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Visioning a Matriarchal Future

Some words for Introduction

First of all, I would like to pose the question of why we need visions and why we use visioning. After all, this could easily be considered as not serious, a pure product of fantasy with no connection to reality. However, in actual fact people are constantly visioning; sometimes we call it making plans or projects, which means we foresee what we want to do.

Visions are a more complex variation of this activity. They can be very elaborate, and their complexity reaches its highest level when they encompass an entire social system. However, they are not dogmas but rather dynamic intellectual constructs that can continually transform and expand, depending on how their content gradually takes shape and how they become more tangible. This demonstrates that visions have a strong relationship with reality and essentially serve as guidelines for future action. Without visions, actions in the political field are carried out merely for the sake of it and are therefore more likely to fragment than to achieve anything. On the other hand, this relationship with reality is essential for visions, since without it they would simply be dreams or even delusions.

There are two reasons why Visioning a Matriarchal Future is very important as a guideline for future action:

First, visions of a matriarchal future are not wishful thinking nor are they abstract utopias, which are many in number but lack deeper impact. In contrast, Visioning a Matriarchal Future is based on real matriarchal societies of the present and the past, which have existed for a long time and still exist in some parts of the world. They form part of the legacy of humankind and provide the foundations and accurate knowledge to envision a matriarchal future.

Second, visions are extremely necessary in our disruptive, late-patriarchal time because, without them, we would have to consider this horrific patriarchal model of war, destruction and millions suffering as normal, as a given from the beginning of human history. Such an assertion exists as a perfidious ideology, which we are repeatedly led to believe in different variations and which suppresses any hope of a change in

circumstances. However, knowing that matriarchal societies have existed far longer in human cultural history than patriarchal ones can give us the future-oriented energy required to rebuild them. And this is precisely what Visioning a Matriarchal Future is about.

1. A clear vision

If we want to talk about a matriarchal future, such visioning can provide clear guidance for all those who are looking to implement new matriarchal patterns and can make their matriarchal practice lasting and powerful. This vision is the topic of Matriarchal Politics. It explains the radically different cultural model of matriarchy, as a mother-centred, consensus-based, egalitarian society which will have great significance for the future of women and mothers, and for humankind in general. I would like to talk briefly about what this vision might include.

Matriarchal Microstructures

At the *social level*, the model of matriarchy means escaping the increasing fragmentation of society, which drags human beings down into a state of separation and loneliness and renders them sick and destructive. Rather, it means developing structures that foster various types of *affinity or intentional communities* such as communes, alliances of neighbouring communities and networks. However, affinity communities are not created from mere communities of interest – entities that rapidly come together and quickly fall apart. Rather, affinity communities arise from a spiritual and intellectual common ground through which a symbolic clan develops, resulting in a group that is more deeply connected than a mere community of interest.

The matriarchal principle here is that such affinity groups are generally *initiated, supported and led by women*. The determining criteria are the needs of women and children, who are the future of humanity, rather than the power and virility-based aspirations of men. Men will be fully integrated within the new matri-clans but according to a different value system; namely one based on reciprocal care and love rather than on power.

At the *economic level*, even more growth in large-scale industry, in the military and in our so-called “standard of living” would not be

possible, considering the risk of completely destroying the biosphere and life on earth. Here the perspective emerges of an alternative, local and regional subsistence economy, because the subsistence perspective means that people are economically independent. Subsistence entities engage in self-sufficient, independent activities in which the quality of life takes precedence over quantity.

This does not only mean doing local gardening and agriculture but also fostering regional communication, trade, technology and arts. Even producing high technology is possible at the regional level if the monopolisation by transnational corporations is brought to an end. These corporations try to make the peoples of the world dependent not only on their technologies but also on the very basis of life, namely water and food. This must definitely come to an end!

The regionalisation of agriculture, trade, etc. for the benefit of *women and their families or clans* is a matriarchal principle because they form the basis of human life on earth.

At the *level of political decision-making*, the principle of matriarchal consensus is basic for a truly egalitarian society. It can be practiced here and now, immediately and everywhere. It is the inspiring stimulus for creating any matriarchal community. It establishes a balance between women and men, and also between generations since the elderly as well as young people are able to have their say. In addition, it's really the basis of democracy, since it demonstrates what formal democracies promise but fail to deliver.

According to this principle, the small units of the new matri-clans are the actual decision-makers. All the alternative movements try to practice this principle more or less, thereby gaining lots of experience. To implement the consensus principle in the future, a system of smaller and broader councils must be developed, all interconnected to make decisions at the communal, local and regional levels. The consensus principle cannot be practiced beyond the region but, in this vision, independent, flourishing regions remain the political goal.

At the *spiritual-cultural level*, it's essential for all hierarchical religions with belief in transcendent divinities and claims of absolute truth – which have deeply debased the earth, humanity and especially women – to be rejected. Rather, we are looking at a new *sacralization of the world*, in line with the matriarchal perspective that the entire world and all it includes is divine. This leads to freely and creatively honouring and

celebrating life and the visible world. In this way, matriarchal spirituality pervades everyday life and becomes a normal part of it.

Matriarchal Macrostructures

Regionalism:

In a new matriarchal society, “bigger” is not necessarily “better”. The smaller units of society, responsible for engendering person-to-person and transparent politics, are given preference. They must not become so big that people cannot see through them and cannot participate in their decisions, as is the case in so many of today’s national states and super-powers. But they must be big enough to safeguard their self-sufficiency by means of a subsistence economy and the diversity of their handiwork, technologies and arts. The ideal dimension is that of the *region*.

Unlike national borders, the borders of a region are not random; rather they have developed out of the conditions of the landscape and out of cultural traditions. Regional borders are formed by the decisions of the people themselves who want to live together on the basis of common cultural and spiritual traditions; this avoids any war of culture or of religion. Often the landscape corresponds to these cultural borders because natural borders can be formed by mountain ranges, rivers, big lakes or the sea which bound people within their regional places.

A new matriarchal society does not extend beyond its own region; it is a network of communities in villages and of neighbourhoods in towns. These are mutually independent village republics and town republics and, as such, the principle of consensus limits the size of towns and cities.

The two faces of society:

Humanity is made up of two – men and women (diverse genders included). All traditional matriarchal societies have taken this basic fact into account, in that they maintain a social order based on *complementary gender equality* and *perfect balance between the sexes*. A modern matriarchal society will also be set up this way.

This means that, in every realm of society, women and men are equally represented. In matriarchal politics it is always a woman and a

man together, as the chosen speakers for the clan, who represent it in the outside world. That is also true at the levels of village, town and region: here too, the speakers for the village, town or the whole region are always a woman and a man. They act together, representing the dual face of society.

This is true not only in politics but for every aspect of society: for economic functions just as for spiritual offices, as well as for special groups and guilds such as handicraft workers, technicians, artists and scientists. Each post is simultaneously represented by a woman and a man and therefore doubly filled. The female speakers are chosen solely by the women of the clan, the village, the town, the guild, and the male speakers are chosen solely by the men.

Culture and spirituality at the interregional level:

Regarding culture at the interregional level, spirituality is once again the connecting power. Matriarchal spirituality is not institutionalised and is therefore free, but it is not arbitrary. It has a foundation that binds all humankind: Mother Earth and the flow of life.

Although a matriarchal society, as a structure, cannot be constituted beyond the regional level, it can create friendly alliances with other regions. These *interregional associations* are of a purely spiritual nature and are expressed symbolically. This means that people of neighbouring regions might visit each other, giving gifts of friendship, sharing their cultures and celebrating festivals together in order to learn from each other, without any manipulation to convince the other of one's own way of life. In this way a free, horizontal network of *sister regions* can be created, completely distinct from today's centralist, hierarchal state structures.

In the age of modern communication technologies, especially the internet, these cultural and spiritual alliances are not limited to neighbouring regions but can link to other countries and even to other continents. So, a sister region in Europe can be associated with a sister region in South America or Africa or the Middle East, and they can share communication and cultural gifts via the internet. In this way, interregional associations among matriarchal communities, towns and regions could arise worldwide.

Global structures

To solve global problems, these steps from below must nevertheless be supplemented with more comprehensive structures. These structures are not "above" as there is no "above" in this sense in matriarchal societies; they are simply more comprehensive.

National states no longer fit the bill: they are too big for humane, transparent political processes. And, at the same time, they are too small to solve the global problems created by the current patriarchy and left behind for posterity. This is especially true regarding problems related to advanced destruction of the biosphere on Earth. It's no longer possible for national governments, or even regional ones, to solve these problems. They affect all of humanity, so global strategies are needed to solve them.

No more national states:

Existing national governments must be dissolved in two directions: on the one hand, in the direction of autonomous regions, which are the basis for life; on the other hand, in the direction of a global structure with a purely executive status which has no state power. Such a structure could be a Global Council, made up of the two halves of a *Women's Global Council* and a *Men's Global Council*. Today, the U.N. has tried to form such a global council but, because of its patriarchal structure which excludes the issues of women and of many peoples, and because of the power plays by the super-powers at this level, it has failed to fulfil its ideals. It just continues the patriarchal status quo.

New distribution of national wealth:

One initial and fundamental challenge is therefore to dissolve the financial wealth of each national state, transferring this first to the regions and, in the regions, to the communities. Of course, this does not mean that the money goes to individuals or patriarchal institutions, rather it's only distributed for *matriarchal communities*. Exactly half this wealth, 50%, must go to women and the other half, that is 50%, must go to the men of the communities, and not more to the men as is common in patriarchy. In this way, each sex can develop their respective area of the society and region. As every agency is already occupied by both sexes in a new matriarchal society, this can be independently accomplished by each sex.

However, this money is not a payment for motherhood and women's work (which in fact cannot be paid) but belongs to them as half of humanity. It's their modest share for all that women have done for free throughout long periods of time. This equitable division of wealth would enable women to stop begging for state aid, which for them is notoriously scanty anyway. And it should start right now for women's communal and cultural projects!

With the equal division of national financial wealth, women would probably establish infrastructures to fulfil social needs, with the likely result that communities, healthcare, culture and education would flourish. And women would establish their own schools and universities, because their knowledge is never respected in patriarchal societies. But even men are not free to do what they want with their share of money, for the projects of both women and men in the communities and regions would be agreed upon by the local and regional consensus councils, according to maternal values.

Global structures for global problems

The other direction in which the public wealth of national states should be dissolved would be towards the structures of the Women's Global Council and the Men's Global Council. An agreed-upon percentage of women's and men's wealth from all the regions would go to these two halves of the Global Council, conducted by delegates of both sexes. The Global Council's assets would be used exclusively to solve the global problems of polluted air, water and soil and of damaged life on earth; in other words, cleaning up the technology-fuelled legacy of pollution caused by military powers and industrial corporations.

Members of the Women's Global Council and the Men's Global Council are always delegates elected from each region and they are accountable to their region; they have no power to make decisions independently of their region's determinations. They moderate and coordinate the decisions of all regions of the world in precisely the same way that a regional or local council coordinates the decisions of the matri-clans.

With these structures, what we call a “state” dissolves, regardless of whether it's a monarchy, an autocracy, a so-called democratic national state, an empire or a super-power. The concept and image of the hierarchical “state,” no matter how it's constituted, have become redundant. Every time, the patriarchal history of established domination began with the formation of “states”. With the development of new matriarchal societies, which are free from domination, a new humane history of cultures can begin.

2. Where is this vision implemented today?

The fact that this vision of a new matriarchal society radically changes perspective is even more important because it does not provide remedies for patriarchal problems but rather transgresses this system emphatically.

If we look at the situation today, we can see many diverse movements in which women are actively taking part and have important roles. They are developing non-patriarchal patterns, which can be seen as a tendency towards a new matriarchal society, even if they are not aware of this background. Through the matriarchal model, it's not difficult to see how they can be combined toward this more comprehensive goal and could possibly collaborate.

Let me give some examples of movements that relate to the different levels of society and already implement some matriarchal patterns.

At the *economic level*, many diverse *Ecological Movements* are on their way to this goal. They are many and they are everywhere. They include the *Movements of Urban Gardening* and of *Transition Towns*. These movements can be based on the *Movement of the Maternal Gift Economy*, which is very important in this context, and on the many gift-giving circles which already exist. Women in these movements are increasingly aware of the matriarchal patterns included in their activities, and such awareness is growing.

At the *social level*, many kinds of communities already exist, as the *Communities Movement* can show us. Affinity communities of different kinds are spreading in Europe and the U.S. and in many other places.

Several of them are led by women, which definitely put women and mothers at the centre, as we can see in the movement of the Kurdish women in the Middle East, or in the women's village Nashira in Colombia, and also in the "Motherful Community", which focuses on single mothers. All of them are aware of the matriarchal values and patterns they have established. Women in these communities choose, by themselves, if they live with or without men, a variety of such choices already exists. These are exciting examples of women who take matriarchal patterns seriously as the basis of their lives.

There are many others, and many more are planned as projects, which I am not familiar with but hope to learn about soon. They are the conscious seeds of a new matriarchal society.

At the *level of political decision-making*, all the alternative movements mentioned above try to practice this principle and they have gained lots of experience in this way. Women in their communities practice it on a daily level in all-women's councils.

At the *spiritual-cultural level*, we already have a great variety of movements created by women who have left the traditional male-dominated religions, such as the international *Goddess Movement* and the *Movement of Matriarchal Spirituality*, which developed within the Feminist Movements. Many women and some men have begun to celebrate the cycles of the earth and the cycles of life in many individual ways. There is no hierarchical order or spiritual head among them and, of course, no missionizing.

Some concluding words

We can see a large number of conflicting powers in the present and we don't know which ones will shape the future. We are currently witnessing the end times of patriarchy and they are extremely dramatic because they threaten the total destruction of entire peoples and civilisations, including the Earth's biosphere. It would be wishful thinking to ignore this.

But there are also strong forces for renewal, which in my view all point in the direction of new matriarchal patterns. The creations by women I have already mentioned serve as decisive role models: with them, the future has already begun!

At the same time, knowledge of matriarchal patterns and societies is spreading rapidly, since many women and increasingly more men are realising that it is urgently needed. Given our current wars and humanitarian catastrophes, more and more people want to know about a completely different way of life, a different social model that is not an abstract utopia but based on thousands of years of lived human experience.

Seeing this awakening and action by younger generations of women who are learning from their foremothers gives us hope. Because women are many, everywhere are lots of them, they are half of humanity. Thanks to them it will be that, one day, this patriarchy of the present will become a thing of the past.

Because one thing is for certain: the future of humanity will be matriarchal or there will be no future.

That's why we need a matriarchal revolution, now! This is the perfect answer to this destructive phase of late patriarchy, which is getting worse by the day.

We need a matriarchal revolution to change this situation in a radical way. And we have the guidelines, we have the vision and the knowledge to do it!
