as above so below. The sky is male, the earth is female; they mirror each other. They also created the great serpent, the constellation of Draco, in the earth in Adams county, Ohio. The spiral creates the earth-connection. See earthworks/serpent.html.

Questions. Women in the menopause are in their most powerful time. Grandmother councils unveil wisdom. They are supposed to be the most powerful.

Question about different tribes having different animals. Why do the Iroquois tribes have so many different animal symbols? Different tribes have different animals. Barbara comments that this has nothing to do with totem animals. Every animal has its own wisdom.

Bear. A bear is crossing boundaries. It can use four legs, but is also can stand on two. He/she can be in the tree, on the earth, in the waters, and in the cave under the earth. The animal crosses boundaries. Follow the bear (be cautious when she has cubs) and see what she/he eats: what she/he eats, you can eat. The bear gave us a lot of information about medicine.

Wulf. All men share equally when killing the animal; they kill together and bring the animal to the grandmothers.

Buffalo. Remark of Pat: the buffalo skull is the altar: that is the sacred place for women. The skull goes away from the altar of the men; this is because they hunt and

kill the animal. The women butcher the buffalo, make use of it, make cloths, make tipi's. The women learn from the buffalo. Sometimes we offer tabacco; with this we approach the divine.

Diem Lafortune - Family Preservation: Revisiting Traditional Adoption Practices. Toronto, ON Canada. See first conference above.

Pat McCabe - Native American Science of Right Relations: Economics.
New Mexico, USA

Abstract. A look at North American Indigenous ways of Life from Dine (Navajo) People's perspective which anthropologists have termed "matrilineal" in which material wealth passes through the women's side of the family and a few ideas from the Lakota People's Spiritual practice, and the economy of the "wopila," the give-away principle.

Bio. 'Woman Stands Shining' ('Weyakpa Najin Win' or Pat McCabe), is a writer, artist, speaker, activist for Right Relations from the Dine (Navajo) People, from New Mexico, U.S.A. Called on for an ability to re-frame our collective relationship to Earth and to each other by drawing on traditional principles of ancient cultures, she speaks and teaches internationally.

Summary. Pat did not like us that to take pictures of her in her traditional native Indian Lakota dress while playing the drums and standing next to the big and huge buffalo skin she brought all the way from New Mexico to Rome.

The buffalo. Why did she take the buffalo skin? The buffalo knows that is offering itself to us. There is a deep reciprocity, a deep love between the buffalo and the human being. The animal provides food and shelter and warmth. The buffalo is a great teacher to me. Everything around us is doing one thing: it is making more life. Even death is making more life. The big plan is all about life.

The Hoop of Life. Lakota view 'the great hoop of life', the circle of Life, it is the great medicine wheel, which represents the wholeness of life.

Patriarchy does not understand 'the hoop of life'. We should not reinvent it, this wheel of humanity. Pat calls the human being 'the five fingered one'. Uphold the honor of being a five fingered one. Mother Earth she instructs us. Women bleed together. There are dream lodges. They have communal dreams; these are an integrated part of our community.

Bleeding. Every month I have the possibility to offer my blood. Western medicine tells women to forget this, do not do a ritual. Talk to the elder women and learn how important it is. When I go for a new job, I tell them I will be not there during 4 days of each month (bleeding time).

Female leadership brings balance. Grandmothers lodges are the centres, also for the male leadership. Originally they choose the male leaders.

The more grateful I am for the feminine, the more grateful I am for the masculine. I pray that you will be so powerful as possible. Make the reunion with the masculine as powerful as you can do. Then the planet thrives.

Note: Afterwards participants received a mail from Pat; in the mail she gave the following words of Oren R. Lyons:

As we plunge ahead to build empires and race for supremacy we should stop and listen to [the female] song of life. For without the female there is no life.

-- Oren R. Lyons, Spokesman, Traditional Circle of Elders, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan, Onondaga Council of Chiefs of the Hau de no sau nee.

Her last words:

The mind creates the abyss, the heart crosses it.

Note: One of the things Pat said was: Please consider the matriarchal perspective of an arranged marriage. The child will be protected by four clans. They take responsibility for the child.

12:30 Heide Goettner-Abendroth (Germany): Matriarchal Studies and the Gift Economy via Skype - Moderator Genevieve Vaughan

Abstract. In my lecture, I will give some ideas about the relationship of Matriarchal Studies and the Gift Economy. This will be explained while giving the deep structure of matriarchal societies as a new definition of this type of society, which is at the core of modern Matriarchal Studies. How this overlaps with the Gift Economy theory will be shown.

Bio. Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth Philosopher and researcher of matriarchal cultures, founder of modern Matriarchal Studies. She is visiting professor at University of Montreal/Canada, and University of Innsbruck/Austria, Director of Academy HAGIA, International Academy for Matrtriarchal Studies, and organizer of three world congresses on Matriarchal Studies and Politics. Nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

Summary. Modern matriarchal studies place the mother in the centre. No woman is ruling over the men. There is equality. It is a gender-egalitarian society with no hierarchy, raised on maternal values. It is more realistic than patriarchy. There is:

1. the social level
2. the political level
3. the economic level
4. the cultural/spiritual level.

Matriarchal society is based on the prototype of the mother as the first gift giver. She cares for all her children, in all variety. Men must be like a good mother. Sisters are mother of all the children, not each of them must be the biological mother. Spouses stay only for one night in the clan house: this is called a walking marriage. Women guide the clan without dominance.

- 1.the social level. It is a non-hierarchal society based on kinship.
- 2.the political level. Decision-making is starting in the individual clan house and extending to the local and regional concils. Consensus is reached by talking. It is a grass root democracy. It is political society of consensus.

3.the economic level: subsistence economy; no private property; the mother distributes the food; the mother supervises the clan house. The matriarch is the mother of all in the clan house. The clans who are better off invite all the other clans and give gifts. You can call it a gift economy. A matriarchal society is based on mutuality and on the circulation of gifts.

4.the cultural/spiritual level. There is no male omnipotent God. The whole world, the universe is regarded as feminine divine; she brought forth everything. Everybody is being a child of Mother Nature. Everything is sacred; there is no barrier between the sacred and the secular. On the spiritual level these are sacred societies, societies of the goddess and the divine feminine.

What is the connection with the gift?

1. social. The birth is very important, it is the first gift. All social needs of individuals are directed to benefit the whole.

2. political: there is the gift giving of language: how to build peace, which is an honor.

3. maternal women are the directors of the economic gift giving values. Gift giving is not marginal but central.

4. cultural. Mother Nature is gift giving. She is a creative force. The Divine Mother is reflected in every woman to create life and in every man to protect life.

The future. We have to create new social structures and networks, which are matriarchal and include gift giving. We need people with clear visions on matriarchal and gift giving structures. Webinars and conferences give us the possibility to keep in touch with each other.

Note Annine. Van eerdere conferenties met Heide Göttner-Abendroth maakte ik ook verslagen.

*Annine van der Meer, 2011, 'The Time is Ripe'. Conferentie tgv 25 jaar Akademie Hagia te Sankt Gallen, mei 2011, verslag on line.(LINK)

*Annine van der Meer, 'Kort Nederlandstalig verslag inclusief excursie van het weekseminar te Winzer juli 2010 in Duitsland' (LINK).

* Annine van der Meer, 'Uitgebreide Engelstalige samenvatting van het Weekseminar on matriarchal societies at the International Academy Hagia in Winzer in Germany juli 2010', met lezingen van dr. Heide Göttner-Abendroth en reacties van internationale studiegroep Matriarchaatstudie, met elkaar verbonden via een internationaal digitaal netwerk (LINK).

13:00- 14:00 Lunch

Musical interlude: Elena Skoko

14:10 - 15:00 **Philosophy of the Gift** - Moderator Bernedette Muthien

Daniela Falcioni (Italy): The Ability to Give Ties us to Others

Francesca Brezzi (Italy): Philosophy of the Gift

Questions and answers

15:10 **Gifts, Money and Activism** - Moderator Bernedette Muthien

Jodie Evans (USA): Giving is the Gift

Tracy Gary (USA): Redesigning the Future: The Grace of Women's Giving, Feminist Teamwork, and The Gift Economy as Alchemy for Social & Cultural Stagnation.

[Questions and answers](#)

16:10– 18:00 ***Spirituality and the gift*** Moderator Luciana Percovich

Erella Shadmi (Israel): Motherhood as an Alternative to Post-Humanism and Post-Gender

Camilla Martinez (USA): The Great Gift of Indigenous Sacred Medicine

Letecia Layson (Filippines/USA): The Gift of Kapwa

Morena Luciani (Italia): The Gift of Ritual and Female Shamanism

[Questions and answers](#)

18:00 **Vicki Noble** (USA): The Natural Gift of Female Healing

18:30 ***Mini concert* Julie Felix** (USA/UK)

19:00 ***Celebration and Healing Ritual*** led by **Vicki Noble**

Francesca Brezzi - Philosophy of the gift. University of Rome Three, Italy

Abstract. This philosophical analysis departs from the insignificant, marginalized character of the gift and from the exaltation of homo economicus and faber. The venture begins from the authors who identify with gift theory and from the presence of the gift in contemporary social fabric. Look carefully beyond the utilitarian surface and an alternative vision emerges.

Bio. Francesca Brezzi is a professor of Moral Philosophy, Director of the Department of Philosophy and Faculty of Literature at the University of Rome Three. She is past Rector's Delegate for Equal opportunity-Gender studies (1998-2004), President of the Roman Inter-University Observatory for Gender Studies, equal opportunity and parity. Francesca founded and directs an on line and print journal, The Department of Philosophy: *B@bel voices and itineraries of difference*.

Summary. The precise definition of the gift is difficult to give. There are many perspectives with a wealth of significances.

Jodie Evans - Giving is the Gift

CODEPINK, USA

Abstract. Moving money and time as a model for gifting. Stories from US Philanthropy and Activism

Bio. Jodie Evans has been a peace, environmental, women's rights and social justice activist for over forty years. She is the co-founder of CODEPINK that works to stop US Military interventions overseas and promote diplomatic solutions. She has published two books and produced several documentary films, most recently Netflix's "The Square."

Summary. Giving is a relational thing. Do not think too big and too abstract. Fear, or guilt or shame avoid to feel. Fear avoids feeling. Giving comes from love. In a heart-

relationship oxytocin is released in 20 seconds.

I make beautiful trouble and I do not fear. While being an activist for over 40 years, I was thrown into jail 75 times. When I am hurt while being in the street and protesting, I think of the victims who are hurt much more than I am. Then I do not feel the pain anymore.

The audience gives Jodie an ovational applause.

Question. Jodie remarks that only giving is not working; philanthropy is terrible. She once had an experience with a group who got a lot of money: fighting came into the group; they disagreed. The group fell apart.

Tracy Gary - Redesigning the Future: The Grace of Women's Giving ,Feminist Teamwork, and The Gift Economy as Alchemy for Social & Cultural Stagnation.
Wholehearted Philanthropy & Triskeles Foundation, USA

Abstract. As cultural evolutionaries, responsible for planet thriving, let's redesign considering principles of feminist harmony. Let's advance compassion & collective wisdom, & challenge those who "do not know how" to co-create connectivity. Models will include: women's collectives, women's music, women's giving circles, foundations, businesses, & the lessons of giving for next generations & partners.

Bio. Thru women's cultural arts, giving & social-eco-justice, Tracy Gary embodies the Gift Economy's values. A feminist philanthropic leader, she works globally & throughout the US. She's co-founded 24 nonprofits, including Unleashing Generosity, The Women's Building, & Women Donors Network. And she's authored "Inspired Philanthropy: Creating a Giving Plan And Leaving a Legacy."

Summary. Tracy tells us that she was born into a wealthy family in New York. She was taught to do something for the community. She studied with Claude Levi-Strauss structural anthropology. She was left alone by her parents who were always abroad and gone. She stayed with the servants. Tracy: I could transform my pain. She founded women's gift giving circles and is connected to Mama Cash in Amsterdam. She feels herself divinely inspired; as soon as there pops up a serious problem, she sleeps on it and there will come a solution within 4 days. Solutions to many problems are exponential care and love.

Funding needs an infrastructure; she advises in this field. She asks the organizations who need money from donor organisations: 'what is your theory of change' and 'What are you uniquely called to do right now'. She discusses the strategy. We cannot change what we do not see. We are all working our way from separation to connexion. Men are much more involved into the exchange culture.

Tracy is connected to 145 women donor organizations. There are a few websites: www.fnt.org. and unleashinggenerosity.org. (women's funds are community based). Donors, activists and community leaders are working together. Giving is a kind of alchemy; giving is an antidote for neglect. Giving is getting out of yourself and seeing the other and feeling love.

Erella Shadmi – Motherhood as an Alternative to Post Humanism and Post-Gender.
Beit Berl Academic College, Israel (see first conference above)

Morena Luciani Russo - The Gift of Ritual and Female Shamanism

Laima Association. Italy

Abstract. Inside shamanic female spirituality, rituals are "gifts", the ancestral form of giving thanks to the Maternal Life-Giver and Her natural cycles. Shamanism narrated by men focuses on knowledge and healing practices emphasizing phantasmagorical powers and neglecting ritual arts. Since the beginning women have created ritual to restore balance between the visible and invisible worlds.

Bio. Morena Luciani Russo is an Italian ritual artist, a spiritual activist and an independent researcher in the field of shamanism and anthropology of the sacred feminine with a degree in anthropology, University of Turin. She is founder of Laima Association and author of "Donne Sciamane" (Women Shamans). Morena leads women circles, gitanic circles and workshops.

Summary. Gift is the basic concept of female shamanism. Female spiritual practices are not recognized by men. The male vision of shamanism is different than the female. Women are seen either as powerwomen or as witches and sorcerers. In matriarchies sacred and daily life are one. Divine energies are there. In the western vision these are very fragmented. The male shamanism tries to dominate the mystery of nature. They played a role as spiritual and political leaders but they did not understand the instrument of the offering in a ritual. Female rituals are directed to the restoring of balance. They use the ritual to create order. In a ritual I can make an offering that is dear to me. We want something back: we receive balance and order. The ritual is a thanksgiving to the cosmic mother to celebrate the cosmic cycle.

Sacred Bread. One of the very old female rituals is the making and offering of bread. Bread is the symbol of sacred transformation.

* *In Greek mystery school* bread was used as a symbol of life. In Sicily in Italy people celebrate on the 30th of April the festival of Demeter for ever.

* *There is also the festival of Saint Gemma in the middle of Italy*, the rituals are meant to redistribute the wealth. The women make bread and lit the ceremonial fire. For several days they are making bread, together. Female shamans take care of the fires. Young girls carry all the breads into the village/town in a nuptial dress with much gold on it.

* *In Sardinia* breadmaking is an art. Women give decorated bread to their fiancée. There are also breads of the 'maids of the temple', another word for 'sacred prostitutes'.

Concluding: female shamanism is hidden in in collective women's rituals

Letecia Layson – The Gift of Kapwa

Center for Babaylan Studies, USA

Abstract. "The babaylan was the first Filipino psychologist. As a priestess she was also the guardian of Filipino sacred knowledge," according to Virgilio G. Enriquez. Kapwa, shared identity, is core to Filipino Psychology and personhood. "Kapwa is an awareness of the rootedness of each of us in the One Divine Essence." Felipe M de Leon.

Bio. Letecia Layson is a Filipina, Feminist, Futurist, Priestess of Morphogenesis (Form Coming Into Being), High Priestess of Diana; Priestess of Isis, Priestess

Hierophant in FOI/TOI-LA. Letecia is one of the Founding Mothers of the Center for Babaylan Studies; a member of International Feminists for a Gift Economy, Modern Matriarchal Studies Network.

Summary. Please shift your awareness to the 7701 islands in the Pacific. They have 125 indigenous tribes and there are 135 languages (no dialects). They extend families of these islands have gone all over the world but still are in contact with each other. We are animists. Everything has its life-force. Kapwa means the self in the other. When I am in a relationship with you I am never alone. I am related to all things animate and inanimate. Everything has its divinity in it: what we touch is sacred.

The cosmic matrix of being has 8 layers or dimensions. You are always somewhere in these layers. There is no go away. Our DNA comes from Africa via Indonesia to Micronesia. Culture bearers only write in poetry; they use 88 words to describe what and how you can see; they use 100 words in order to describe what and how you can touch.

Colonialism and capitalism have taken these layered dimensions, these realities from us; they have broken it. Gender-issues come with the Europeans.

Memory is transmitted via DNA; there is this physical awareness that we are all one. But we are so busy with words. Intuition is personal. Tacit knowledge is local but also universal. This is about collective consciousness.

The Babaylan. The high priestess the Babaylan was a culture bearer; she was a healer with sacred herbs, a midwife, wearing the symbolism of colors that all had significance. She was a fierce fighter. She was pierced by the Christians and fed to the crocodiles; in our view the crocodiles are our ancestors.

We indigenous people are not marginal. We must give: we cannot not give, because we are born like that.

Camila Martinez - The Great Gift of Indigenous Sacred Medicine

Maya Seed Ark Project, Central America. (See above under film)

Abstract. The Great Gift of indigenous sacred medicine has been at the forefront of the evolution of consciousness on Mother Earth. Deep contact with the plant kingdom as method renders indelible healing. Entering through this visionary portal, we will journey from spores to seeds to another reality of the sacred feminine.

Bio. Camila Martinez, M.A. is a curandera, traditional native medicine doctor in the Mazatec tradition of Oaxaca, Mexico. First westerner with graduate degree in Tibetan and Ayurvedic medicine, 40 year eco-warrior on indigenous issues, translator, author, filmmaker, poet, Buddhist Lama. Founder and director of the Maya Seed Ark Project, Central America.

Summary. Camila is the last one of this panel, the last speaker after a long day. She asks us to close our eyes and invites us to sit by her fire. 'Come and sit by my fire'. Grandmothers are carriers of the seeds; seeds are the carriers of life; seeds are life. The four colors represent the four directions. Seeds and bread feed the physical and the spiritual body.

A new type of colonialism is popping up; after 500 years of colonization we have

recently been colonized by the genetic engineering of seeds. This topic is quite unknown. I am a seed mother; we plant the seeds in order to harvest them. Two medicine women, who were great masters, were my teachers. Another grandmother taught me about the seeds.

Monsanto and allied companies are these new colonisators. They sell genetically modified seeds. The Mayan people have the blue seeds. These are the good seeds in Oaxaca; they are nearly gone. Oaxaca is the cradle of the corn; 50 years ago the land was thriving and self-sustaining. Now the situation has totally and dramatically changed. You must know what are you eating and how this effects your health. We get sick of eating GMO food.

Seeds continue the gift. One seeds gives after being planted, much more in return. Three kinds of seeds are victim of genetic engineering.

1. corn.
2. rice
3. grain.

In California there is a strong movement trying to preserve the food supply of good seeds. 'If we cannot protect our food supply, what we will protect', Camilla asks us with soft voice

Camila is a seed warrior. There is a shrinking landmass were the good seeds can be planted. Why? When you plant a gmo seeds, it spreads through the soil, the water, the insects; it effects the whole chain. People get all kind of illnesses, people get sick and young girls are menstruating much earlier than normal.

In pre-Columbian times cacao was the kind of money to use for exchange. Then in colonial times it shifted from agriculture to mining.

Our sacred medicine is the mushroom, the *fungai* (?); it is spread by spores and not by seeds. *Peyote* is used more to the north. This mushroom is our panacea. It heals the body and the mind; it can heal deep trauma. There is a revival of using the old medicine, but without doing the necessary rituals that are essential for the sacred medicine. They only use it to sell it.

This medicine, when used properly, is giving a deep connection with Mother Earth. We give prayers to her. Medicine women and men are holding the line. In Guatemala they are killed because they organize rituals in public. Camila wrote a book *The Mushroom Doctor. The Wisdom Way of a Feminine Shaman*, 148 pages.

Receiving blue seeds. When I went home on Monday, 28th of April I had to wait outside the hostel for the shuttle bus to bring me to the airport; Camila just entered the hostel: our paths crossed again. I thanked her for her impressive speech; she opened her bag and gave me a handful of blue seeds of the Mayas. This impressed me; later I realized that some years before I had received a 'seedling' price in the Netherlands. And now I received precious blue seeds.

Camila told me that the Mayan elders want to come out. She asked me if I would be willing to invite them to the Netherlands. To be continued.

Monday April 27 - Sala Carla Lonzi

10:00 – 13:00 *Theory of the Gift* – Moderator Mariam Tazi-Preve

Angela Giuffrida (Italy): The Conceptual Foundations of the Gift Economy
Susan Petrilli (Australia/Italy): Mother-sense in the Study of Signs
Luigino Bruni (Italy): The Grammar of *Munus*: Inhabiting the Ambivalence
Questions and answers

Musical interlude Diem Lafortune

11:30 **Alberto Castagnola** (Italy): The Gift Between Economy in Crisis and a New Imaginary

Augusto Ponzio (Italy): The Gift in Lovers' Discourse
Simone Woerer (Austria): The Crisis of the Gift
Angela Miles (Canada): - Escape from 'Gender': Mothering and the Gift Economy

Questions and answers

13:30 -14:30 lunch

14:30 -20:00 **Discussion: all speakers and participants** - Moderator Letecia Layson

Angela Giuffrida - The Conceptual Foundations of the Gift Economy Italy

Abstract: The presentation sheds light on the conceptual foundations of the gift economy showing the close correlation between the maternal system of thought and the civil practice of matriarchal communities of which the economy is a part. It places the attention also on the civilizing capacities of the maternal mind in realizing social organizations centered on care.

Bio. Angela Giuffrida has been professor of philosophy in the high schools of the Veneto region. She developed a new theory of knowledge in the book *Il corpo pensa: Umanità o Femminità* (2002), expanded in the volume *La razionalità femminile unico antidoto alla guerra* (2011)

Summary. Angela explains that she focused her work on thinking about thinking. Spontaneous reactions are older than the rational way of thinking. This is about theory and philosophy. The body thinks; living organisms are very concrete; they are self managed. They are able to transform energy. A single process cannot be fragmented. The experience of the body is very important. The mind mirrors the experience of the body. Women have a circular way of thinking, a broad embracing flexibility. Men's attitude is mono-directed. They see one thing and separate body and mind. Men isolate data and look to reality as opposed to each other. Subjects are considered as immaterial beings.

Susan Petrilli (Australia/Italy): Mother-sense in the Study of Signs (see above)

Luigino Bruni: The grammar of *munus*: inhabiting the ambivalence

LUMSA of Rome, Italy

Abstract. The dynamic obligation-gift inherent in the Latin etymology of *munus* is central to a perspective on the gift and the *communitas* that is generative. Many deviations found in relations between economy and gift depend on an inability or unwillingness to accept ambivalence. This ambivalence is tied to the question of vulnerability central to themes of care, women, and relational goods.

Bio. Luigino Bruni is Professor Ordinario of Political Economy at the LUMSA of Rome, scientific director of the SEC, School of Civil Economy, coordinator of the project Economy of Communion and editorial writer for "Avvenire". Among his most recent publications: *L'altra metà dell'economia* 2014, with Alessandra Smerilli and *Fondati sul lavoro*, 2014.

Summary. Women have lower salaries. Female vocation in patriarchy is caring and not being paid for this; this is exploitation. Women have started to behave like man. We create non-profit organizations who receive money from gambling and the internet; 50% belongs to the Catholic Church. NGO's benefit from an influx of money derived from gambling and addiction. What a sad story. Capital enterprises are built on invulnerability. Creativity is wounded and everything is paralyzed. All gift-less societies are highly hierarchal.

Alberto Castagnola (Italy) The gift between economy in crisis and a new imaginary

Abstract. The economic use of planetary resources. The damage to the environment today and in the long term. The imbalances in the relation to nature which must be urgently healed. The gift element in the relation to nature in past societies. The principal theoretical elaborations on the meaning and roles of the gift. The ecofeminist positions. The gift component in alternative and solidarity economies and in thinking around degrowth. For a new imaginary about the gift understood as a substantial factor in the project of a better world.

Bio. Alberto Castagnola, economist, researcher with Svimez, with ISPE Istituto di Studi per la Programmazione Economica. Expert in economy, international finance, cooperation for development. He participated in campaigns for raising awareness on international issues. He engages with environmental issues, experimenting with forms of alternative and solidarity economics. He is a member of the National Degrowth Association.

Summary. We need degrowth. The system is getting out of balance. We cope with enormous migration and desertification. We have to decolonize our imagination. Feminist philosophy is an attempt to introduce completely new images. Degrowth means no collapse but transition. The idea of the gift is essential. This paradigm has to change the current system.

First step. We must think of alternatives for current consumption. We have to recognize the value of the activities done out of free choice. This does not mean that we have to abandon the salary scale.

Second step. The role of the women must be fully respected, not only in daily life but also in scientific research. Everybody should be free to choose the work he/she

would like to do with the highest respect for the environment. The public administration must be reorganized completely. Fair trade must be a main pillar.

Augusto Ponzio - The gift in Lovers' Discourse

University of Bari, Italy

Abstract: In *Fragments of lover's discourse* and his 1974-76 seminars, Barthes maintains that lover's discourse is excluded from the discourse of power and scientific knowledge, relegated to the private sphere. Lover's discourse is eccentric with respect to dominant places of giving for returns. This paper focuses on gifting in amorous discourse.

Bio. Augusto Ponzio is Professor Emeritus, once Full Professor in Philosophy of Language which he taught from 1970 at the University of Bari with General Linguistics. Among his authors: Levinas, Schaff, Marx, Rossi-Landi, Bakhtin and his Circle whose works he translated in 2014 presented in a bilingual Russian-Italian edition (Bompiani).

Simone Woerer - The Crisis of the Gift - Innsbruck, Austria

Abstract. *The Gift in its various manifestations is deeply connected to life itself and Patriarchy is based on the Crisis of the Gift.* These are two pillars of a theory of the Gift based on the "Critical Theory of Patriarchy. Let us dis-cover our matriarchal and gift-friendly sources to reconnect with the Gift and life-giving practices.

Bio. Simone Woerer, M.Ed., M.P.S. is a doctoral candidate in Political Science (University Innsbruck/Claudia von Werlhof), an independent researcher, author of a book and several articles written in German, active member of the *Planetary Movement for Mother Earth* and *FIPAZ* in Innsbruck. Woerer is currently working on her doctoral dissertation "The Crisis of the Gift".

Abstract. The gift is based on matriarchy; patriarchy is based on the crisis of the gift. We are born into patriarchy, we have to live with it and overcome it. The global crisis is planetary on an economic, political, social and environmental level. We see the failure of the patriarchal system. Rosalie Bertell started the planetary movement, Claudia van Werlhof continued. Patriarchy transforms the gift into poison.

Angela Miles - Escape from 'Gender': Mothering and the Gift Economy

International Women's Human Rights Education Institute at OISE/UT, Canada

Abstract. The maternal basis of the gift economy reveals the self-evident but currently hidden truth that economic relationships are human and social relationships. This presentation will explore the ways that healing this separation between our economy and our humanity moves us beyond 'gender.'

Bio. Angela Miles teaches in the Adult Education and Community Development Program and Co-founder of the International Women's Human Rights Education Institute OISE/UT and an editorial Board member of *Canadian Woman Studies Journal*. Publications include *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions* and the edited collection *Women in a Globalizing World: Transforming Equality*,

Summary. Angela Miles described her own integrative feminist politics and showed the ways that Genevieve Vaughan's work provides a deep theoretical grounding she felt was lacking earlier. Theoretical articulation of the gift paradigm and gift economy has confirmed her experience/conviction that apparent paradoxes at the heart of the most exciting feminist positions are actually dialectical contradictions requiring/enabling deep reconceptualization and offering generative new possibilities. She suggested that we can better understand now why truly transformative feminisms:

- struggle for the 'feminization' of the whole of society and affirm women associated work and characteristics *against* gender;
- resist/refuse the current conceptualization of humanity even as they insist on women's full humanity;
- recognize and value women's essential and enormous unpaid work while refusing/resisting its commodification in the market (cf Mariarosa Dalla Costa (Italy), Maria Mies, Veronica Bennholdt-Thomsen, Claudia VonWerhlof);
- affirm women's specificity *and* equality (with men) and women's diversity *and* commonality (among each other).

Questions. Our society made scarcity spending abundance on war and huge buildings. This took away the gift. We have to change our perspective as in an optical illusion.

Genevieve Vaughan: everything you do with the heart, everything you do without selfishness, is great. Create a communal system and take the gift economy on higher levels. We must design future. We are all mothered *children* otherwise we would not have survived.

Annine van der Meer, Sunday May 3, 2015.

Founder en president of Academie Pansophia, The Netherlands

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