

Speakers

Veronika Bennhold-Thomsen

Politics of the Subsistence Perspective

The way into the post-economic-growth-society can be successful only with a different perspective: by orienting ourselves towards that what is necessary for contentment with life, towards subsistence. It is this spirit which consciously determines the new social movements for eco-villages, urban communal gardens, for new and old common land, for the re-localisation of production (e.g. “transition towns”), and determines also our everyday life, even if less consciously. The subsistence perspective has its roots in mothering, in caring, in giving. It is matriarchal politics of everyday life.

Biographical Note

Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen gained a professorship and holds a doctorate, she is an ethnologist and sociologist; the focus of her work: rural and regional economics in Latin America as well as in Europe, Feminist research. She works within the framework of the Institute of Theory and Practice of Subsistence outside academia, and teaches at the University for Culture of the Soil in Vienna.

Lin Daniels

Pagoda: Temple of Love and the Pagoda Community. A Western Model of a Matrifocal Community of Lesbian Feminists

My goal here is to examine an intentional community that is matriarchal at its base and intention and, matrifocal in its function. I am examining a community of Lesbian Feminists who decided to make the political truly personal by immersing themselves in Lesbian culture, and who created a context in which to live their Lesbian Feminist principles. The genesis of the community, how it functioned and how it evolved will be discussed here.

Choosing to live in a women only community, with Women’s Spirituality at its base, was, in 1977, 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 1970’s. Many of these communities dissolved, some lasted through the 1980’s, and a few, like the Pagoda Community, lasted into this millennium.

Intentional women’s communities were, are, practice grounds for the patriarchy, glimpses of how life could be lived among women – here and now. The women who founded them trudged through murky, treacherous waters to build bridges between women at a time when we were just beginning to find each other. For The Pagoda Community, it meant years of joy in living among women in an idyllic seaside setting, together with the chaos that comes before real change. It also meant dealing with issues left over from the patriarchy: issues of class, race, able-ism, and many other issues that the Lesbian Feminist community at large were grappling with.

While patriarchy is a relatively new aberration in human history, it has managed to all but obliterate primary, matriarchal cultures. Can women reclaim our herstory of living together cooperatively? Can we resurrect the idea of a matrifocal community and make it a viable option for day to day living? Can we even fathom a world in which our destiny as women is controlled largely by our will, our imaginations? Can the intense desire to live in community with one another free us from the patriarchal colonization of our minds? Can this exist in a modern, Western society?

My intent here is to offer a glimpse into just one of the many women's communities that began in the 1970's. It was a community that endured as an intentional community for over twenty years, with a Temple dedicated to the Goddess at its core, "The Pagoda, Temple of Love."

Biographical Note

Lin Daniels is the founder of the East Coast Lesbians Festival, and has been producing festivals and conferences internationally for women only since 1974. She is now Director of *The Amazon Icon Foundation*, founded to produce and distribute biographies and documentaries about Lesbian Feminist activists, writers and cultural workers. She holds a Masters degree in Women's Spirituality.

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Angela Dolmetsch

NASHIRA. Building a new matriarchal Society in Colombia

In Colombia, 32% of households are headed by women and depend on their work as the main source of income. As a result of the gender structure of Colombian society and high male mortality rates, due to 40 years of civil war, massive displacement of rural communities and endemic violence, women are frequently responsible for the care of the family including the elderly as well as children.

In a 3 hectare piece of land where lemon, orange, tangerine trees, plantains and noni shrubs are in full production, 88 women from low income groups and their families are building a matriarchal community. They have been cultivating the land for the last seven years, producing their own organic vegetables, raising poultry and fish that are fed on organic worms. They have built with their own hands a first batch of 41 houses, divided into groups of 8 houses. Each group constitutes a productive unit. Each unit has a woman as coordinator and a treasurer to take care of the finances. Thanks to a government program, private generosity and the work of the women themselves, the houses have been completed without the beneficiaries owing mortgages or other debt. A board of women is in charge of directing the community affairs.

The social organization of these women based on matriarchal principles is inspiring. Decisions are taken by consensus and tasks such as looking after the children of the community, and the cleaning and maintenance of common areas of the ecovillage are done through "mingas" or collective work. Since many of the women are from rural areas of Colombia that have been affected by violence, the women of Nashira are in the process of creating a model project where generosity, solidarity, and respect for the environment will generate a happy and sustainable community.

Biographical Note

Born in Cali Colombia, Angela Dolmetsch lives in Colombia. She is a lawyer and earned her Ph.D. in 2006 at the London School of Economics about "Maternalism in Colombian Politics".

She is responsible for including the Quota system in the Colombian Constitution, which became a law in the year 2000. She is organizer and member of the Colombian Women Consensus of the Peace Boat (embarcapazcolombia.org) 2001 to the present. She is organizer of the Colombian Women's Court "Women. Dignity and Memory", that took place in Cali in October 2005 and in Pereira 2006. And she is creator and sponsor of the eco-village NASHIRA.

She holds several executive positions: Elected Member of the Executive Council of the International Federation of Women's Lawyers FIDA 2005 to the present. International

President of FIDA, 1988-1990. Member of the Preparatory Commission on Public Administration for the Colombian Constitutional Assembly, 1991. President of “Mujeres por la Democracia”, Colombia’s only women’s political party and candidate for the Senate, 1991-2001.

Heide Goettner-Abendroth

Modern Matriarchal Studies. The basis and the situation today

At first, the fundamental concepts of modern feminist Matriarchal Studies will be given, and the difference to traditional matriarchal studies is lined out.

The basic definition or deep structure of matriarchal societies (economical, social, political, cultural) – as it is used in modern Matriarchal Studies – will be presented, it has been gained from cross-cultural research on still existing indigenous matriarchal societies all over the world. Matriarchies will be shown to be gender egalitarian and consensus based societies, creating actively peace by different most intelligent guide-lines. Some concrete examples of societies of this type will be named.

At last, its development during the last decade and its situation today will be discussed

Matriarchal Politics and the Vision of a New Society

Matriarchal politics is based on modern Matriarchal Studies; its intention is to create egalitarian, peaceful societies. How this goal can be achieved, is shown to us by still extant matriarchal societies, whose traditions go back to centuries/millennia.

Their economical, political, societal and spiritual patterns are of the utmost interest; they demonstrate how societies can be created and maintained free of violence and based on gender-balance and friendly reciprocity. This is valid for the microstructures of family, clan, and village as well as for the macrostructures of city, region and the association of regions. The relevance of modern Matriarchal Studies for the vision of a new society will be explored.

Biographical Note

Heide Goettner-Abendroth is a philosopher and researcher on culture and society, focused on matriarchal studies. She was born in Thuringia (Germany) in 1941 and is mother of three children, two daughters and one son.

In 1973 she took her Ph.D. in philosophy and theory of science at the University of Munich and taught philosophy for ten years there (from 1973-1983).

Since 1976 she has been doing pioneering work in Women’s Studies in Germany. She has published various books on matriarchal society and culture, and has become the founding mother of Modern Matriarchal Studies. She works as independent scholar.

In 1986 she founded the “HAGIA. International Academy for Matriarchal Studies and Matriarchal Spirituality” in Germany, and since the beginnings she has been its director.

In 1980 she was visiting professor at the University of Montreal/Canada and, in 1992, at the University of Innsbruck/Austria. Since 1998 she is member of the “Institute of Archaeomythology” in California (USA).

In 2003, she organized and guided the First World Congress on Matriarchal Studies SOCIETIES IN BALANCE in Luxembourg and, in 2005, the Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies: SOCIETIES OF PEACE in San Marcos, Texas/USA.

She is one of the women across the globe who have been nominated by the worldwide initiative „1000 Women for the NobelPeacePrize 2005“.

www.goettner-abendroth.de

www.hagia.de

Johannes Heimrath and Lara Mallien

Matriarchal aspects of an existing community. The natural condition of an intentional extended family

In the course of the new social movements of the 1970s, there a group of communally living people was formed – at that time in Bavaria – which is now settling in Klein Jasedow in East Pomerania/Germany. The female and male founders of this intentional extended family have been consistently living together for more than 30 years. The family members are not bound to any religious or political creeds, they like to refer to their group facetiously as a “Community of the un-likeminded”. Searching for the secret behind this amazing stability of this intentional community, presently consisting of four generations, the group realized that their ways of living together are to a high degree in accordance with those of matriarchally organized indigenous communities. Lara Mallien and Johannes Heimrath will give insights into the everyday issues arising in one of the oldest intentional communities in Germany.

Biographical Note

Lara Mallien, born in 1973, dancer, and Johannes Heimrath, born in 1953, composer, are publishers of the culturally creative journal *Oya – Thinking and Living Differently*. Together with the other members of their community they resettled in 1997 into the small village Klein Jasedow in the furthest Northeast of Germany. Since then they have been committed to promoting the resilience of that region from the point of view of subsistence perspective.

Katie M. Hoffner

“Mother Earth’s Political Party”: The Importance of Women’s Voice in Restoring Balance to Our Planet

Mother Earth is making a passionate plea for more women to join Her party, to take a seat at the political table and to start voicing their needs as matriarchs of their communities. It is time for women (and right-minded men) to step up and take non-violent action to ensure a safe and healthy planet that delivers a sustainable way of life for humankind that is worth living.

Women can drive positive political and economic impact through every decision they make whether small or large; and Mother Earth is depending on the collective action of these individual leaders for Her survival.

We must take action NOW!

Biographical Note

Katie M. Hoffner’s professional and personal work is focused on co-creating big ideas and creative solutions that lead to empowered and sustainable communities. She is based in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA and holds a BA in International Studies and a MBA from Thunderbird/Graduate School of International Management.

Since 2001, she has been devoting her work to empowering women and protecting our environment – which she believes are inextricably linked. She has stepped up and become very active in political campaigns on the local, state and national level. She is helping both on the policy side as well as the company side in getting clean energy and technologies to play a bigger role in our economic system.

Kathy Jones

Inspired by the Lady of Avalon: Creating a Goddess-centred World for the 21st Century

Over the last thirty years in the small country town of Glastonbury in Southwest England, a fluid group of people has been working together to bring Goddess consciousness back into

our world. Founded in feminist and matriarchal thinking and inspired by the Lady of Avalon, Goddess of the sacred Isle of Avalon on which we dwell, many Goddess-centred teachings, events and Temples are rippling out into the wider world as a source of inspiration for many people in our own and others lands and cultures. We see ourselves as part of a wider remembrance of Goddess all over the world, and the bringing of Her consciousness into the modern world.

Biographical Note

Kathy Jones is a Priestess of Avalon, Priestess of the Goddess. She is a writer, healer, ceremonialist, teacher and initiator. She is the webster/organizer of the internationally famous *Glastonbury Goddess Conference* and Founder of 3 years training to become a Priestess of Avalon in Glastonbury, England, and other Goddess-centred courses. She is the author of many well-loved Goddess books, including *Priestess of Avalon*, *Priestess of the Goddess*, *The Ancient British Goddess* and *Spinning the Wheel*.

www.kathyjones.co.uk

www.goddessconference.com

www.goddesstemple.co.uk

Cécile Keller

My vision for this conference is that we give all what happens here on the intellectual and political level into the world spiritually. What happens here every day, will be expressed on the spiritual level in a different way.

Then we are involved holistically and find again our connection with the Earth and all living beings. In our society, we are separated from Her most of the time.

At the congress, the spiritual continuum will develop gradually, emerging from the single day by day rituals. Every day a diverse spiritual energy will become visible, which in the end leads us to the appearance of the Circle of the World.

Biographical Note

Cécile Keller is a woman doctor in a holistic way. She is trained in Shamanic knowledge, physical therapy, and herbal medicine. She works as a gynaecologist and healer in her own practice.

Since 1997, she is collaborating in teaching at the International Academy HAGIA, and in 2007 became its co-director. She is guiding the Matriarchal Mystery Festivals and the Spiritual Healing Circles at the Academy.

She is doing her own research on matriarchal medicine and presented first results from this new field at the both World Congresses on Matriarchal Studies 2003 in Luxembourg and 2005 in San Marcos/Texas.

Siegrun Laurent

From Feminism to a Matriarchal Society. The example of the Academy ALMA MATER

By way of example the learning process of the participants of the course of studies at the Feminist-Matriarchal Academy ALMA MATER for Culture, Ethics, Religion and Spirituality shall show, that after 40 years of analysis of patriarchy and work on women's self-knowledge the way to a matriarchal society is open – let us walk it ...

Biographical Note

Siegrun Laurent lives in Karlsruhe in Germany, she is a scholar of cultures and studied the fine arts. At present, she is director of the Academy ALMA MATER. She is mother of three

daughters. Since 1970, she has been working for the autonomous women's movement. She is co-founder of educational and social women's projects and co-organizer of conferences and symposia on matriarchal and spiritual topics. She is the initiator of the "Proclamation of the Millennium of Women" at the Castle of Hambach in the year 2000. Further conferences: the "Mother's Summit" in Karlsruhe, 2008, the "Goddess-Congress" at the Castle of Hambach in 2010.

Letecia Layson

AncientFuture Memories – Babaylan in an age of Globalization

Ancestral Filipino communities were organized as family-based barangays (independent villages). The leadership structure included four major roles: datu, babaylan, bayani, panday. The datu (chieftain), bayani (ward leaders) and pandays (skilled masters of technology/crafts) were responsible for the community's material well-being, providing leadership, protection in a physical sense and protection of the barangay (village) and its bayanihan spirit. The bayanihan, or co-operative spirit has its foundation in the religious idea of Anitu, guiding spirit collective of the community which included human ancestors, nature spirits, some of which in the West might be identified as Goddesses or Gods.

The datu-babaylan leaders are sanctioned from Anitu. While the datu's primary role as culture bearer is responsible for material and physical needs of the barangay, the babaylan's role as culture bearer is to bridge the realms of material and physical, with the realm of Spirit to create a wholeness with and relationship to the Anitu.

This presentation focuses on the babaylan's role in the indigenous people of the Philippines, contemporary Filipino and Filipinos in diaspora. I will introduce to concept of de-colonization as a pathway to spiritual liberation re-connecting Filipinos to our deep ancestral roots as a unified people. The role of babaylan as culture bearer has the potential to re-indigenize contemporary actions that connect people beyond tribalism, class and country.

Biographical Note

Letecia Layson is a Filipina, Feminist, Futurist, Priestess of Morphogenesis (From Coming Into Being) and High Priestess of Diana ordained in the Dianic Tradition; Priestess of Isis, Priestess Hierophant in The Fellowship of Isis (FOI) and The Temple of Isis. Currently Letecia is a co-director of the Center for Babaylan Studies and active member of International Feminists for a Gift Economy, Modern Matriarchal Studies Network.

Barbara Mann

The Matriarchal Politics of Buffalos

With capitalist patriarchy in chaos worldwide, we look to other models of governance, in this instance, those of the indigenous cultures of Ohio. The first principles of Europeans and Turtle Islanders are at wide variance, so that slipping back into matriarchy requires that different "truths" be grasped.

The First Truth of eastern woodland cultures in North America is that the Earth is Our Mother. The Second Truth is that, as Daughters of Mother Earth, women alone control and distribute the gifts Our Mother gives to through our interactive clan and national structures. It is the obligation of the Grandmothers, with the aid of the Matrons, to ensure that all the children are clothed, fed, and housed.

The physical safety of The Innocents – a legal status – is the absolute right of women and children, and the primary obligation of the Young Men to provide. The Grandfathers oversee

the Young Men in this, but Grandfathers may not discuss any subject that the Grandmothers have not given them. The Grandmothers and Matrons may overturn any decision of the Grandfathers.

The Grandmothers, alone, nominate all persons, male and female, to public office. Differences in abilities are recognized, and people *trained*, with Grandmothers very careful only to put *skilled* leaders, female or male, into leadership positions.

Although the Western obstacles to matriarchal functioning are immense in the U.S., traditional peoples are reclaiming their old configurations. In Ohio, for instance, the Grandmothers run the multi-nation Native American Alliance of Ohio. In southern Ohio, Bird Clan Cherokee Matrons have the only treaties Europeans recognize, deeds of sale, by which they re-acquired some of their ancestral land. These vigorous young Matrons have brought back to the land their Brother, the Buffalo, who is thriving once more.

Biographical Note

Dr. Barbara Alice Mann, an Ohio Bear Clan Seneca active in Native American issues nationally and locally, is also an internationally respected scholar. An Assistant Professor in the Honors College at the University of Toledo, she lives and works in the traditional Ohio homeland of her people. She is the co-director of the Native American Alliance of Ohio.

Marina Meneses

Commerce between Juchitecan women: Economic security, independence and cultural sustenance

To sell and to buy among Juchitecan women, in other words to interchange something, is part of our way of living in order to maintain ourselves not only in the strictly economic sense, but to be part of a social network that allows us to interchange affection, support, wisdom, knowledge, skills, hopes, to feel alive and to belong to a community that gives us security. This is made possible by local and regional commerce in the hands of women: the high estimation of our language, our own food and clothing, and the work that produces it, in other words of subsistence; the principle of reciprocity that rules social and familial relationships; and the system of celebrations based on a cyclical concept of life. This gives to us the economic independence as women and as a culture because we are not depending on the globalised market economy, but our market adapts to our needs and lifestyle as Zapotecan women. The Zapotec culture from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, located in the State of Oaxaca, Mexico, has been characterized by maintaining ethnic pride, the strong presence of its women and the high estimation for the role of the Juchitecan mother.

Biographical Note

Marina Guadalupe Meneses Velásquez was born in 1954 in Juchitán, Federal State of Oaxaca in Mexico. For many years she worked as a teacher for social education at the University of San Christobal, Chiapas. Furthermore, she is a teacher of sports and of yoga. She took part in the research for the book *Juchitán, City of Women* (1994) and was co-author. She was active for a long time in the ecological group Foro Ecológico Juchiteco, from 1999-2000 assistant for ecology of the City of Juchitán, and since then working in several associations for the preservation of the cultural and ecological inheritance of her native region. Besides all these activities she always was and still is a trader of textiles and jewelry in the market place of her home town. Marina is mother of a now 23 years old son.

Christa Mueller

Urban Gardens: Creative places for a new urban civilization

This talk deals with the question, to what extent the new urban gardening movement is a forerunner with regard to central questions of the future concerning the supply of good food, the development of new communities on the local level, and a new understanding of global connectedness.

Biographical Note

Dr. Christa Müller is a sociologist; for many years she is committed to research on urban and rural subsistence. She is executive partner of the joint foundation “anstiftung & ertomis” in Munich and had a leading role in building up the foundation “Interculture”.

Her most recent book (in German): *Urban Gardening. About the Return of Gardens into the City*, Munich, March 2011, Publisher: Ökom.

Patricia Mukhim

Politics of the Khasi Matriarchy: Towards a new understanding and reclaiming the lost spaces

Khasi matriliney is, according to studies conducted by sociologist Dev Nathan, the fastest eroding matrilineal society in the world. Whereas in the past women have held ownership over land and the youngest daughter (‘khatduh’) is the custodian of family property and able to administer over that property, after informally consulting her maternal uncle, these days that control is slipping out of her hands. There exists an anti-matrilineal movement led by a few Khasi males. These, being influenced by patriarchal societies around them, have been spearheading a movement called the ‘Synkhong Rympei Thymmai’ (‘Foundation for a new hearth’).

It may be mentioned that in Khasi society the ‘khatduh’ is an institution in herself. Before the advent of Christianity the ‘khatduh’ played an important role in the extended family. Her parents stay with her until their death and she has the sole responsibility of looking after them. Perhaps this is the reason why she is given the bulk of the inheritance, especially the ancestral home. The ‘khatduh’ being an institution, her home is open to all. Any member of the family in distress finds shelter in the ‘khatduh’s’ home. Her brothers and sisters can continue to live in the ancestral home as long as they are unmarried. In case the ‘khatduh’s’ brother or sister is divorced they can come back to the ancestral home. In such a situation, a man who is married by the ‘khatduh’ is expected to be as accommodating and open-hearted about including every member of her extended family under her roof.

There have been organisations like the ‘Mait Shaphrang Movement’ which have demanded that there be equal distribution of property between sons and daughters. Their contention is that the Khasi male owns virtually nothing and is therefore not given due respect by his in-laws. Normally the Khasi male bachelor gives all his earnings to his parents as long as he is unmarried. This is called the ‘kamai nongkhynraw’. Hence he has no savings and no property to call his own after marriage.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Khasi woman who is abandoned by her partner/husband and has absolutely no support whatsoever from society or the clan. It may be mentioned that the Khasi have a strong clan system. But with time and the arrival of an aggressive market force into a once close-knit egalitarian society with strong communitarian values, things have changed drastically. The number of single mothers in Khasi society is very high; marriages are very brittle and marital discords very often lead to abandonment of the woman without any alimony whatsoever because such a thing was unknown. In the past a

divorced woman could go back to her maternal home and expect all the support due to her and her children.

Globalisation has put a price on everything including all natural resources such as land, water, forests, minerals etc. These were once common property resources that are expected to be shared resources. The forces of globalisation find it harder to negotiate a price with communities and prefer to strike deals with individuals. Hence it is today very common for Khasi men to be owning land, real estate, forest lands, mines etc. when in the past ownership used to be with women. These rapidly changing social norms need to be examined as they are encroaching on the sanctity of the matrilineal system and threatening to marginalise women and their rights.

Strategies to reclaim those rights are imperative. One of the reasons why women have not resisted these subtle moves to upstage them is because they are not aware of the strength of the matrilineal system and that it is fast eroding. Attempts to spread this awareness through the media and other platforms have resulted in very discordant noises from male members of society, including male politicians.

This speech seeks to bring before the table the essence of Khasi matrilineal society and its descent into a chaotic mess where women are grappling for solutions on how to redeem their lost spaces.

Biographical Note

Patricia Mukhim is a journalist and editor of *The Shillong Times* in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. She is the Director of the Indigenous Women's Resource Center at Shillong, where she conducts training and workshops on gender sensitization and mainstreaming for NGOs, government functionaries and development workers. She also trains NGOs in rural areas on self-help, resource identification and community participation and is Research Advisor of the North Eastern Institute of Development Studies (NEIDS) and Member of the Meghalaya State Consumer Protection Council.

She has official positions in many important political institutions in India, for ex. she is Appointed Member National Security Advisory Board since January 2011 and Vice President, Indo-Global Social Service Society, New Delhi; currently special invitee Meghalaya State Planning Board & Member Meghalaya Indigenous Knowledge Commission; Founder President, "Shillong We Care", an organization that challenged militancy, and the culture of extortion in Meghalaya; Member National Foundation for Communal Harmony, under Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi; Member Board of Governors, BASIX, Hyderabad; and others.

She received several high reputed Awards and Recognitions for her social and political work.

Bernedette Muthien

Matriarchies in Africa: Decolonising Love & the Egalitarian KhoeSan

African Matriarchal and Egalitarian societies – what does love have to do with it? Everything. Inspired by indigenous feminist methodologies, this presentation focuses on the Egalitarian KhoeSan of Southern Africa, of which my mother, and hence I, are descendant. To contextualise, I will start with a broad examination of Matriarchal and Egalitarian societies in Africa, particularly drawing on the works of diasporan Nigerian scholar, poet and visionary, Ifi Amadiume. Whereafter the limited indigenous feminist scholarship of the KhoeSan, as well as the narratives of female KhoeSan elders and healers, will be discussed. I will analyse social structure and social values, and show these as inextricably interdependent – egalitarianism and nonviolence or peace, as well as gifting, all bound by love or compassion, trust and respect.

It is collective kinship and love, compassion, gifting, trust and respect, on which indigenous and KhoeSan values are based, which grounds our structures as egalitarian and nonviolent. This then is the Praxis, rather than the Theory, of Everything, of Love, KhoeSan-style.

Biographical Note

Bernedette Muthien co-founded and directs an NGO, Engender, South Africa, which works in the intersectional areas of genders & sexualities, human rights, justice & peace. Her community activism is integrally related to her work with continental and international organisations.

She has published widely, written for diverse audiences, and believes in accessible research and writing.

Amongst others, she co-convenes the Global Political Economy Commission of the International Peace Research Association, is a member of Amanitare, the African network of gender activists, and serves on various international advisory boards, including of the international journal *Human Security Studies*.

She is co-founder of an indigenous scholar-activist network, the KhoeSan Women's Circle, in addition to convenor of an international listserv of Native scholar-activists, Gender Egalitarian.

She was the first Fullbright-Amy Biehl fellow at Stanford University (1994-1995), and holds postgraduate degrees from the University of Cape Town (Dean's Merit List), and Stellenbosch University (Andrew W Mellon Fellow) in South Africa.

For more information please visit: www.engender.org.za

Valentina Pakyntein

The Pnar Trilogy: Explicating Dynamics of Gendered Relations through the Lahoo Dance

This presentation is about an indigenous Pnar community inhabiting Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya, in North East India. This discussion relates to the dynamics of Gendered Relationships in the Pnatri-centered family. The traditional Lahoo Dance – a woman flank by two men – symbolizes male-female relationships. Through this dance one can explicate the gendered relationship in the traditional Pnar family which is extendable to their public life. The matri-centred family is at present compromise with Christianization and modern polity; yet it perpetuates in forms at variance from the past.

Biographical Note

Valentina Pakyntein is Assistant Professor of Anthropology in North- Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, India. She has been researching the indigenous matrilineal Khasi-Pnar of Meghalaya, being herself a member of the community. An insider's perspective is reflected in the articles published by her.

She is associated with the UGC National Project on Capacity Building for Women Managers in Higher Education, India, in the capacity of an Associate Trainer. She is a member of "MatriaVal", Germany, a society promoting Matriarchal Values. As an anthropologist she is member of other national and international bodies of anthropologists. She had presented her community at various regional, national and international conferences, workshops, and symposia.

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Ina Praetorius

Subsistence and the Good Life

Subsistence means that people see through the destructive patterns of patriarchal capitalism and start to act differently, in ways that are friendly to the world. There are many examples for this trend all around the world.

Biographical note

Ina Praetorius, born in 1956 in Karlsruhe, Germany, holds a doctorate of theology and has a background in German studies. She is a freelance author and lecturer with emphasis on post-patriarchal theology and ethics. She is housewife, mother of a grown-up daughter, and lives in Wattwil/Switzerland. Her most recent publication (in German): *I believe in God etc. An Interpretation of the Creed*, Gütersloh 2011.

<http://www.inapraetorius.ch>

Marguerite Rigoglioso

Matriarchal Spirituality and Virgin Birth

In this presentation, Marguerite begins by discussing the nature of spiritual beliefs and practices in matriarchal societies – such as the primacy of female divinity, the emphasis on nature and its cycles, and the powerful role of women as shamans and priestesses in matriarchal religions. She then focuses on her pioneering theory that a belief in women's capacity for virgin birth (parthenogenesis) was possibly foundational to matriarchal cultures. She discusses her discovery of an entire cult dedicated to miraculous conception in the ancient Mediterranean world, and posits how changes to and corruptions of that cult led to the creation of patriarchy itself.

Biographical Note

Marguerite Rigoglioso specializes in the study of female deities and women's religious roles in the ancient Mediterranean world. She is the author of *The Cult of Divine Birth in Ancient Greece* and *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity*, groundbreaking works on women's priestly roles as they relate to ancient beliefs about miraculous conception. She has travelled extensively throughout Europe and North Africa researching sites and artefacts associated with ancient female divinities. Her academic articles have appeared in various journals and anthologies, including *Societies of Peace* and the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, where her pioneering paper on the Graeco-Roman cult-center to Persephone at Lake Pergusa in Sicily received an honourable mention for the journal's New Scholar Award. She holds a Ph.D. in humanities and an M.A. in philosophy and religion from the California Institute of Integral Studies, where she now teaches in the women's spirituality program, and an A.B. in psychology from Vassar College. She also teaches pioneering courses in women and religion at Dominican University and the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.

Lydia Ruyle

Images and Herstories of Goddesses of the World

Lydia Ruyle will present a visual talk on the images, symbols and herstories of the sacred feminine from many cultures of the world and her Goddess Icon Spirit Banners will hang in the St. Gallen Tonhalle.

All world cultures have images and herstories of the sacred feminine. Lydia has created over 250 Goddess Icon Spirit Banners which made their debut at Ephesus, Turkey in 1995. The

Banners continue to fly in exhibitions, museums, temples, universities, congress halls, processions, historic sites, conferences, schools.

Goddess images are complex and encoded with many symbols which connect them around the globe: water, serpents, shells, eyes, grain, weaving, moon, felines, flowers, vulvas, tree of life. The images are an important record of the cycles of birth / death / regeneration of sacred feminine wisdom. Goddess myths and herstories celebrate the creative forces of Mother Earth as rock, cave, hearth, community, volcano, landscape, plants, animals, birds.

Lydia leaves smaller prayer flag versions of the Goddess Banners at sacred sites around the globe in order to empower the sites and women with Goddess herstories.

Biographical Note

Lydia Ruyle is an artist scholar emeritus of the Visual Arts faculty, University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado where The Lydia Ruyle Room for Women Artists was dedicated in 2010. Her research into sacred images of women has taken her around the globe. For seven years, Lydia led women's pilgrimage journeys to sacred places. She creates and exhibits her art and does workshops throughout the U.S. and internationally. Her Goddess Icon Spirit Banners have flown all over the world spreading their divine feminine energies. Her book, *Goddess Icons Spirit Banners of the Divine Feminine*, was published in 2002.

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Christina Schlatter

The MatriArchiv. About its foundation and significance

The idea of a "MatriArchiv", a library for Matriarchal Studies, came up in conversations with Heide Goettner-Abendroth. From 2007 onwards, there was an opportunity to build up the library for Matriarchal Studies within the Canton Library Vadiana. It contains by now 1200 publications in several languages. In my talk, I will present the concepts and goals of the MatriArchive. In the third part of my speech, I will demonstrate the diversity of this new field of research by way of selected book titles, which shall arouse curiosity as to the following visit to the library for all.

Biographical note

Christina Schlatter was born 1955. Background: German Studies and History of the Arts. During her family years, she was active in the field of arts and organized and guided a picture-gallery. She did post-graduate studies in Information and Documentation, and since ten years, she is director of the Department Services to the Public in the Canton Library Vadiana of St. Gallen. Together with Kurt Derungs, she published about mythology of landscape of Eastern Switzerland and Vorarlberg.

Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve

The Private is Political. Family relations under patriarchal and matriarchal conditions

This contribution is meant to demonstrate what in Western societies is understood by family and living-together in a family and how the individual suffers from it. I will systematically describe from which problems this construct of family is suffering, and why it cannot function, and on which pre-conditions it is based. I will give an analysis of the family as a place of domination (e.g. the primacy of marriage), of exploiting the potentials of mothers, and of reinforcing the existing gender gap. This documents that the family is the basic place to maintain and teach our social order, where the process of socializing a human being takes

place under the conditions of patriarchy. Thus people are carrying patriarchy within themselves and are taking part in the continuation of the existing societal and political system. In contrast to this, there are other past and present traditions in which the genders are socialized in an egalitarian way, in which the family group is understood as being a matrilineal community which provides care and security to its children and grown-up members. Relations between partners are institutionalized to a lesser degree, above all they are not confined to a nuclear family, but are oriented towards erotic attraction and voluntariness. Motherliness and fatherliness are being implemented in matriarchal communities in a very humane manner by all group members. The isolation of mothers and the suffering of children from divorce are completely unknown. As a result of these family patterns, in these communities political actions are orientated towards the needs of the extended families or clans and the social community.

Biographical note

Mariam Irene Tazi-Preve, born in Innsbruck/Austria, is sociologist at the University of Vienna. At the University of Innsbruck, she studied political science and French literature. She works in the fields of political science, demography, and family studies. She stayed for research purposes in Great Britain, Australia and Spain. Her research is dedicated to the topics of family- and population-politics, fatherhood and motherhood, Feminist political theory, and emigrant Moslem women. Besides talks in Austria and abroad, she has published numerous articles and several books, among them (in German): *Motherhood in Patriarchy*, 2004; *Fathers being Offside*, 2007; *Family Politics – National and International Perspectives*, 2009.

Genevieve Vaughan

Theory and Practice of the Gift Economy

The abundance of the knowledge economy on the internet has made it possible recently for many people to envision a material economy of abundance, where exchange: giving in order to receive an equivalent, is no longer necessary and instead, gift giving directly to satisfy needs is the economic mode of distribution. The gift economy is not new but has existed for millennia in so called “pre” capitalist matriarchal societies. Its past and present basis is in mothering where needs are satisfied directly because small children cannot pay back for what they have been given.

Exchange has a logic which contradicts the logic of direct gift giving. The market of Capitalist Patriarchy, which is built upon exchange preys upon the gifts of all, channeling them away from needs of the many and transforming them into profit of the few. In order to create a new society and economy of abundance not only on the internet but everywhere, it is necessary to acknowledge the maternal and matriarchal basis of gift giving.

Biographical Note

Genevieve Vaughan (b.1939) is an independent researcher. In 1963 she moved from her native Texas to Italy. Her two early essays “Communication and exchange” (*Semiotica* 1980) and “Saussure and Vigotsky via Marx”(1981) deal with language and economics, a theme she has been working on throughout her adult life. In 1978 Genevieve became a feminist, participating in the Italian and international feminist movements. She began to see the fact of women’s free labor in the home as gift giving, an unacknowledged free economy of women from which communication and community derive. Her first book *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange* was published in 1997.

In 1983, Genevieve returned to Texas where she started the “Foundation for a Compassionate Society”, an all-woman activist foundation which initiated many innovative projects based on the political use of “women’s values”. The Foundation closed its doors in 2005 after two final

international conferences: *A Radically Different Worldview is Possible: The Gift Economy Inside and outside Patriarchal Capitalism* (2004) and *Societies of Peace: the Second World Congress of Matriarchal Studies* (2005) (under the guidance of Heide Goettner Abendroth). Genevieve has edited two books, an issue of the Italian journal *Athanos*, titled: *IlDono/The Gift: A Feminist Perspective*, Meltemi (2004) and *Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different Worldview is Possible* (Inanna Press 2007). Her web book *Homo Donans* appeared in 2006. She has written several children's books and has made a CD of her songs. A film about her life and work *Giving for Giving*, came out in 2007. Most of Genevieve's books and articles are available free on her website: www.gift-economy.com

Claudia von Werlhof

The “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth” – Why it has been founded and why it is necessary

Background; founding of the Movement; its connection with the “Critical Theory of Patriarchy”; its activities and information campaign so far. Plans for publishing in 2011 the book of Rosalie Bertell: *Planet Earth. The Latest Weapon of War* in German, since it is of fundamental importance to the movement. Appeal for participation and passing-on the aims of the movement.

Biographical Note

Born in May 1943 near Berlin during the bombing of Berlin, Germany. Since then opponent to war and violence. Logically linked with this is the recent founding of the “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth in 2010 as a reaction to finding out, that there exist in the East and West new military weapons meant to annihilate masses of people and the earth itself. Preceding that: diploma in economics and sociology, doctorate in sociology, qualification as a professor of political science. For years empirical research in Central America and Venezuela. At that time realization of the importance of the issue of women for all scientific fields, and development of a new concept of global capitalism that includes patriarchy as the basic structure. From this formulation of all-encompassing societal alternatives. Single mother of a son since 1982. From the “Bielefeld Approach”, developed at the Department of Sociology of the University of Bielefeld, to the “Critical Theory of Patriarchy” as a new scientific overall-paradigm, which has been as developed at the Institute for Political Sciences at the University of Innsbruck. At this institute, professor of Women's Studies since 1999, will become emeritus professor in 2011.

Activist against neo-liberal globalization since 1997. Participating in modern Matriarchal Studies as well as speaking at most of the international conferences on this subject since 2003. Working on post-capitalist and post-patriarchal, pro-matriarchal alternatives, last time while organizing the international conference “Ways to a New Civilisation” at the University of Innsbruck in 2010.

Numerous publications in different languages. Series of books (in German) “Contributions to Dissidence”, Publisher Peter Lang. Soon following no. 26: *The Failure of Modern Civilization and the Struggle for a ‘Deep’ Alternative. On ‘Critical Theory of Patriarchy’ as a New Paradigm.*

Artists

Siegrun Claaßen

Photo Exhibition: The New Matriarchal Mystery Festivals at the International Academy HAGIA, Germany (2003)

Born 1943. She studied education, art, and textile working. For many years, she was a teacher and equal rights representative in Schleswig Holstein, responsible for cultural events in rural areas. There, she took part in establishing an adult education center. Ecological studies and the study of building with mudpacks; she built her own house out of wood and mudpacks. Since ten years she creates objects of art and takes photos of them at places which she transformed in a spiritual way. She finds images of the Goddess in nature and takes photos of them.

Gudrun Frank-Wissmann

Film: A Life Dedicated to Matriarchal Studies: Heide Goettner-Abendroth (2011)

Film: Celebrating the Year of the Earth. Matriarchal Mystery Festivals at the Academy HAGIA (2006)

Gudrun Frank-Wissmann holds a diploma in design and filmmaking. In 1994, she began her research work and filming with the matriarchal Kunama in Eritrea, East Africa. She made films about the Kunama, about the Garo in Meghalaya/Northeast India, and about the people of the Pacific Island of Palau. Her stays with these people added to her understanding of matriarchal societies.

Her contacts lasting for years with the Kunama women made it possible for Gudrun Frank-Wissmann to take part in and make a film about a secret women's ritual: *Andina Koyake – When the Ancestors Speak through their Daughters*. It shall be published in 2011.

Uschi Madeisky

Film: Celebrating the Year of the Earth. Matriarchal Mystery Festivals at the Academy HAGIA (2006)

Uschi Madeisky is a filmmaker. Since the nineteen nineties, she is producing documentaries about matriarchal societies and their way of life, and she received the "Tony Sender Award" of the City of Frankfurt for it. She has learned and now teaches at the Academy ALMA MATER and is member of the Board of MatriaVal ("Association for Strengthening Matriarchal Societies and Conveying Matriarchal Values"). Furthermore she is doing networking and is committed to projects dedicated to spreading matriarchal wisdom and ways.

www.matriaVal.de

Isabella Verbruggen

Isabella Verbruggen is a Tympanistria* from Holland, a priestess who interweaves Mediterrean Framedrum traditions in the Wheel of the Year. During the last thirteen years she developed in her workshops, courses and rituals an unique blend of qualities of varied rhythms. As a passionate teacher and performer she likes to pass on the spiritual heritage of framedrumming, like many other women. Isabella is mother, grandmother and co-teacher of a Priestess-training.

*Tympanistria is the original word for a woman who played the tambourine.

www.rhythmandrituals.nl

Loes Moezelaar

Loes is Priestess in the ancient way; she is herbal medicine woman, spiritual healer, frame drummer, co-teacher of a Priestess training, she is mother & grandmother. In cultivating, caring and preparing the herbs she makes use of their medical and magical qualities continuing the tradition of the priestesses and magicians of antiquity. She gives workshops in which you learn all about herbs and the ancient religion and how to make your own products.

loesmoezelaar@hotmail.com

The women of the Labyrinth Zurich, Switzerland**The Labyrinth, a path of life, a heritage of matriarchal cultures.**

During the International Conference in St Gallen we set up a trace on the land, a sign of our mother earth, a path for all beings living on her. In the park opposite to the Tonhalle (Concert Hall) we create a gathering space, a place under the open sky for mutual exchange, for contemplation and joy. We invite everyone to enter this picture of life and walk the labyrinth.

Contact

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