

Today, we are facing the frightening social and environmental consequences of “modern” patriarchal colonial capitalism. Still, egalitarian, life- and mother-honouring social relations and world view, exemplified in Indigenous societies and still pervasive though unrecognized in “advanced” capitalist society, offer vital inspiration and evidence that “another world” is possible. Genevieve Vaughan’s theorizing of gift economy and gift paradigm is an essential resource in this struggle. She reminds us that other-oriented giving and receiving, embodied quintessentially in maternal relations, form us all as individual human beings dependent on others for survival.

Giving and receiving is the basic human and economic relation-creating process, affirming the intrinsic value of the direct receiver, and of others as the gift flows on. Giving has been paradigmatic of humanity and human community for many tens of thousands of years and remains central today, though invisible and denied as an economic paradigm.

Self-referencing exchange (and not just unequal exchange) actually interrupts connection and relationship building with many negative consequences. It divides economic, social, ecological, legal, educational, cultural, spiritual, personal and natural realms, which in patriarchal Indigenous gift economies, are united in affirming intrinsic value and building relationships.

We are *homo donans* before and more deeply than we are *homo sapiens*. Yet, this is forgotten. Quid-pro-quo exchange is presumed to be the predominant and defining human social interaction. Unilateral giving is seen only as a periodic individual behavior choice. In the dominant imaginary, we have shrunk to *homo economicus*.

Gift economy uncovers a deeper materialism grounded in maternal giving and receiving that includes the possibility of passing the gifts on in a world beyond the hungry mechanism of bilateral exchange. Far from seeking to have the value of the maternal economy and free gifts of nature measured with the tools of exchange, we need to evaluate the market in gift terms, by how adequately it satisfies peoples’ needs.

Articles in Part One introduce Indigenous and feminist gift culture and theory. Articles in Part Two and Three bring gift lenses to Islamic, Jewish, Anishnaabe culture and social organization, and to specific historical events, institutions, and elements of life in Canada, Colombia, Europe, France, Germany, Italy, Senegal, the UK, and U.S. These articles are an exciting testimony to the varied promise of gift-informed analyses, and possibilities of a better world built on life- and mother-honouring social relations.

Aujourd’hui nous devons faire face aux conséquences désastreuses pour la société et l’environnement dans la foulée d’alisme “moderne” patriarcal et colonial. Et pourtant, il existe des sociétés autochtones toujours en activité, où une vision du monde, une vie égalitaire respecte la maternité, mais ne sont pas reconnues par nos sociétés capitalistes dites «évoluées». De là nous viennent une inspiration et l’évidence d’un autre monde possible. Nous devons à Genevieve Vaughan, dont les travaux théoriques sur l’économie et les paradigmes du don apportent une ressource essentielle à ce débat. Elle nous rappelle que les autres relations qui ont intégré les concepts issus de la maternité font de nous des individus qui dépendent des autres pour survivre.

Donner et recevoir est le processus à la base de tout contact économique et humanitaire. Il confirme la valeur intrinsèque du donneur et les autres impliqués dans le flot des échanges. Le don a été le paradigme de l’humanité et des communautés humaines depuis des millénaires, et reste central de nos jours, quoiqu’invisible et dénigré comme paradigme économique.

L’échange auto-référencié—pas seulement l’échange inégal—interrompt la connexion et la construction des relations avec des conséquences néfastes. Il divise les sphères économiques, écologiques, légales, éducatives, culturelles, spirituelles, personnelles et naturelles, alors que les économies matriarcales inhérentes aux autochtones unifient les relations intimes. Nous avons été des «*homo donans*» avant d’être des «*homo sapiens*». Nous l’avons oublié! L’échange donnant-donnant est présumé dominant, et définit l’interaction sociale. Par ailleurs, le don unilatéral est perçu comme un choix individuel et sporadique. Dans l’imagerie dominante, nous sommes devenus des «*homo economicus*».

L’économie du don révèle un matérialisme enfoui profondément dans le donner et le recevoir maternels et inclut la possibilité de donner dans un monde au-delà des exigeants mécanismes de l’échange bilatéral. Loin de chercher à calculer la valeur du don de l’économie maternelle, et ceux gratuits dans la nature, avec les instruments d’échange, nous devrions évaluer le marché en fonction du don et chercher comment il satisfait les besoins de la société.

Les articles de la première section abordent la culture autochtone et féministe du don et sa théorie. Les deuxième et troisième sections jettent un œil sur les cultures Juive, Musulmane et Anishaabe, leur organisation sociale et certains évènements historiques spécifiques. De plus, nous apprenons les conditions de vie au Canada, en Colombie, en Europe, en France, en Allemagne, en Italie, au Sénégal, en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis. Ces articles sont des témoignages excitants qui nous promettent une information sur les analyses et les possibilités qui appréhendent un monde basé sur des relations sociales qui honoreront les mères.

BARBARA ALICE MANN, ANGELA MILES, SHEILA MOLLOY,  
CHANG PILWHA, AND GENEVIEVE VAUGHAN

## ABOUT THE GUEST EDITORS...

**Barbara Alice Mann**, Professor of Humanities in the Jesup Scott Honors College of the University of Toledo, in Toledo, Ohio, USA, has published over 250 published articles and chapters and fifteen books, the latest two of which are *President by Massacre: Indian-Killing for Political Gain* (2019) and *Spirits of Blood, Spirits of Breath: The Twinned Cosmos of Indigenous America* (2016). Other works include *The Tainted Gift* (2009), on the deliberate spread of disease to Natives by settlers as a land-clearing tactic; *George Washington's War on Native America* (2005, paperback, 2007); *Daughters of Mother Earth* (2006, paperback as *Make a Beautiful Way*, 2008); and her internationally known *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (2000, 2004, 2006). Dr. Mann regularly speaks at conferences, nationally and internationally. An Ohio Bear Clan Seneca, community recognition, she lives in her Ohio homeland.

**Angela Miles** is a founding member of Toronto Women for a Just and Healthy Planet, Antigonish Women's Association, Feminist Network for a Gift Economy and a member of the editorial board of Canadian Woman Studies. She teaches at the OISE/University of Toronto where, with Alda Facio, she co-founded the International Women's Human Rights Education Institute. Her publications include, *Integrative Feminisms: Building Global Visions* and the edited collection *Women in a Globalizing World: Transforming Equality, Development, Diversity and Peace*.

**Sheila Molloy** is a long-time supporter of women and a feminist. She has a background in public and inter-governmental organizations in the area of education. She speaks and reads English and French, having worked in bilingual environments. She has been a board member of *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* since 2007.

**Chang Pilwha** is Professor Emeritus of Ewha Womans University. She was the first President of the Asian Association of Women's Studies and the first Chairperson of the APEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI) in 1999. She also served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Asian Journal of Women's Studies (AJWS)* for many years, as the President of the Korean Association of Women's Studies in 2000, and as the Convenor of the Ninth International Interdisciplinary Congress of Women (ww05) in 2005. As the Director of the Asian Center for Women's Studies, she led the launching of the Ewha Global Empowerment Program (EGEP) for women activists of non-profit organizations from Asian and African countries. She was also the Director of the Ewha Institute for Leadership Development, where she conducted programs for women leaders of various fields, including business corporations. Currently, she is working as the Chair of Asian Women Bridge, Dorun-Dorun, which operates skills and leadership training centers in Nepal, Cambodia, and Laos. She works closely with the Ministry of Gender Equality, the Korean Women's Development Institute, and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) as well as many NGOs, including the Korean Women's Foundation, and the Korean Sexual Violence Relief Center.

**Genevieve Vaughan** (b.1939) is an independent researcher who has been working on the idea of the maternal gift economy as an alternative to Patriarchal Capitalism for more than half a century. She created the multicultural all-woman activist Foundation for a Compassionate Society (1987-2005) and the network: International Feminists for a Gift Economy (2001 and ongoing). She founded the Temple of Goddess Spirituality dedicated to Sekhmet in Cactus Springs, Nevada (1992 and ongoing). Her books are *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange* (1997), *Homo Donans* (2006) and *The Gift in the Heart of Language: the Maternal Source of Meaning* (2015). She has edited three anthologies *Il Dono/The Gift* (2004), *Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different Worldview is Possible* (2007) and *The Maternal Roots of the Gift Economy* (2019) and has written three children's books. She is the mother of three daughters and lives part time in Rome, Italy, part time in Austin, Texas. See [www.gift-economy.com](http://www.gift-economy.com).