



## Zeitschrift für Patriarchatskritik

BOOMERANG - Journal for the Critique of Patriarchy

*-Updated version 5-22-15-*

### **Editorial**

#### **Why do we need a critical theory of patriarchy?**

We have been discussing launching a journal for some time now, and it's finally here: The Journal for the Critique of Patriarchy.

It has been a long time coming, because:

It is increasingly difficult to find any serious discussion about questions we consider relevant, namely discussions about world developments, crises, and the imminent threat of war that have eclipsed all other worldly events. There is a form of ubiquitous destructiveness, the gravity of which is becoming increasingly apparent in a more widespread way, but which is not yet clearly understood. It has taken on a noticeably planetary dimension. It touches on everything, including the natural world, cultural diversity, living conditions, the workplace, income, democratic and human rights, health issues, and future possibilities. There is no adequate discussion of this destructiveness at the political level, or in the media, at congresses, or in academic journals or books – even publishers present roadblocks to this necessary discussion. “Intelligence” appears to be literally drying up, in what is a systematic process of dumbing down. With so-called “reforms,” the universities have completely distanced themselves from thinking itself, especially from critical thinking. The left openly supports “internationalism” in the form of globalization, which is to all intents and purposes imperialism. Furthermore, most of the “alternative” movements have sold out and have so narrowly reduced their focus, that no actual common works remains possible. In many of these groups, you find new

options for the continuation of patriarchy that reach beyond both capitalism and socialism. A sort of “backlash” which one could refer to as neo-patriarchal tendencies, has become apparent, especially among the women who are rising to power in these groups, and who choose as models the shining examples of women operating in the social power structure: government officials, ministers of war and bank or corporate leaders. The remnants of the critique of patriarchy have for the most part been squashed, even though these critiques themselves have failed to get to the root of the problem. For example, it is almost impossible to say anything at this point about “women” or “mothers”, especially in circles of so-called “emancipated women.” “Gender” is the single politically correct topic. The German matriarchal movement’s main journal, *MatriaVal* has ceased publication. This journal was not limited to matriarchal concerns; it also published critiques of patriarchy and, at a time of intense patriarchal rage, addressed the question of whether or not renewed matriarchal relationships were even possible. It seems there is no place for our more extensive understanding of patriarchy in the context of the matriarchal scene’s new “positive thinking.”

At this point, men working in the context of the “alternative scenes” have at long last also begun to concern themselves with patriarchy, and even with matriarchy. Nonetheless, no theoretical framework that can be distinguished from that of the past is apparent (Hercksen 2010). At this point, when a writer cannot avoid the terminology, what one reads might be described as “patriarchy light” or “matriarchy light.” These approaches remain fundamentally patriarchal and have little to do with the actual search for the matriarchal relationships that were forcibly destroyed and obscured by patriarchy.

Wherever you look, you find an attitude bent on preserving the system – a narrowness of thought, feeling and behaviour, as well as corruption, division, a head-in-the-sand policy, and the doubletalk of the saviours of both modernity and patriarchy. As well, you find an esoteric dabbling with concepts of the supposed development of planet earth and humanity to a higher level, while what we are experiencing is its continuing destruction at the hands of earth’s inhabitants (Bertell 2011). You also come face to face with increasingly bold prevarication (Ulfkotte 2014) that serves to conceal Western war-mongering.

We are living in time when things of a previously unknown magnitude are occurring in a situation unlike any that has preceded it, and we are beginning to put life on earth and the planet herself at risk (Bertell 2013b, 2014). Earlier feminist movements, previous critiques of globalization and patriarchy, feminist ecology, “deep” ecology, anti-consumerism, subsistence economics, matriarchy and earth-based spirituality – none of these were genuinely successful in countering these tendencies. Most of the movements emerging in the last twenty-five years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not even recognize the developments that are now coming to light. This failure, however, has yet to impact the consciousness of those involved, and this is the result of a failure to understand these developments and to underestimate the danger they present.

New movements have arisen, and, as part of an effort to address the new dimensions of reality, they are trying to determine how and why the old movements failed. Part of this reality is the deliberately produced natural catastrophes that result from “geo-engineering,” weather wars, and experiments with nuclear and post-nuclear military technologies, all of which have been subjected to field trials for decades, and all of which can be employed without any previous declaration of war (Bertell 2013a). This is why we founded the “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth” (PBME – [www.pbme-online.org](http://www.pbme-online.org)) in 2010. The theoretical branch of our ongoing effort to understand the today’s world in a new, timely and – for the first time – comprehensive way has found a home within the “Research Institute for Patriarchal Criticism and Alternative Civilizations” (FIPAZ), which was founded in 2007. This theoretical approach is the paradigm developed by the so-called “Critical Theory of Patriarchy” (the KPT, or Innsbruck School).

So, from our base in Tirol, Austria, we are now launching this new, yet long overdue, and timely project, as a logical conclusion to our efforts to date:

“BOOMERANG – Journal for the Critique of Patriarchy.”

We want to address the existing gaps, errors and points of confusion in the debate about our time and demonstrate first of all the *inversions* – like those one finds in Orwell’s novel “1984” – that allow war to appear as peace or reaction as reform. These inversions create a terrible confusion about what is really happening. Wherever we are, we have to get down to the proverbial “nitty-gritty,” as we are increasingly caught up in the history of our own civilization: the history of *patriarchy* as a BOOMERANG.

This is the precise reason for the journal’s title: the word BOOMERANG is a metaphor for a period of time in which we are confronted with distortions that have yet to be recognized for what they are, and which have now begun to catch up with us in some serious ways. The boomerang has turned back upon us, so to speak.

Central to this is our new concept of PATRIARCHY, which is filled out, extended and supported by a comprehensive criticism of technique and technology that goes back to antiquity and fills what has been a ubiquitous gap until this point. In the context of this new concept, what was once called “ALCHEMY,” viewed from a new perspective, plays the pivotal role of a world-transforming, and thereby world-destroying, method or “procedure” (Werlhof 2010a, 2011, 2012). Only when seen from the perspective of the critique of patriarchy can the alchemy of antiquity be accurately understood and defined in its further development and comprehensive growth **in** modern Europe, which is to say, as a generalized “method” (Werlhof Man.). From our point of view, this new definition of patriarchy, which encompasses “alchemy,” provides the key – the key being the symbolism of alchemy, as such – that unlocks the door to the myths, the systems of violence, the secrets, the unrecognized (ir)rationalities, the taboos, and that which is unspeakable in the civilization that we all were born into. For, it is this civilization, with its self-evoked *kyndiagnosia*, the programed “incapacity to recognize danger,” that is dragging us into the abyss.

In the form of “modernity”, we see in this civilization the most recent and most intense phase of a global, thousand-plus-year-old, and now “capitalist,” patriarchy, in which so-called “socialism” must also be included. This “capitalist world system” has, in our view, taken on the character of an “alchemical system of war,” of a generally operative “destruction via procedure.” This process is, however, presented to us as the “creation” of a “better world” by means of the modern alchemy of progress and technification.

The development of a new and comprehensive definition of patriarchy that goes far beyond the description of “patriarchy” as a system of male rule over women would not have been possible without the more recent research into matriarchy. This examination showed matriarchy to be a civilization free of domination, where “in the beginning is the mother” – *mater arché* – (Göttner-Abendroth 1988). This opened a new way to look at patriarchal civilization – *pater arche* – where “in the beginning is the father.” With that perspective as a starting point, the outrageous disgrace of patriarchal civilization as a negation of matriarchal civilization becomes clear. It also makes obvious the extent to which both of these civilizations constitute end-points of a continuum of civilizational development (Genth 2009), with matriarchal civilization undergoing an all-encompassing process of complete inversion and nearly total destruction.

We can now draw upon concepts that provide us with a comprehensive orientation and, for the first time, make possible an analysis of reality that cuts across all problem areas, disciplines and dimensions without losing sight of the interrelationships. It is of the essence that we avoid being taken in by those ideological inversions that are the hallmark of the patriarchal “project” of “creation from destruction,” or destruction through “creation.”

We also want to start a theoretical debate about the world today – how it developed into what it is, what dynamics are at play, what this means for an “archeology” of both the present and the future and what the appropriate response is.

That said: we hope for the most variegated discussion possible, and hope to provide a suitable focal point and platform for both a discussion of everything currently relevant to demystifying the period of time we live in and for offering the sort of comprehensive information that would not be published elsewhere.

Let the debate begin!

It can be scientific, literary, satirical, descriptive, analytical, “disciplinary”, inter- or multidisciplinary, new, old, audacious or timid, experimental or traditional – all that matters is that the debate begins! We require this debate to orient ourselves in these “times of the BOOMERANG” – such a debate would in essence be PROPHETIC! It would bring to light what has actually happened and is still happening, although we did not or could not previously see it. It is no longer possible to avoid the obvious conclusions. We are experiencing a universal “revelation”, what might be called an

apocalypse in the most primal sense of the word. Countermeasures will certainly be taken to prevent the scales from falling from our eyes, so that we remain blind to this revelation.

What will we see if we take a really deep look? What is it that will permit us to grasp how one thing relates to another, and how we are to proceed?

We have a concrete proposal. We want to use the journal to present the starting point for the analysis that we in the KPT have developed. One possible approach is to further investigate the themes that we have teased out and refer to as the “five relationships” (Genth 2009) that every society/civilization must find a way to regulate. These relationships can be characterized as more or less matriarchal or patriarchal by the way in which they are addressed.

In the context of the new definition of CIVILIZATION that we are advancing, we differentiate matriarchal civilization from patriarchal civilization. These are obviously the two principal forms of civilization, and they constitute a sort of historical continuum with the gradual “patriarchalization” of nearly all of the previously existing matriarchal civilizations, leading to the emergence of various hybrids that exhibit different tendencies.

Broadly speaking, the five “relationships” that all civilizations have to regulate, whether they are matriarchies or patriarchies, are:

1. The **relationship with the natural world**, which, in the light of the approach adopted, encompasses economic and technological issues.
2. The **political structure**, which plays a determinant role in the political and interpersonal organization of social space and its inhabitants.
3. **Gender relations**, which regulate the way in which women and men cohabit and reproduce the species.
4. **Intergenerational relationships**, which determine how the relationships between generations evolve over time.
5. The **relationship with the Transcendental**, which addresses the mysterious conditions of material existence, the how and the why of life and death, the interrelationship of body, spirit and soul, and all other spiritual and religious questions.

If we keep these five relationships in mind, we do not risk overlooking anything essential. These relationships are like a type of *Vademecum*, or proverbial red thread, running through our analysis of civilizations, be it their macro- or their micro-relationships. These relationships are organized in different ways, depending on the patriarchal or matriarchal character of the society/civilization they exist in, which is to say, whether it is a society/civilization that is primarily hostile to or supportive of life, which marks them as more or less matriarchal or patriarchal.

In this light, these five relationships will serve as criteria for shaping the contributions to and discussions in coming issues of this journal, unless, of course, some persuasive alternative is presented.

Invitation!

We are genuinely hoping for all kinds contributions (conference papers, book reviews, theoretical articles, announcements, current debates, interviews, portraits, photos, poems, essays...) that address the topic in general, and most particularly for contributions specific to the topic we have chosen for Nr. 1: “Motherhood in Patriarchy.”

The deadline is June 30, 2015.

Issue Nr. 1 will appear on October 1, 2015 and Nr. 2 is being planned for the spring of 2016.

The articles should be less than 10,000 characters including spaces – the one exception being the feature article.

Submissions can be sent via [www.fipaz.at](http://www.fipaz.at) or directly to [BUMERANG@fipaz.at](mailto:BUMERANG@fipaz.at)

## Feature Article

### A Sojourn Into the “Critical Theory of Patriarchy”

Modern Society and Its Five Basic Relationships – From the Point of View of the Alchemy Thesis

Claudia von Werlhof

**In its totality, modern civilization** should not be glorified as the best of all possible worlds, representing progress, development, democracy and human rights for everyone, but rather should be described as a “civilization of alchemists” or “an alchemical system of war,” or as “capitalist patriarchy.” This civilization is literally destroying the world, and is itself on the verge of collapse. We are currently experiencing this phenomenon as a “crisis” (Werlhof 2012).

From the outset, this civilization, which represents the highest development of patriarchy until this point, has held as its “ideal” the successive *disruption of previous civilizations*,

*and even the entire natural order*, as such. This goal must be characterized as “patriarchal,” a description of a social order unlike anything that historically precedes it, one that increasingly strives in practical ways to realize its apotheosis in the form of a *pater arché*, specifically, a thoroughgoing “in the beginning is the father.” Beginning, in this case, means the advent of everything, whether born or manufactured, should be separated from all earlier concepts of beginning that have anything to do with motherhood – *mater arché* – or the natural world – Mother Nature – or are culturally based on such concepts. While patriarchy is a *utopian project* it is not one that intends to build upon existing creation in the broadest sense, but is in principle committed to the complete elimination and ultimate replacement of any creation by a putatively superior male counter-“creation.” The concrete utopia of the creation of a purely “paternal” world beyond mothers, the natural world and existent cultures and civilizations, to the degree that they are not patriarchal, is, as such, quite literally the utopia of a universally “patriarchal” civilization.

When we talk about patriarchy, it’s not a question of tearful complaints about women’s rights or the petulant demand for inclusion on the part of the excluded. To the contrary, women’s “participation” in patriarchy could only serve to perfect it.

Here, we are using a concept of patriarchy that signifies a cataclysmic upheaval and all-encompassing social transformation, as well as the successive transformation of everything that lies outside of the patriarchal perspective, imagination, intention and sentiment and its transformation into its opposite. This opposite must be characterized as a form of thinking, desiring, feeling and behaving that is no longer oriented around what really exists and its cyclical arising, coming into full being and ultimate decay. Instead, what is at issue is the “creation” of a “sanitized,” abstract, self-sufficient and initially purely “imaginary” essence, one that until now could only be conceived of as an “afterlife” beyond this world. This new, allegedly superior and divine afterlife is to become a unique and eternal “paradisiacal” reality using “alchemical” techniques: to whit, the destruction, transformation, and finally all-encompassing supersession of the world that actually exists by the “Great Work” of alchemy. As such, this alchemy is the “process” by which “in the beginning is the mother” is to be replaced by “in the beginning is the father.”

If there is any “essentialism”, this is it!

Oriented around an alleged possibility, this threatening new thought, feeling and behaviour is hostile to what is real. It appeared for the first time with the emergence of patriarchy, and they develop in tandem. This is an *historical process* of taking hold by degrees, sometimes advancing rapidly, and at others only incrementally, experiencing setbacks and deviations, but ultimately determining most of civilization’s characteristics in the process.

At the outset, this was not an evolutionary process, if by that one means a process of consistent development, but rather an historical break in the form of the emergence of war (Dieckvoss 2003). For about 6000 years now, we’ve been witnessing bellicose developments and conquest (Southeast Europe, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, China, India, Greece and the Roman Empire, followed by the European colonization of the

world and the development of the modern world system, and finally today, a threatening “New World Order”).

Alongside war as a destructive means of transformation came the imposition of an “order” beneficial to the victor “within” the conquered territories. It was the *state* that facilitated the ongoing domination of the oppressed. Under these conditions, oppressed civilizations, which in general were “matriarchal,” meaning adhering to “in the beginning is the mother” (Göttner-Abendroth 1988), were gradually “patriarchalized,” distorted, neutralized and destroyed.

This goes in particular for any of the practices described as “alchemy” in already patriarchal Hellenistic Egypt (Schütt 2000). The clearly very old matriarchal origins of alchemy as a civilizing approach to natural conditions, which was characterized by a mimetic convergence and cooperation within an overall “unity of life,” were gradually “forgotten” and transformed into their opposite. Cooperation with the natural world was purposely circumvented, eventually allegedly *surpassed* and finally intentionally *superseded* by a “paternal” and masculine “creation,” rather than one that is maternal and natural. The point of this was to legitimize patriarchal domination and, over time, to lead to a “pure patriarchy,” with no matriarchal remnants.

This sort of altered or new creation and the concomitant *transformation* of all matter and all living beings requires in principle the patriarchal-alchemical destruction of all existing matter and living beings – e.g., “mortification.” The *alchemical “procedures”* involved in this transformation are based on the subsequent use of what has been destroyed – *acquired, subdued* – as “raw material,” the so-called *materia prima* or *massa confusa*, and its re-composition with “pure” matter that is refined in a series of steps until it becomes the “Great Work” of alchemy. This goes from blackening and whitening to turning things yellow or red – when dealing with metals, it ranges from transforming lead into silver and then gold, or even perhaps eventually into the highest form of matter, living matter. The so-called “philosopher’s stone” would be the incarnation of power – permitting the procedure to be carried out anywhere at any point in a single stroke. The stone represented nothing less than “*the theory of everything*” in the service of world domination.

To use other metaphors, the procedure based on the “*materia prima*” addresses the Queen (Moon) and the King (Sun) and their “progeny,” the “divine” alchemist or *hermaphroditic* “creator” (Werlhof Man.).

It is claimed that this is the route to a new and allegedly better world. It constitutes an effort to gradually “push aside” both mothers and Mother Nature, as well as the earlier matriarchal cultures and civilizations, with their seasons and cycles, thereby achieving freedom, “purification” and emancipation. From the patriarchal perspective, these cultures and civilization appear imperfect, impure, base, sinful, demonic, even violent – they render man “dependent” – and therefore must be destroyed and dispensed with.

These gloomy and violent alchemical procedures were experimented with in every patriarchy, from India and China through to the Middle and Near East, even if only initially by a minority. In principle, this experimentation encompassed all areas of the natural world, of gender and generational relationships, and of politics and the

transcendental. In the final analysis, the outcome was always *failure*, because the creation of life without mothers and the transformation of lead into gold didn't and couldn't work – not to mention the impossibility of producing a “philosopher's stone.”

Alchemy's global success story begins after the arrival of the Arabs in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. Alongside the characterization of ancient alchemy as a “unified patriarchal science,” this is the critical theory of patriarchy's central thesis (Werlhof 2010c; Man.).

Patriarchal alchemy first took hold in early modernity – the Renaissance – evolving into basic procedure and objective for achieving progress in modern times. Modern (natural) sciences and technology, which is to say, machinery, are based on the development of alchemical principles, just as is true for the formation of the state, warfare, the legal system, bureaucracy, modern gender relations, the nuclear family and the modern economy, or capitalism. This view of the relationship between alchemy and modernity is an entirely new – and from the “normal” point of view, entirely contradictory – intellectual approach to the emergence, characterization and further development of modern civilization. It instead denounced older procedures, including those of alchemy, as failures that have been surpassed, successfully left behind and displaced by something entirely new (Schütt 2000). Only a critical analysis of patriarchal alchemy allows for a “different perspective” about these developments, one that shows that both the goals and the methods behind modern “progress” have remained classically alchemical. Now as before, it's a question of the allegedly possible production of a “better” and “superior” matter, and of life itself, using the alchemical method of “divide, transform and rule”. This generalized patriarchal motive and the methodological realization that accompanies it are so clearly accepted as self-evident (at least, this has become the case) that they are not (cannot be) subjected to critical reflection and always (un)consciously serve as acceptable premises. As such, they are part of the “collective unconscious” of modern civilization (Werlhof 2013). As unconditional “belief” in masculine “creation” and its successful imposition, they are quasi-unquestionable. As a result, it is extremely difficult to present and disseminate the critical theory of patriarchy and its underlying alchemy thesis as a new approach. Because this theory indicates that the patriarchal project of altering creation has not and cannot succeed, it can only be perceived in any and all patriarchal thought and feeling as extremely mean-spirited and heretical (cf. My Hanh Derungs 2011).

The Church played a formative role in the adoption and further development of alchemy as the “patriarchal method,” specifically, in the form of the Inquisition. In a period spanning the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, working with its “secular arm,” and following the Reformation, with Protestants as well, the Church was the first modern institution to universalize alchemical procedures. Over the course of 600 years millions of people were subdued through terror, persecution, looting, torture and murder – since the 16<sup>th</sup> century women in particular (Becker et al. 1977, Honegger 1978). This “mortification,” the physical, psychological and spiritual subjugation of the European population (Federici 2004) gave way to the “improvement” of subjects in the modern nation-state (Opitz-Belakhal 2006) and their integration as soldiers, wage labourers and unpaid “housewives” and members of the industrial reserve army in the modern capitalist economy (Werlhof,

Bennholdt-Thomsen, Mies 1983).

The colonization of the world occurred parallel to this. This horrifyingly violent alchemical process transformed the “colonies” into resources at the service of the European colonizers’ “higher” civilization (Mies 1988). This is the source of the modern international division of labour, that lays the basis for today’s “modern world system” (Wallerstein 1979).

In spite of the repeated rise of impassioned counter-movements, for example, the 16<sup>th</sup> century peasant wars (Zimmermann 1982), *alchemical modernity* has become so normalized at this point that almost no one (any longer) recognizes it as such, let alone as the violent project it is. As a result, it has rained down destruction upon the natural world and all living beings, bringing us ever closer to their collapse all over the world, and all this damage has failed to bring us anything worth replacing them with. This artificial progressive utopia, which presents itself as the starting point for a new paradise on Earth, is ever less able to hide the fact, that without the natural world it has nothing to offer and cannot even go on existing, or that it cannot at least recycle the trash it creates, which in the end presents *an environmental hazard*.

That is the background and substratum of the current crisis of modern civilization, which has become a global alchemical system of war, where the increasing focal point is who desire lay claim to the remaining “resources” – before they are quite literally completely used up (cf. TTIP, TPP, TISA). The world is being destroyed at a breathtaking speed – it’s only taken around 200 years to get to where we are (Wright 2006). Placed in the context of the of Earth’s overall existence, this is effectively a nano-second.

Patriarchy’s utopia has long since become a *dystopia*, and following its global success, alchemy has largely collapsed. The fact that patriarchal civilization has passed its apex and, as a result of its extreme violence has begun to go into decline, served to finally expose it for what it is. Recognizing this and drawing the appropriate conclusions is the current task, but that requires that the *superstitious belief* in progress and modernity as the best of all possible worlds be dropped, particularly in the form of an “alchemical project.”

If patriarchal alchemy is not completely and totally abandoned, no reform can address the current crisis of civilization. Only *in the aftermath* of alchemy as a civilizing project will it be possible to treat the natural world and everything that remains alive in a respectful, cooperative and caring way. Such an approach cannot become generalized and lasting in patriarchy, because patriarchy is committed to the conquest of everything living. Only becoming conscious of this impulse, and then consciously rejecting it, will open the way for the restoration of Mother Earth and all of her remaining creatures.

We need a new, and in the end, more realistic and less distorted view of our current reality. This is what we hope to provide in *Boomerang*.

We will now turn our attention to the *five fundamental relationships of modern civilization*, which takes the form of a patriarchal-alchemical-capitalist world system:

• **The relationship with the natural world** is the central relationship in any civilization (Genth 2011). In an essential way, it encompasses economics, technique and technology. Since the origins of patriarchy, it has been connected to androcentrism and *anthropocentrism*. In this sense, it lays the groundwork for valuing “men” or “human beings” above all other natural phenomena. Accordingly, “spirit” and “soul” have been increasingly denied their natural essence and their place within nature, and with this, their imperious form of being alive. This ultimately cleared the way for the nearly complete disregard for all manifestations of life, for the Earth, and for all living beings upon it that we are familiar with today. This way life is led directly to annihilation, and it is a process that continues uninterrupted up to this point.

The relationship to the natural world in today’s patriarchy is not just a question of subjugation, *control and pillage*; it has passed on to the irreversible *transformation* everything alive into a coagulum, into dead nature – into “capital.” This “metamorphosis” does not respect any natural rhythm; it is the “große Wandlerin” (Goethe’s great transformer) in complete opposition to nature and the natural order. This is in effect the systematic “use” of nature’s power in the service of men and their civilization, which amounts to the “replacement” of the natural world. This extractive, “cannibalistic” relationship to the natural world and towards everything alive means that both their enfeeblement and eventual consumption are preprogrammed. The intent to replace natural force through alchemical transformation procedures, up to and including the effort to take hold of the life force itself using a “philosopher’s stone”, has not, however, proved successful. Today, we are all faced with the outcome of this relationship to the natural world in the form of the *disappearance of the world* (e.g., Jaeger 2008 re: Goethe).

This relationship to the natural world is based on a several-thousand-year history of attempts to dominate, subjugate, control, pillage and replace nature. Already in Antiquity, there were efforts to artificially create life, and thereby to allegedly achieve some potential “improvement” on what the natural world had to offer (Schütt 2000). The hope was to use these “replacements” to gain increasing independence from “Mother Nature.”

This “alchemy” serves interests contrary to its matriarchal origins – it is an attempt to overcome the initially prevailing female and maternal natural world and women as mothers. Ideally, a patriarchal man should not come from the womb, but from the head/spirit/logos/thigh/penis or even a “father’s” rib. From that point of view, the creator of the world/nature must be a male God who is beyond his creation. However, the world he allegedly created seems to be less complete than he himself is (Ernst 2014, Straube 2001). Otherwise, why would anyone want to make a “new and improved” world?

At this point alchemical thinking, action and desire, which is both matricidal and utterly destructive to the natural world, and which has already failed time and time again, has not been given up, as scientists always predicted would be the case, but has entered a more far-reaching and decisive phase that has at this point, taken on a planetary dimension.

Aided by the so called “development of the productive forces”, resulting from the new technology of the “machine” (Genth 2002) which, as we have seen is itself the result of alchemical thought and alchemical procedures (Werlhof 2010c), this alchemy hopes to become a generalized, and now global, program for the overall transformation of the

world into “capital,” or as Marx would have put it, the transformation of “Lady Nature” into “Mr. Capital.” This places capital in a new light. It is the totem, form and expression of a new motherless and manmade patriarchal world, which is intended as a second and this time “eternal paradise,” in the form of a purely patriarchal utopian civilization. Unlike the traditional paradise, in this paradise, any matriarchal residue and all thought of “dependency” on mothers or the natural world will effectively be eliminated. It is an empty “paradise” “purged” of all life and filled up with lifeless, artificial products (photos of Las Vegas in the middle of the desert or of the manufacture of artificial snow at the dwindling glaciers come to mind) (Scheiber 2015), which are treated as examples of a “better life” or a “superior natural world.”

The underlying *phobia of mothers and the natural world* goes far beyond what Max Weber described as the “demystification” of nature. In modern civilization, with the so-called development of the productive forces taking the form of mechanization as “technification” (Genth 2002), we are drawing ever closer to the technological *overthrow of the natural order*, along with all of the related forms of cultural organization. The destruction thereby engendered could, as such, be called *destruction by procedure* or the *development of the destructive forces*.

This is made perfectly clear by the development of new military technologies, and not only because of their use in declared wars; these technologies are regularly adopted into civilian life even before their alleged “conversion” into peaceful technologies (for example, the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in medicine and by the pharmaceutical industry). As “macro-technologies,” they have acquired a role in as yet officially unacknowledged warfare (weather wars, plasma weapons, geo-engineering), as well as increasingly destroying the Earth at a planetary level (Bertell 2013a). The clear intent is to “tame,” or “mortify” our Earth, rendering it a technologically controlled and “superior mega-machine,” whose natural force can be used **even** as a weapon of war (Bertell). There is no sign of an official discussion or theoretical assessment of these life-threatening phenomena; in fact, any such discussion or assessment is prevented using any and all available means.

The alchemical project has become a profitable economic undertaking. As a result, driven by greed and using all available means, it has developed a truly horrifying dynamic. The basis for this was and is exploitation, with both the participants and their working material being violently transformed into “factors of production,” “labour power” and “raw materials” or commodities by the “relations of production.” This impacts on the social base as unpaid housework, slavery, and serfdom, as well as precarious, “marginal” and forced labour, such as the current “housewife-ized” labour conditions and forms of “unpaid commodity production” all the way up to “proletarian wage labour” as the alleged “standard form of employment.” The latter is found throughout the world, but in reality only encompasses a minority of the labour force (Bennholdt-Thomsen, Mies, Werlhof 1983/1992).

Gradually, this will result in the transformation by *mortification* – the complete subjugation and “killing” – of the natural world, including everything produced, into “capital,” at no great cost. The result will be its conversion into an allegedly “better

matter,” a superior labour force and ultimately a “Great Work” in the form of the recomposition of dead material into commodities, machinery and “command,” which is to say, a decree from above, to use Marx’s term. At the end of the day, this capital formation results in money. Today’s money is “self-propagating” (Marx); it produces itself as *alchemical gold* and as a capitalist *philosopher’s stone*. Nothing is so multipurpose and easily converted as money. Only modern, interest-bearing money creates a “genuine” illusion that arbitrary and unlimited growth, even a certain “fertility,” can be “achieved” outside of the natural world using alchemical means.

Modern agriculture provides another example. Chemical and industrial methods are used to forcibly create a seeming fertility, one that is increasingly removed from actual soil conditions, thereby completely undermining them in the process. In the final analysis, starvation is inevitable (Shiva 2004 and 2009).

This “accumulation” of capital constitutes a violent form of “primitive” accumulation: in alchemical terms, “mortification,” which is to say, the appropriation and expropriation and the dissolution and transformation of living matter into “means of production” and “resources” for the valorisation of capital. This means that the “use value” of the natural world and various forms of life are absorbed into capital formation, causing it to be lost to nature and living beings, which are seen as “valueless” or “worthless” in their own right from the outset, although without them there could be no value in the form of exchange value at all.

This process of “primitive” accumulation is not only “necessary” once, as Marx assumed, but will nonetheless be continuously applied both within and outside of agriculture, where it got its start. The “ongoing primitive accumulation”, as we have analysed it in the context of the subjugation and oppression of women (Werlhof 1978), is not a unique violent historical event but a continuous source of different forms of capital accumulation at all levels, whether local or regional (most recently Scheiber 2015), or in the context of its spread and operation at a global level (Werlhof 2007). Only in this way can the constantly necessary basic material – the *materia prima* – for these alchemical procedures and for the “Great Work” be amassed.

On the whole, what must first be acknowledged is that the capitalist economy would be meaningless and – even in a literal sense – would never have gotten as far as it has, without modern technique, in the form the machine’s technology. Both are inseparably connected to not only an economic, but also a “*technological social formation*,” by this alchemical transformation project. Indeed, the modern economy is more an element of the technique of alchemical procedures than the inverse – otherwise it would have remained at the mercantile stage. Were this economy to disappear, if anything survived, it would be its technique and technology, and this to the degree that it remained “alchemical” in character. Otherwise stated, alchemy existed and can exist without capital, *but capital cannot exist without alchemy*. This is the nexus that has never been identified anywhere, or even recognized: The patriarchal-alchemical project is the underlying essence, and it can continue to exist outside of modernity, just as it did in the past.

This will likely prove to be an important historical point should “post-capitalist”

movements arise that nonetheless continue to adhere to some form of patriarchy and a corresponding form of alchemy, without being directly conscious of this fact or even wanting to be conscious of it. As we've already established, issues of patriarchy and its alchemy are greeted with indifference by most of protagonists. This is probably because they want to continue to use alchemical methods, even in the event of system change.

From this perspective, an overall *critique of the natural sciences* as the basis for modern technique and technology, as well as of each of the individual branches of science, which tend to increasingly integrate all aspects of the modern natural sciences, becomes possible. Most natural scientists hold their own views to be universally valid and correct, which is to say, reliable, objectively verifiable and in the end irrefutable. This amounts to an adherence to an unwaveringly "alchemical" and capitalist-patriarchal approach.

This means that almost all of science accepts the patriarchy's "binary mind-set" (Behmann 2009), the idea that all phenomena are separate from each other and can be reduced to abstract categories – e.g., "material" and "spirit" or "life" and "death" – to allow them to be "quantified" and ordered (Wagner 1970). This serves to prevent "dialectical" or even articulate thought regarding relationships, contexts and processes of change – as the way in which all living being is characterized. It prevents a correct understanding of life and the way in which it ought to be treated. The question of why "everything is falling apart" today doesn't even arise. This simply becomes a blind spot.

The modern natural sciences arose in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Francis Bacon, who seamlessly transferred the witch trials of his day onto nature, is deemed to be the founder of the modern sciences; as with women, torture was the vehicle for seizing hold of nature's secrets – something that wouldn't be called like that today any more. As an alchemist, Bacon depicted a new and better natural world as a complete and all-encompassing conversion and restructuring of the animal and plant worlds, including crossing boundaries that separate species in the way we have finally begun to learn how to do today. He projected a utopian, strongly hierarchical and patriarchal civilization, with new, ultimately submissive and, therefore, "better" human beings (*New Atlantis*) and developed a scientific methodology (induction, deduction) that **is** still used today (Bacon 1990).

In this way, the contemporary analytical, quantifying and mechanistic view continues to define matter as "dead," the source of which can be traced to the alchemy of Antiquity. This form of thought can be found today, even there where a new understanding of nature (relativity theory, quantum theory, electromagnetism, cosmology) is taking shape, as well, as wherever the primary issue remains the domination of the natural world and power over nature (e.g., the European Organization for Nuclear Research – CERN – in Geneva and both the Eastern and Western militaries).

Since Bacon's time, there has been a consistent effort to use alchemical procedures to gain universal power over – and a related universal knowledge of – the natural world. "Knowledge" in this context is defined as knowledge about how to gain power over nature, and that serves to justify the treatment of the natural world and living beings, no matter how destructive it is. In the final analysis, the knowledge needed to exert power over the natural world and the knowledge that power provides unequivocally constitute

*destructive forms of knowledge.* They are not “the knowledge” – knowledge that will be required when it becomes desirable or necessary to leave this civilization behind. It is now clear how the natural world is being “mortified” and then used as *materia prima* for a “Great Work.” This allegedly guarantees the production of a new and even “better” *matter and nature.*

The overall outcome in the long run, however, is the increasingly inevitable confrontation of a utopia of “creation” based on the exercise of power and destructiveness with its opposite, or put another way, destruction resulting from alleged “creation” proves to be nothing more than an illusion. In the end, this “better” turns out to be fundamentally inferior (Werlhof 2012).

That applies to the commodity, modern alchemy’s “Great Work,” in particular. Commodities are increasingly markedly inferior to the products of subsistence societies and so-called natural products, e.g., the organic food sector. Furthermore, for the most part, following brief use, they are to a greater or lesser degree nothing more than toxic waste.

Power over nature and the related knowledge will, in the end, lead to the final, *irreversible* destruction of the natural world. Nuclear technology is the clearest evidence of this fact, even if it does not lead to a direct nuclear war. Given the increasing and ubiquitous and constant radioactive contamination (Caldicott 2014) – e.g., the Fukushima disaster – it is now the appropriate to ask, “Are we the last generations?” (Bertell 2013b).

In light of this reality, the natural sciences, and all the other ensuing sciences, as well, must be confronted with the fact that their mindset and their methods and procedures were only temporarily applicable and “effective,” but have collapsed in failure in the long run. All that remains of them is the hubris of dominating the natural world and transforming it into its opposite, because that brings with it power and money. For the natural world, it signals death (Merchant 1987). It will ensure not only a rhetorical and conceptual death, but a genuine and literal murder.

Only knowledge that does not spring from such interests can be viable knowledge, and it is obvious such knowledge can have neither patriarchal nor patriarchal-alchemical motivations.

A natural science that knows nothing about and does not wish to know anything about that natural world that does not contribute to its domination and transformation will, as a result, have to face up to the evidence of its own perniciousness. Such a natural science is not rational in the sense of reasonable, but only in the light of subjective interests that are only objective to the degree that they are the ruling class’s interests. That is where this science’s claim to universality ends.

A “true” knowledge of the natural world can only arise if we specifically circumvent this way of thinking and recognize nature for what it is in its own context. As an organic farmer assured me, behaviour that corresponded with this would be a source of joy for her. This can never occur, however, on the basis of an enmity towards the natural world and a belief in the baseness, malignity and defectiveness of nature.

The anthropocentric relationship to nature, which following some initial uncertainty, an

increasing number of women have adopted, must fall away.

A knowledge that liberated itself from these assumptions would legitimately be called “matriarchal.” It would begin (again) everywhere that the destructiveness caused by patriarchal knowledge made it “objectively” impossible to continue defending it.

The results of the patriarchal relationship to the natural world up to this point has been the monopolization of property and power, as well as a “bloc structure” (Ullrich 1977) of technique and technology and economics and bureaucracy in the form of an “alchemical system of war” that adopts the paradigm of the machine and places the entire civilization under its destructive spell. The result is matter purified of nature – *matter without “mater”* – the ideal of modern materialism. Its origins are, however, much older, as the history of alchemy indicates (Schütt 2000).

Logically speaking, nature disappears, and is “replaced” by being transformed into its opposite. It cannot be retransformed into the nature that it once was. This *motherless and natureless matter*, conceived of as the “Great Work” of alchemy, is instead for the most part not reusable and is reintegrated into the natural cycle only as anti-nature.

In the long run, modern alchemy as generalized *matricide* and the attempt to use artificial male means to create material life disconnected from the cycle of life and operating out of its reach is not sustainable.

Nature’s regenerative capacity has, as a result, long since been overwhelmed, and we would now need two or three planet Earths to keep up with our consumption of natural resources. As we only have one Earth, however, our relationship to the natural world – and not only our resource consumption – must be completely reframed.

Like its pre-modern predecessors, contemporary alchemy, irrespective of its global success as a source of “progress, modernization and development,” will end in failure. It will not yield the “philosopher’s stone” that will allow for the creation of a new, artificial paradise the world over, thereby making patriarchy’s utopian dream a reality for all time to come.

Instead, as a result of the degree to which this alchemy has been a war on the natural world and all expressions of life, women in particular, and is indeed a “military alchemy” that is now targeting the planet itself, it has grown in magnitude to the degree that even were there an immediate repudiation of this project, the damage already done would pose a threat to survival. Continuing on as before will inevitably, immanently and “necessarily” lead to the actual “Death of Nature” (Merchant), of life on Earth, and perhaps of the planet herself. While this resonates with the biblical prophesy of the death of Earth in a natural catastrophe of unimaginable proportions, it certainly doesn’t correspond to the “alchemical dream” of the subsequent advent of an allegedly possible “new Earth” (Projektgruppe 2011).

Acknowledging the collapse “inherent” to this relationship with the natural world is modern civilization’s major taboo, because this would mean this civilization’s end before the currently unfolding process has run its course.

• **The political relationship** in modern patriarchy has as its goal the transformation of society into a “machine,” or an “alchemical system.” Social space, as a result, should be “empty,” atemporal and devoid of any creative energy of its own, as if it sprung spontaneously out of the original “uterine” space. To the degree that it is a living and unpredictable space, it is considered ripe for “mortification.” In a certain sense, this results in *space as “empty space,”* a concept that is also found in the modern natural sciences. This is meant to produce a new and “superior” space filled up with the new alchemical creations, which explains all of specifically patriarchal architecture and the penchant for constructing conspicuously large buildings, as well as the nature of urban planning. Politics is tied to “the policy planning of space.”

Politics, as an organized *political machine*, is itself an “alchemical procedure.” It is a “divide and rule” process, or better yet, a “divide, transform and rule” process. Politicians conduct procedures similar to those of alchemists, with the goal of subjugating, and thereby ensnaring, the occupants of a given space.

Under the current dominant conditions of centralized power, technique / technology and money, the political relationship obviously can’t really be or remain democratic, as we are always told it is and will be. *Men’s holy order*, like the entire patriarchy, always comes hand in hand with a more or less dictatorial or totalitarian form of domination – today “plutocracy.” In Antiquity, following the patriarchal conquest of the matriarchal terrain, despotism ensued, with the *state* generally assuming the central role in organized politics. War and the “divide and rule” principle, which might alternately be called an alchemical “divide, transform and rule” principle, as a violent form of “creation from destruction,” cannot, in the final analysis, be democratically legitimized. As a result, these alleged democratic procedures do not actually address really important political issues; their objective is the regulation of money and power. This could never be the case in genuine democracies, such as egalitarian matriarchal civilizations, where domination was/is not a factor.

Generally speaking, the *ruling principle* is always present at both higher and lower social levels. It is a general prerequisite for establishing the conditions necessary for the alchemical project of creating a “better world.” Both the sacred and the secular rulers, “God the Father” and the *pater familias*, as well as every individual man with respect to a woman, plays the same role within the hierarchy, underscoring its all-encompassing patriarchal character as the ruling father’s system – ideally, even in their absence.

*New Atlantis*, written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Francis Bacon, the founder of modern science, presents this ideal of a patriarchal-alchemical “re-creation” of social space (Bacon in Heinisch 2004). Were it possible, this perspective would ultimately legitimize the rule of fathers, rendering it unassailable *in perpetua*. A truly living political exchange, like that described by Hannah Arendt, would no longer even be thinkable, let alone an actual possible experience (Arendt 1958/2002).

Today, we are beginning to slide in the direction of an increasingly chaotic form of domination. The decay and *disempowerment of the modern national state* followed by either a shift into the international system or a decline into a “failed” or “rogue state” has, in all instances, been stage-managed from above. *Terror as politics* and the

manufacturing of both regional and international wars, accompanied by the rise of refugees across the globe, also serves to clear the way for actual world domination, for example, in the form of a totalitarian “New World Order,” which could either be preceded by or lay the groundwork for a new and devastating world war (Chossudovsky 2012 and 2015).

The very way this approach has emerged paves the road for the end of any pseudo-democratic remnants and for the division of the masses into parties, classes, ethnic groups and religious denominations, as well as for mafia-like conditions of corruption and blackmail. It makes politicians, in both the narrowest and the broadest sense, lackeys, slaves, and incidental cogs in the wheels of a remote-controlled political machine.

“Women in power” at any level of the political hierarchy cannot change anything, and once they are there, they won’t even want to. To the contrary, women in power will find themselves “mortified” into willing and welcome *accomplices* providing a certain façade to the whole system, ultimately throwing their lot in with patriarchal political conditions and taking responsibility for its crimes, as well as directly participating in them, thereby proving that women can act just like men.

In this regard, one thing is perfectly clear; in patriarchy, “power” in political relationships is ultimately always *power over life and death*. It is only those with genuine power who get to make such decisions. This decision must be made time and time again, simply because the process of “mortification” – the subjugation and the inclusion or exclusion of people and their milieu from the political space – is constant. Through war, through diverse rituals, in medicine, in the domestic sphere, in sexuality, and through various crimes, those who are not particularly powerful are also able to exercise this power in matters of life and death. Obviously, some women now want to share in this power.

The ideal would be a form of rule that runs on automatic pilot, a machine that could directly encroach upon what is outside of it and no longer had any need for human beings. This would create the illusion that the ruling structure could be “forsover.” The appropriate global, world state would be, so to speak, the “philosopher’s stone” of the patriarchal political relationship – incidentally, this being exactly the same as the nascent and similarly structured new “welfare” state. The suggestion would be that domination and violence no longer exist, because no one specific is responsible for either.

This ideal is also typical of the military, which dreams of engaging in war with machines alone, and thereby removing the “remaining risk,” and this is increasingly occurring (drones; computerized weapons systems; geo-engineering; weather wars). The similarity to the political relationship, with political domination taking the form of the state, is, in this light, no mere coincidence.

Attempts to achieve local democracy and egalitarian relationships, for example, the Zapatistas in Mexico (Werlhof 1996) or those matriarchies that live on (Göttner-Abendroth 2009) offer old and new starting points on a continuum of political relationships.

In general, however, a successful spread of this sort of local democracy across the globe is not a likely outcome today. The imperative economic basis for the minimum necessary

self-sufficiency is increasingly lacking – as a result of “land grabs” for instance. A social structure that is oriented around the “interconnectedness of all living beings” (Werlhof 2010 b) is also lacking. In the North of the international system, such a social structure has suffered an historical defeat and has been displaced by “better human beings,” in principle meaning isolated individuals and mass society, in the form of a mortifying and anonymous “melting pot.” In this light, it’s remarkable that “the people” continue to demand justice, democracy, equality, freedom and honesty in politics. It remains the case that rule must be legitimized and cannot simply be postulated as self-evident or “natural,” as it was at the outset of Aristotle’s patriarchy (Aristotle 2012). The memory of matriarchal relationships is still intact enough that it continues to resonate, rather than fading away. This memory could well be reignited anywhere and at any time.

- **Gender relations** in today’s patriarchy cannot be properly understood, either universally or individually, outside of the macrostructure of civilization’s relationship to the natural world and its related political conditions. It is not simply a matter of the patriarchal-alchemical nature of single gender relations; these are, in fact, an *image* of the entire civilization being regulated by patriarchy. Gender relations resonate with the earliest days of patriarchy (e.g., Meier-Seethaler 1992), and most recently, with Early Modern times, which are characterized by the persecution of “women as witches” (cf. Daly 1991). Purely psychological behavioural approaches, as is most common, cannot provide an appropriate account of patriarchal gender relations, if they fail to consider patriarchy’s *overall social context as a civilization*. To the contrary, the question must be posed as to the degree to which the patriarchal conditions, which have been ascendant for thousands of years in one form or another and have increasingly – not decreasingly – determined the forms of life, even allow for a quasi-independent “psychology” (My Han Derungs 2011). In the best-case scenario, the remnants of matriarchal gender relations could be ferretted out as a sort of “secondary culture” (Genth 1996) that still appears periodically and transitorily, first and foremost in the context of love affairs, familial relationships and friendships, and without which the patriarchal civilization might not be able to persevere.

In any case, gender relations in patriarchy are more or less – today, more than ever – marked by an attempt to degrade, devalue, subjugate and systematically control and just generally disempower women as human beings, members of the labour force, mothers and sexual beings – in short, to “mortify” them. The situation of the patriarchal mother is basically hopeless; mothers only have specious options (Tazi-Preve 2004). In the final analysis, this is heading in the direction of the literal *abolition* of mothers. They are to be “alchemically” replaced, using machines, hybridization and artificial life, and transformed from patriarchy’s “good” mothers into “mother-machines” (Corea 1986), with surrogacy and artificial insemination, all the while being abused with implants and regular interventions, all to produce “better” women, mothers (Schmölzer 2005) and children.

This begins as an attempt to make mothers expendable, first ideologically, then programmatically, and finally in reality. Preceding as if this were actually possible, the

“worthlessness” of mothers is confirmed up front by dismissing their work as retrograde and generally unpaid. Wherever machines encroach, there is no remunerated work worthy the name, because their very purpose is to replace workers.

Even as “still”-mothers, women will be increasingly forced to take part in the alchemical system’s production that occurs outside the home, where their work will be judged of some value, albeit very limited, given that the debasement occasioned by *housewife-ization* (Bennholdt-Thomsen et al. 1983) continues to hold sway, **also** outside of the home.

Women find themselves subjugated and integrated into the alchemical machine by patriarchal procedures as allegedly “superior” women and mothers and as “better” members of the labour force. Following their “mortification” – i.e., alchemical transformation – these women find themselves either combined with machines to become cyborgs, a sort of human-machine hybrid, or displaced by machines altogether: work, sex and childbearing machines. This process is already pervasive, both in the “North” and in the “South.” However, in the latter case, at least to some degree, pre-modern forms of subjugation, which are nonetheless alchemical in the intent, remain operative.

The central premise of the patriarchal project is matricide in the form of the elimination of motherhood, and its replacement, broadly speaking, by mechanical procedures meant to finally free patriarchy from its dependency on mothers. There is ample historical evidence of this desire on numerous levels – in mythology, in psychology and in the legal system (Tazi-Preve 1992). This, however, requires the patriarchs to find a means of *male self-generation*: artificial wombs, men with uteruses, or perhaps in the post- or trans-humanist realm of robots and artificial intelligence, the synthetic life of the “life industries” and nano and gene technologies, or by cloning (cf. Rifkin 1986, Schirmacher 2001).

The current tendency appears to no longer be exclusively focused on the artificial reproduction of the species, but for some time now also its replacement by *post-human artificial life*. At this point, it’s not just mothers, but the “human being” as such who is in the crosshairs. In spite of this, nobody seems particularly concerned; that’s how thoroughly normalized alchemical thinking has become (e.g., Fritsche 2013).

This is an aspect of what must be considered, at this point, when addressing homosexuality and transsexuality. A critique of patriarchy and alchemy provides a point of view that is outside of current ongoing “pro or contra” debates. The scene in question changed a long time ago, and the issues at play are no longer recognition and anti-discrimination; these have been replaced by a quasi-alchemical re-formulation of the entire gender debate. In the academic discourse, women’s studies have not only been supplanted by gender studies, but also by “sexuality studies,” with the particular focus of research being homosexuality and transsexuality. Hardly any lesbians are to be seen at gay pride parades these days. The issue of the day is the effacement and re-creation of what a man or a woman can or should be (Tazi Preve 2014). It has become clear that it is now, to some degree, progressive not to be heterosexual. The new ideal of so-called “superior human being” will first and foremost mean the quasi-alchemical transmogrification of men into “also-women,” and to a lesser degree, women into “also-

men.” There is also by this point the attempt to not only replace women as mothers, but also as men’s sexual partners.

With homosexual marriage, followed by adoption or surrogacy, which is now legally permitted in many countries, the mother will no longer be necessary within marriage. In the case of lesbian marriages, on the other hand, conventional modern alchemical techniques of artificial insemination can be used. All of which serves to make a critique of technique and technology unwelcome in this context.

Alongside the workplace and politics, the *modern patriarchal nuclear family* plays the central role in structuring gender relations, because of its key modern function, the daily reproduction of wage labourers, the reproduction of the species and the satisfaction of basic human needs. This type of family is, so to speak, the primary site of *alchemical production of human beings*. In the process, it has become a point of principle that the triangular mother-father-child constellation is considered a natural reality and the sole possible way of reproducing the species, when, in fact, it simply represents the political construct favoured by the patriarchal authorities (Tazi-Preve 2012). By extension, it is only logical that in patriarchal-alchemical conditions, men as “breadwinners” and “fathers” are called upon to rule, and to do so as if they were the “creators” of the coming generation. In reality, the opposite is now the case – the nuclear family is the most dangerous possible site for women and children. These fathers and creators, who historically began as warlords and religious leaders, acquired wealth by conquest, and in the process evolved into the “fathers of the nation.” This was to resonate in men’s basic *tendency towards violence* in their familial roles as husbands and fathers. This reflects the “creation” through destruction that is at play both within and outside of the family.

It was the women’s shelter movement that first pointed out the sickening nature of the matter-of-fact acceptance of violence against women, although this was by no means enough to eliminate it.

The patriarchal perspective that ultimately the female gender, and women as mothers in particular, are to be eliminated leads, in and of itself, to distortions and alienation in the relationships between men and women. This is all the more alarming, because even those “conscious” of the issue are unable to avoid the consequences. This perspective socially “predetermines” relationships down to the smallest detail and declares “worthless” housework and maternal tasks.

On this basis, it is safe to say that *mimesis* has occurred, which is to say, the emotional reconciliation with patriarchy and its alchemical utopia has to a significant degree become the norm, serving to shape perception as a result (Genth 2002). Something is lost in this process – a sense of awe in the face of all of life’s wonders. This makes the imagination a place where everything is or, in any case, can, to a greater or lesser degree, be construed to be a “commodity” or a “machine,” with human being as raw material and nothing any longer coming from the natural world. However, what one gets as a result is neither “better” nor “superior” – it is simply trivial and spiritually vapid. Life’s wonders will no longer be understood and respected as a gift, but instead will be seen as manageable and, by extension, killable. This is a recurring problem in reproductive

medicine. “*Value*” also undergoes an inversion in this setting. What is at play now is life itself.

The previous tradition of female-maternal care for people has suffered in this process. We are increasingly faced with a degradation of human relationships and with the “absence of culture” – one might even say the disappearance of “caring” (*cultura*) from daily life. We are seeing the steady growth of Ivan Illich’s so-called “shadow-work,” which is nothing more than the expression of the loss of what is living. In the final analysis, this work impoverishes and conceals the contributions made by women, transforming them, through a destructive process, into factors at the service of the overtly male “creation” of a world of “dead” commodities and consumption (Illich 1982). This way begins a process that gradually undermines the work of “caring” – one might say, it has been “contaminated.”

As a result, one sees an ever-larger *distance and alienation from life* among women (Frick 2012), even towards the lives they’ve birthed. Some women have begun to respond to the unreasonable patriarchal demands by – one might say, prophylactically – no longer wanting to be women and mothers. For them, the order of the day becomes a sex-neutral “*gender*” (Bell, Klein 1996), leading to a retrograde alchemical hermaphroditism, with the woman becoming the “also-man.” This results in an adaptation that lays the groundwork for *freedom from women and mothers* and constitutes the end of a creative and female form of sexual relations and society, which, in any case, is patriarchy’s stated goal. As a result, for those who adopt this patriarchal position, the debate about motherhood is “politically incorrect”; it is allegedly “regressive,” even reactionary, and certainly taboo. From patriarchy’s alchemical perspective of progress, there will soon no longer be mothers in the strictest sense of the word, and in response to this, potential mothers are relinquishing their creative capacity up front. This goes as far as women having their uteruses removed to improve their position on the labour market. What is to be eliminated is something that, in a certain sense, has already been sacrificed: motherhood.

“Gender” – oriented women no longer even want to play a role in the reproduction of life. The field will be abandoned to women in the colonies, surrogate mothers, or even machines – in short, any and all forms of genetic and reproductive technologies, including “childbearing” men and other perverse projects.

Because the *machine as a “replacement” for the living*, the natural world, mothers and a life-sustaining culture not only fails to value gender, but requires its *destruction*, gender’s incorporeal quality will no longer be perceived. Indeed, any reference to this quality will be denounced as *essentialism*. Modern patriarchal women have increasingly begun to abandon the living and the natural world, leaving behind even the meaning of their bodies and wombs in it. Indeed, they have renounced all of this, and with flags aloft, so to speak, have crossed over to the patriarchal and masculine side. In the process, they leave behind anything that is an impediment to this transition. This is the source of the claim advanced by so-called “emancipated” women that the *female body is purely a cultural fiction* (Butler 1991). The most recent American Women’s Studies Association conference included a session entitled “Theorizing the Post-Human Body.”

Well, if there is ever such a thing, it will be first and foremost a machine!

The misconception in all of this is the premise that if we are no longer part of the natural world, we can escape its fate, or put another way: no body – no bondage. In short, we would rather be abusers than be abused.

Female sacrifice is implicit in alchemy (Eliade 1980). So, it seems better not to be part of this species. Alchemy and its methodology are, however, not seen for what they are and, thus, rejected, because their effects go unrecognized or are perceived as positive. In any case, we generally lack the conceptual framework for identifying alchemical procedures. The alchemical transformation of gender – e.g., surgically – is, however, certainly welcomed.

All of this answers a question posed by those of us in the early women's movement: *What, in the long run, will women make of their experience in patriarchy?* How can it be that until recently overt outrage has been almost entirely precluded? What are the implications of the fact that in the long run most women have opted for a "mimesis" with patriarchy? Does this mean that the potential for a violent reaction has from the outside and from above increasingly encroached upon interior life, making inroads among those below, such that it has now reached women in general?

From the point of view of the "gender"-movement, there is – as is indicated on its Facebook platform – a patchwork of – count them (!) – sixty "sexualities." The movement considers gender assignation arbitrary, calls for an alchemical-mechanical solution and proffers a new technologically determined definition of gender relations, and, it should be said in passing, receives massive support from above. This, however, is not the only available option for dealing with the problems of being a woman in patriarchy.

*Feminism* has, by this point, come to signify everything and nothing. Wars have been carried out in the name of feminism (white men freeing oppressed women in Afghanistan and the Middle East). This amounts to gender terminology being used to buttress patriarchal policy – to date a "feminist" Hillary Clinton has approved of every U.S. military intervention.

Another reaction emphasizes gender *differences* (Irigaray 1991), rather than gender "similarities." The latter suggest interchangeability or some form of "gender neutrality," whereas differences do not refer to any qualitative sameness or irrelevance of gender.

"Difference" must, however, formulate and express its *opposition to patriarchy as an alchemists' society*, if it wants to break free and not simply serve the interests of either neo-conservatism or neo-patriarchal pseudo-"alternatives." Any other approach will only remain bogged down in patriarchal suppositions (e.g., Herman 2006). This would, of course, include any view of the two genders as discrete and "pure" heterosexual raw material (e.g., the reasoning behind circumcision), which alchemists – here, the church in the form of priests and the state in the form of registrars – will combine in pursuit of their "Great Work," for as long as women remain necessary. It is also the case that the necessary starting point for gender relations that are independent of these interests and

manipulations can only be found beyond this type of an alchemical model.

*Gender relations that seize to be patriarchal* are only possible outside of alchemical thought and behaviour. How this will turn out remains an open question, but the matriarchal societies that still exist today can provide an example.

• **Intergenerational relationships** in patriarchy – as was the case with gender relations – are not geared towards creating ties between generations in a way that fosters either a sense of the “unity of life” or loving relationships and mutual concern, with the reciprocal sense of responsibility that that would encourage. To the contrary, concepts and mechanisms of division also reign in this instance, and their role is to prevent the realization of the natural and cultural ties between generations and genders. The objective, in fact, is to destroy these ties and alchemically replace them with a *division into abstract “generations”* (within a new and necessarily artificial context) and their artificial re-composition if needed. The earliest signs of European patriarchy in this sense are already to be found in Plato’s utopian “state,” with newborns being taken from their mothers and other newborns being substituted, so as to prevent the development of the bond between mother and child, which is usually (one of) the strongest we know. This is done because women are the gender who love their children, as it is said in Plato (in the true sense of the word). This love is to be undermined and transferred to the state, its ruling class and its gods. Even the procreation of the next generation should not be left solely to the partners and their inclinations; instead, new generations should be bred from the point of view of bloodline and class. From the outset, the love between parents, as well as that that they would have for a common child, is of no concern. In this sense, the state, with its institutions, behaves like a classic alchemist, wanting to subjugate and manipulate the “raw material” it controls in the service of a “Great Work” (Plato 1973).

Among other things, such *utopias* call to mind the futuristic experiments conducted by the Nazi regime’s “Wellspring of Life,” (the famous “Lebensborn”) which were meant to lead to superior living beings.

It is no accident that alchemical thought and behaviour so early as in Antiquity call to mind the “machine.” Even before the invention of the machine as such in modernity we know of the formation of a social or societal “machine” already (Mumford 1977). As such, the machine appears as a social “relationship” from the outset, or – in other words – a theory about the how to rule the society from above as well as the practical experience of how to do it (Genth 2002).

In lieu of a utopian situation of that sort, and before it is installed, the most common way to reshape the future generation as a “masculine creation” is through a *second “male” birth*, in the form of an initiation (tests of courage, examinations, communion, confirmation, beginning or completing school).

In matriarchal societies, the initiation of boys serves a different purpose. They must prove themselves before “Mother Nature,” who is the great cycle of life (Somé 2004). For girls, on the other hand, the menstrual cycle usually provides the basis of initiation (Voss 1988).

It is axiomatic in a patriarchy that mother and child should be separated as soon as possible (for early modern Europe see Renggli 1992), or in some other way alienated from each other – and this is even more the case today. The same general principle applies to youth and elders. There should be as little contact as possible between “peer groups” of different generations, to prevent the development of a trans-generational sense of mutual responsibility, and to ensure that there is no exchange of life experience, no passing down of culture and no mutual love.

Most recently, one of the effects can be observed in the systematic rape of children and young people by adults, for the most part men, which was once seen as perversion, paedophilia and sexual abuse, has taken on an increasingly organized form.

We have arrived at a point where the *individual*, as such, has been separated and cut off from any source, freed of a “home” and left without ties or any sense of place, alone, in need and easily controlled, and that’s the way patriarchal civilization wants it. The nuclear family, which is isolated and without a social milieu, and which subjects each of its members to its own internal hierarchy, is, as such, a perfect fit.

The individual who arose with modernity is deemed to be a “superior human being,” when in fact s/he has been reduced to a laughable, impotent figure, who is compelled to “alchemize” her/himself into **socially** as acceptable a form as possible – e.g., to adopt a particular “identity” (the function of fashions and trends).

The “mortification” of family, tribal, village, regional, cultural and local contexts is promulgated as bourgeois, rational and modern as opposed to feudal, irrational and retrograde. The “superior” human being, as an “ego-logical”, ego-centred individual, is independent from and purified of any “tradition,” thereby becoming a suitable cog in the machine and a multipurpose “iota” of the “Great Work,” something already be found in Plato, and after him, in the works of the 17<sup>th</sup> century utopians (Bacon, Campanella, Morus in Heinsch 2004).

The allegedly “superior human being” is, as such, a human being with no personal social power, and in the end, no personal authority. From the typically patriarchal and anthropocentric perspective, this human being is pronounced the *crown of creation*, even the “homo-creator” or the “transformer of things.” (Wörer 2013).

This individual, who cannot be further subdivided, is now faced with post- or trans-human projects that will ultimately lead to dehumanization and to “de-individualization” (Mies 1992), or to the *man-machine* (Bammé et.al. 1983) that can be used in whatever way best suits the overall construct. Ideally, this would mean the disappearance of generations altogether – a *generational neutrality* that parallels *gender neutrality*. This would, in a sense, amount to the successful obliteration of all previously existing natural and cultural reference points. Time and cyclicity would, in a certain way, also become increasingly irrelevant. This has been the utopian goal of alchemy since time immemorial – a *dislocated, motherless, natureless, spaceless and atemporal order*.

First, however, will come an attack on the unborn, with the use of artificial reproduction techniques, and this will occur alongside an attack on the elderly. It needs to be perfectly clear that from the perspective of an increasingly ubiquitous “alchemical system,” there

are a variety of ways to secure a grip on them, the unborn and the elderly, and manipulate, fabricate, or even “dispose” of them. Discussions about legalizing “medical fertility” techniques, as well as assisted suicide for elderly people, must be understood in this light. It is horrifying that this legalization and legitimization of the killing of “worthless” lives (Singer 1994) may well become a reality.

In the long run, whatever someone produces – like a commodity – is theirs as a result of its “production”; they own it. As a result, they can dispose of it as they wish; they even have the legal right to trash it. That was the case in Roman Antiquity, where, for example, in the event of a birth, the *pater familias*, as the alleged source of life, could decide whether the life in question was to continue or not with a thumbs up or a thumbs down.

The new *patenting of life* (TRIPS) gives us a foretaste of what this could come to mean. The ownership of a form of life will largely eliminate that form of life’s right to an unimpeded and self-determined existence (Mies, Shiva 1995). We have already experienced these conditions in the form of slavery and serfdom. Animals and plants are already manipulated for profit, which means to leave them for appropriation by others and further alchemical valorization. As well as the impact this will have on the economy and technological development, it will also affect different human generations and their respective narratives; they will be divided, or at least be understood as principally divisible.

It is impossible to exclude the potential for far-reaching abuse of a generation that has been torn out of its social fabric.

Even last names are no longer determined on an intergenerational basis. This has also become the prerogative of legislators, who are pursuing an all-encompassing *dissolution of the generational context*.

Migrants, insofar as they are torn out of their culture’s generational context the world over, play an involuntary role in this regard. In comparison to the North since the nuclear family became the norm, migrants are far more concerned with establishing a new generational framework for themselves. The reality, however, is that, at this point, such a framework is only found in the upper echelons of society or among the aristocracy, where there is still something to bequeath to the next generation.

Matriarchal societies, on the other hand, are attentive to the creation of a context free of intergenerational divisions, or, put another way, to the creation of an enduring structure that is based on a kinship with mothers, with the related attachment to grandmothers, great grandmothers and clan mothers, as well as to the ancestors in general. In complete contradistinction to patriarchy, given their life experience and wisdom, clan mothers are the central decision-makers in issues related to community life. This is the only way to guarantee the *passing down of the wisdom and the cultural characteristics* that play a particularly important role in strengthening and orienting the coming generation. This is clearly undesirable in a modern patriarchal society, where everything new seems better than everything old.

• **The relationship with the Transcendental** in patriarchy is shaped by the *belief in the “pater arché” principle*, which is to say, the alleged superiority of men and the masculine character of creation. Part of this is the alchemical belief in miracles, meaning, of course, the possible improvement upon “creation,” or even the fashioning of a “creation” beyond the reach of women and the natural world, thereby addressing existing insufficiencies and filling lacunae. Fundamental to this, of course, is the belief that this is achievable and legitimate. In the final analysis, the patriarchal relationship with the Transcendental is based on an ideological system that *believes that violence* is the first and last means available, because violence is essential for the realization of humanity’s alleged task: building the heavenly kingdom on Earth. As such, patriarchal *religion* is usually tied to a related *legal system* that particularly punishes resistance to systemic violence, thereby completely inverting *good and evil* as matriarchal justice had previously understood them. (cf. the Codex Hammurabi in 2. Millenium b.Ch.). The patriarchal relationship to the Transcendental is by definition confined to a very real and entirely immanent sphere that is assailed by sanctions from all sides.

This relationship to the Transcendental directly rejects a relationship with the natural world. In patriarchy, the relationship with the Transcendental is religiously constituted by a *renunciation of all older forms of goddess worship* and of the cyclical process of coming into being, existing and decaying, which all living beings experience as a factor “unifying all life”. The same is true **for** the denial of the intrinsic essence of life that lies hidden in the realm of the spirit and soul.

In patriarchy, one will never hear about the natural world as a living environment composed of both matter and a spirit-soul, which is to say, the natural world as it really is, because the sole objective is to seize, control and dominate the natural world, and finally to transform it. As a result, all patriarchies are predicated from the outset on a *division of matter or bodies from spirit-soul*, followed by alchemical procedures that are meant to make this a reality in the form of a quasi-“self-fulfilling prophecy.” The result is that “pure spirit” separated from matter is perceived as emanating outward, thereby coming to be seen as of a “higher order” than ought to be the case. In the process, spirit is torn away from its female form (*Ruah*) and masculinized (Straube 2001), for example, as the *Logos Spermaticos* of creation or as *Archeus* (Paracelsus 1562). Since Aristotle, men have been perceived as beings imbued with spirit, while women have been seen as empty shells or receptacles – still necessary, but “passive” and, in comparison to “active” masculinity, “dead mother – dead matter” (Treusch-Dieter 1990).

In modernity, the idea that the body exists in a single context with the spirit and the soul – love and life – has given away to the body as a corpus or a corpse, or the body as a “machine” (La Mettrie 1985, Descartes 1648). This is an attitude with roots in the Inquisition.

Seen from this point of view, the modern alchemical “production” of commodities signifies the production of material that is guaranteed to be separated from spirit and from the dimension of the soul, having been generated by murder and butchery and by the destruction and dissolution (mortification) of the natural world. In modernity, this process envisages all nature as dead matter that functions like a machine, but in reality, it was first necessary to transform everything into dead matter, a violent process that is denied

and obscured.

As a result, people now fail to note the unceasing violence that is required to achieve a spiritless, soulless and bodiless, but nonetheless corporeal world (modern “materialism”). The concept of nature as a dead mechanism obscures its ongoing murder as a living being. On this basis, the only spirituality possible is a form of disassociation from “matter,” accompanied by a discourse about a spirit-soul realm beyond the material world. Obviously, this is the nature of *al patriarchal spirituality*.

In the patriarchal context, any attempt to renew the connection between matter and spirit-soul, or even to possibly reunite them, paradoxically emerges again with the machine. This particular paradox only makes sense in an alchemical context. Once everything has been defined as “dead” and the entire issue of life is no longer considered relevant, the inventors of machines begin consider the possibility of the *machine as a potential form of life*. This is because, as alchemists, their goal has always been to create “superior” matter and “motherless” life. As a result, the first machines were “mechanical bodies,” which from the outset were modelled on human beings, especially women, with the goal of eventually completely replacing humans. This was even the case for early machines like the “Iron Lady,” which was not a birthing machine, but a killing machine, used, for example, in the dungeons of the Inquisition. All later machines were also in essence *killing machines*, in a direct military sense, or, if not intended for immediate military application, in the civil sector in one way or another. At a bear minimum, they contribute to the potential mortification of matter and of living beings. That certainly goes for the “machine of machines” (Genth 1989), the computer, which is quite literally a killing machine with its origins in the military industrial complex, as a by-product of the Manhattan-Project that produced the atomic bomb. The subsequent development of computers, including the Internet and numerous other civil applications, shares this military origin. Paradoxically, the same contradiction is found with the creation of “artificial life” (AL), another area where one encounters the subsequent civil application of what began as a military innovation (Bertell 2013a). These developments relate to the generalized militarization – the so-called “weaponization” – of civil space, and not to any successful “conversion” of military equipment for civil use or of death machines into life-maintaining devices.

The upshot of all this is that the development of real alternatives in the civil world is becoming increasingly unlikely – rather than more likely. All of this plays a role in the relationship with the Transcendental, because it completely reverses *the former understanding of life and death*, not only denying the connection between them, but also actively rending them asunder and eliminating them – because alchemy’s goal is to “impart death” and “create” life.

The concept of death as the “Great God of the Soul” (Hoffmannsthal 1893) – never mind of “Death” as the great goddess of the transition from life to death and death to life – is to all intents and purposes, eliminated in this context. Pre-modern alchemy adhered to a form of “spirituality” and religion that, while unquestionably patriarchal, still endeavoured to comprehend the spirit-soul as present in and emanating from being (Schütt 2000) – a perception that has always been alternately accepted or criticized as “superstition.” Modern rationality and the machine have effaced these “relics” from the

history of alchemy – without, however, completely dispensing with alchemy, as such.

This is what we have come to understand (Werlhof Man.), and it is why we argue that the Critical Theory of Patriarchy's (KPT's) alchemy theory should be applied to today's society, particularly to its five central relationships and to its "crisis."

Today, alongside the machine as a killing apparatus, we find the "life industry," which includes "synthetic biology," a typically alchemical "creation of life," with this *life* always "*arising*" from death or the dead, and with whatever final result is achieved being presented as "life." (Venter 2010). The end-result is meant to be so-called AL, or artificial life –for instance, "synthetic" life. This type of life has very little in common with that of living beings. It is simply the vaunted "living" machine and/or a composite of the living and the non-living, in the form of a genetically modified organism, for example (Engdahl 2013).

If the goal of alchemy is to create superior matter and higher forms of life, in short, *to act like and as "God,"* then what we are seeing today is the aspiration to clearly, directly, materially, ubiquitously and extensively do just that in a way that is historically unprecedented. If this fails to work using existing living beings and existing matter, or if there is a desire to create the "new and superior," then the focus will be on the machine in the form of artificial life replacing the life that preceded it. This will serve to rapidly make it crystal clear what the product is to be: It is "life", whether in the form of a bacterium, a nano-machine, a new genetic sequence, a chimera (Bizzarri 2012) or a "cyborg" hybrid or robot, or even possibly a new subatomic particle resulting from an atomic detonation (Calidcott 2002) or from reproducing the necessary conditions, for instance at the CERN nuclear research centre (CERN 2012). This makes the *perverse connection between the alchemical "creation of life" and alchemical killing* perfectly clear, and it raises the question: Where exactly is the superstition to be found?

The *alchemical belief in miracles* that its own "creations," such as commodities, the machine, interspecies chimera, hierarchy and money – collectively, capital – are effectively superior replacements for the natural forms of life that these new creators no longer even allude to is the reflection of an unparalleled, systemic irrationality.

The goal of this work is the ultimate triumph of *alchemy as a way to overcome life and death*, as well as a way to unite both states in a "new creation," e.g., hybridization that results in non-life. The fact that almost no one seems to find this horrifying, and that most people are involved in this work in some way, indicates the degree to which we consider alchemical thought, feeling and behaviour to be a given. As a result the typical patriarchal separating out of spirit-soul is broadly accepted as the norm and acted upon accordingly. However, in relation to patriarchy's own "creations," "the wisdom of hindsight" confirms that soul-spirit is returned to matter – as if such a thing were actually possible. It is asserted that following the successful fabrication of an artificial bacterium, Craig Venter exclaimed, "*We are God*" (Venter 2010). This captures both modern civilization's new relationship to the Transcendental and its objectives.

From an historical point of view, the living "organic order" in Europe gave rise to the dead "mechanical order" of modernity (Merchant 1987). "Old Europe's" matriarchal "world view" with its Earth-based spirituality and its spirit- and soul-based order that

understood the natural world and the planets as cosmic forms of life (Gimbutas 1996) was “demolished” in the process.

Since the Renaissance, this process brought with it its own kind of “magicians,” Neo-Platonists, occultists, vitalists, “world soul” devotees, secret societies and cosmologists – such as Paracelsus and the “Latin” alchemists (Seligman). They continued to try to take the unseen seriously, although their approach was patriarchal and alchemical, though not modern yet. One of the ways that this was expressed, as a result, was in a desire to possess the unseen – the spirit-soul – in the form of the “philosopher’s stone.” That ended when any preoccupation with such questionable areas was completely sidelined by the natural sciences and mainstream philosophy. This cast into doubt the very existence of spirit-soul, except possibly in the case of human beings (Descartes 2001) – or in the case of men, in any event. The natural world was defined as merely a mechanism – a machine that was not (any longer) perceived of as “imbued with spirit” or in any way animated. It was this perception of the natural world as a machine that gave rise to the paradoxical idea that the machine could play the role of “the natural world” (Genth 2002).

Even more significant is the reintroduction of the unseen, living beings, the spirit-soul and the “divine” into the debate at the very moment when it seemed to be possible to finally actually implement the alchemical program and project. In so doing, alchemy makes a quasi-return its “spirituality,” but in a form that has nothing at all to do with the pre-modern period. A return of that sort is of no interest to modern alchemy, and it does not renew earlier forms of spirituality; after rejecting pre-existing spirituality, it invents a spirituality of its own. In a certain sense, this is the “spirit of the machine,” a new *deus ex machine*.

We are talking here of a spirituality and a “spirit” with no precedent, and only the “alchemy thesis” will be able to explain its origins, should it become a reality. One thing, however, is certain; there is no greater affront to a person enthralled by machines than the suggestion that his gadgets are not actually alive.

Only the persistence of a *belief in the miracle of the “greater value” of alchemical “creation”* can possibly make sense of this *utterly irrational “idealism” in the midst of this spiritually vapid and soulless modern materialism*. This is particularly true in the case of the machine and of commodities in general – as unsatisfying, low quality, toxic and short-“lived” as they generally prove to be.

In the case of “black magic,” the secret societies that have always existed in patriarchy have approached spiritual forces as a possible way to exercise a negative influence over both people and events, and they do so **even** in a context where such areas of activity are normally rejected on rational grounds (cf. Wolf 1998). Alchemical practices that are not carried out in public, and which always have a sinister quality, are a particular example of this phenomenon (e.g., the organ transplants that are generally carried out under cover of night [Baureithel, Bergmann 1999], and certain rituals that run the gamut from the Nazi or Ku Klux Klan’s torch-lit, night-time stadium rallies to the ritual sacrifice practiced by

current secret societies).

Within alchemy, there has long been an avenue – preferably meditative – to the immaterial, for example, “*spiritual*” *alchemy* (in India and China, above all [e.g., Porter 1993]) or – and a lot more hands on – in the so-called “sacrifice of women.” These procedures can come to the fore, if the smelted metal fails to do the trick. In the latter case, the blacksmith-chemist carried out this work by throwing his wife, or his so called *soror mystica*, his mystical sister, into the oven, adding her to the metals, so that the Work would be successful (Eliade 1980). In the natural world, only the female is capable of creating, so when men prove unsuccessful, they seize upon the final means and attempt to force its cooperation.

This sort of thinking and behaviour is not a thing of the past. It has, in fact, continued to grow – though taking other forms – since the witch trials.

Up until today, esoteric, spiritual and religious streams in patriarchy *have never had a positive approach to the temporal, to “Mother Earth”, to material forms of life or to unity of matter with the spirit-soul.* They never retain even an element of that sort “unity of life”; they deem it to be corrupted, base, evil, etc.

None of this has changed, although the Earth and all life on her has suffered heavy material and spirit-soul damage and are in serious danger. Indeed, this damage is celebrated by some people both as a quasi-gnostic route to an allegedly “better and higher” world that is closer to God, and as the overcoming of material life lived in a “vale of tears” – as if there were an alternative to a corporal and physical life on Earth, and as if the Earth was necessarily a vale of tears. The *esoteric emphasis on the immaterial*, the so-called “spiritual” or “soul-related,” is rooted in a definitional separation of spirit and matter, rather than in their synthesis – the exception being a new synthesis of spirit, soul and machine (Kidder 1982). This is truly the patriarchal way; it is not the way of the Earth, and it is not the way any earthly body works. Its message is: “Let’s get out of here as soon as possible!”

This, of course, includes asceticism and renunciation of all sorts, which will perhaps allow for the achievement of the ideal of Jesus as a *Christus Lapis*, Christus as the “philosopher’s stone,” arising from otherworldly and entirely untainted matter, from God, and no longer from Mary, Christus as “pure flesh.” This flesh, while indeed flesh, is no longer earthly matter – it only becomes earthly flesh and blood through the typically alchemical sacrament of “transubstantiation.” Again, in a classically alchemical way, Jesus gains this body through **the violence of** its mortification on the cross and his resurrection to a higher life, his “second birth” in heaven.

A contemporary guru of a spiritual movement would, therefore, claim the role of just such a “philosopher’s stone” serving to “change and improve the world,” while this very world is falling to its knees because of the changes already occurring as a result of the alleged improvements expected from the alchemical project. Rather than calling for the end to this project, patriarchal spirituality occupies itself with glorifying the way it clears the path for a potential “heaven on Earth,” thereby fulfilling the promise made by all

alchemy, the alleged realization of the afterlife in this life. In this way, patriarchal esotericism is always immediately connected to the alchemical project.

The esoteric critique of modern materialism doesn't primarily target alchemy as a project meant to produce an effectively spiritless and soulless world of commodities, machines and money. Its target instead is the material world, the Earth under our feet, so to speak, as well as our earthly bodies, both of which are beginning to crumble in the face of alchemical force. Rather than speaking out against the ongoing, all-embracing destruction of the natural world, this critique advances a patriarchal spirituality and religious mysticism that acts *against the Earth*, thereby becoming part of a cohesive web of destruction.

Only a matriarchal point of view ensures that the wonder of life and its soul and spirit is recognized in the material world. The wonder of life is to be seen only in its material form, which is the exception within the universal extension of a permanent "spirit-soul" dimension. The fact that the material world is perceived in the exact inverse way, which is to say, as base and defective, can be attributed to those how are unable to produce material life, and so claim that the immaterial – like all the products of their alchemy – is both superior and more important (cf. Treusch-Dieter on Aristotle's theory of procreation). *The creator is deemed superior to and more complete than his creation* in all patriarchal religions (Ernst 2014). We, on the other hand, see matter and spirit-soul in perpetual unity, and we see earthly matter originating from it, without which the spirit-soul cannot take on an immediate expression of life, e.g., a material one. The division and dichotomy that arises when this view of the relationship of matter and spirit-soul is absent, must be appraised and characterized as the complete absence of reason and, to an even greater degree, of meaning, within a *necrophiliac hierarchization*.

Birth as *rebirth* and death as the beginning of the phase that precedes rebirth have become unthinkable since the advent of modernity, because no rhythmic-cyclic relationship between the spheres of life and death is any longer recognized. Alchemy presents the issue in a different light, because it awaits neither life nor death, but instead wishes to call them forth. For alchemists, life and death aren't absolutes; they can be produced, revoked or hybridized. As a result, death as mortification poses no problem for alchemists; they presume that those killed will be resurrected as higher matter in the "Great Work." Indeed, such a death can only be seen as a privilege (cf. the warriors of Valhalla, the suicide bombers who have blown themselves to kingdom come).

As a result, death is no longer seen as the door to a distinct "otherworldly" sphere, but only as the moment of the extinction of life via "mortification" – as the moment of entry into the alchemical "Great Work of creation."

Life and death, as a result of their definitional separation and their abstraction from the life process and the "unity of life," are reduced to mortified or degenerate matter for technical-alchemical use. The capacity to "generate" or "revoke" life and death at will is the ideal. It is the component of patriarchal practice that appears in endless new variations with war and medicine being the current domains (cf. Bergmann 2004). The ultimate goal is conquest as the overcoming of the natural order, even the unseen and "spiritual," or spirit-soul, dimension of existence.

In this context, life begins with death – which means with violence and mortification – reversing the natural process of *mater arché*, where life begins with birth.

*Fictional divisions* rule the day in patriarchy, for example, the division of flesh, or body, from soul, which is to say, the division between matter and spirit, as well as the division of life from death, the here and now from the afterlife, God from the world and the creator from creation. These divisions are a necessary precondition for the alchemical procedure of destruction and reconstruction.

In the process of the alchemical procedure, these artificial limits are transgressed. The supposed end-result of this mortification and re-composition is a higher state, with a new spirit-soul replacing the old one that has been removed in the process. Is this new spirit-soul somehow provided during the re-composition?

It is in the context of this fictional division that the corresponding concept of a practical and technical “improvement” is introduced – for example, in the case of the classically alchemical technique of organ transplant, where absolutely no consideration of the existing immaterial dimension is considered necessary. In this context, not a single thought is wasted on what is actually being done on the spirit-soul level or at the related corporeal level. These procedures are meant to create a “superior” human being, who is even possessed of a healthier spirit-soul, and who will be beyond death’s reach. Just how is that to be done? The reality is that organ recipients will instead find themselves wracked with fantasies of cannibalism and feelings of guilt towards the organ donors! (Baureithel, Bergmann 1999).

It is not actually a matter of successfully replacing the old spirit-soul with a new one. Instead, in the context of this alchemical procedure, the existing spirit-soul transverses hell and returns seriously damaged – if at all.

The separation of body-matter from spirit-soul is always a fiction, both as it is commonly understood and as a transitory “construct” in alchemical procedures. The very idea of “improving” the body and matter, or indeed, the spirit and soul, or of replacing them through alchemical re-production is nothing other than hubris. It is impossible to create life that “improves” upon what already exists.

Again today, the alchemical project is doomed to failure.

What, after all, becomes of feeling – particularly of “love” – which plays so great a role in the relationship with the Transcendental?

As always, this “separation, transformation and domination” takes the form of a divisionary *hierarchization and dichotomization*. In this process, we see a reflection of the residual “civilizational” relationships in the form of a projection into the non-material and the realm of feelings. However, defining “spirit” as higher and better than “matter,” which is base and inferior, creates a hierarchy in the spiritual realm, as well. Idealized “pure spirit” is spirit without matter. The ideal of an alchemically constructed spirit

would be a “thinking” machine with a “soul.” This machine would render superfluous human thinking, which has always been considered a curse by those in charge, because in principle it can call anything into question.

As is the case with gender relations and relationships between generations, “love” is always programmatically linked to violent division and the exercise of power, which is to say, the systematic *division of thought, feeling and behaviour*. Love should not arise directly from the “unity of life,” of which it is both an attribute and an expression, as is intrinsic under normal conditions. Instead, the focus of “love” should be somewhere beyond that and “upwards,” where what will first and foremost be encountered is the domination, rage and injunction that are understood to be the proof of love, in this context. This will serve to justify the perversion at play as the norm. The expression of this sort of “love for those in charge” is only possible under conditions imposed by patriarchy or alchemy. Otherwise, mothers simply love their children and vice versa, and fathers are seamlessly integrated, as long as they behave like decent human beings.

With the fourth and last step in the alchemical process, Jesus on the cross, the mortified one, who was adopted into God’s “Great Work” and, who, following his resurrection, became the “philosopher’s stone,” the “superior” human being” of a higher superseding flesh, he no longer requiring the female or the maternal. He is now no longer created by mothers, but by God. He is the exemplary prototype for the earthly “superior human being,” the hermaphroditic alchemist and the “second birth.”

The Christian-chemist message is: *suffering* is good. Mortification serves a positive goal; it is the precondition for a better life, a higher love and a superior state of physical being, in the form of patriarchy’s alleged spiritual and heavenly world and afterlife.

In the event that this better life were to occur on Earth, might it be for the machine rather than for living beings, given that, by definition, it is the machine that guarantees access to the new spirit and new soul that alchemical progress on Earth is meant to facilitate.

Women, and especially the way they love, is the devil’s work; they are part of patriarchy’s *spiritual underworld*. Given that men can become entangled in women’s love, it’s good that it will soon no longer be necessary for them to have sex with women to have children – mechanical-alchemical “reproductive” procedures will be used to create both material bodies and spirit-soul ...

How and why could this possibly be? The truth is that feminist researchers have been unable to confirm that these methods lead to any particular improvement. To the contrary, it is fairly clear that this approach damages the lives of all involved (Klein 2003).

On the other hand, a *matriarchal relationship with the Transcendental* is always Earth-spiritual and oriented around the reality of the productive role “Mother Nature” plays in her dimension as the “unity of life,” because such a relationship is and will remain bound to the natural world in its essence as love. In this context, a goddess in the afterlife is as superfluous as the afterlife itself. The “all” – the universe – is both present and ample, and the dead, as our ancestors, are within reach, if we only call out to them. The same is

true of the existent “remnants.” The higher world and the underworld are neither the sites of punishment and “baseness” or of reward and “superiority”; they are instead the point of connection – the axis – of all worlds in their shared identity, their cycles and all of their dimensions. It is the *nexus* upon which all shamans move, as if climbing a ladder...

### **Back to where we started:**

Our objective here has been to present our wide-ranging “alternative view” of both these practical and ideological inversions and their source, with a particular eye to their destructive potential and the way in which they misuse and violate the natural world and everything living at a planetary level. This is the result of our common reflection on patriarchy and our shared critique of technology and technique and of “alchemy,” which we have developed in the context of both an eco-feminist critique of capitalism and current research into matriarchy. Without recognizing these three elements and their close interconnection, we would not have been able to get beyond the current critique of modernity and formulate more than a mere descriptive critique of technology and technique. To do so, we had to recognize these elements and the way in which they interrelate, something that does not currently appear to be occurring anywhere. From our point of view there are reasons for that. One reason is the alleged and perceived *obviousness, even “naturalness,” of patriarchal-alchemical thought und behaviour* that results from its long history. Men, and gradually women, as well, can barely any longer imagine other options or different desires, although the status quo is beginning to destroy the conditions of life and not – as claimed – improving them.

We cannot carry on like this. It is a spiritual error per se to deny awareness of reality, because it has achieved dimensions that transgress everything that preceded it, terrifying and baffling us. “You can expect people to accept the truth about reality” (Ingeborg Bachmann). In fact, people have brought this reality about, so they – and only they – can repudiate it.

We have reached, in fact, overshot, the limits of this patriarchal “civilization of alchemists.” This can be seen in the current collapse of some of its elements and subsystems. In this light, it is a matter of finding ways to make people conscious of this ongoing *destruction by procedure*, so that we can stop it. No longer using alchemical procedures would be the starting point. Simply put, we must stop behaving like patriarchs and alchemists...

Given the generalized demolition of all of society’s significant constituent elements, frameworks, knowledge, meanings and realities to create pulp for “x” arbitrary hybridizations and obliterations – “mortification” – and the way this is treated as progress, it is impossible to anticipate what difficulties we will face in this regard. “Spirit only blows where it wants to” – and that is certainly not in the midst of today’s spiritual confusion, so it is safe to assume that the soul, as our bridge to what remains of the natural world, has in many cases likely been searching far and wide. In this light, it is incumbent upon us to determine where we will find the mental, psychic, spiritual and, not least of all, loving and emotional strength for sort of “emergence from patriarchy” we need (Projektgruppe 2009). One thing is certain, contemporary society will be of no help.

The “natural world” provides the only way to get there!

*Translated by Michael Ryan*

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## About us:

### The BOOMERANG Editorial Group

#### Dr. Ursula Scheiber

Dr. Scheiber grew up in a village in the Alps and studied political science in Innsbruck and Santiago de Compostela, Spain. She wrote her thesis on “Alpinism and Politics,” in 2005. During her doctoral studies at the University of Innsbruck, Dr. Scheiber began a serious study of the matriarchal thesis and the critique of patriarchy, eco-feminism, the perception and aesthetics of nature, and the subsistence paradigm. In 2013, she presented her PhD dissertation: *MOUNTAIN LIVING – The Destruction of the Natural World in the Alps and a Future Oriented Approach to Nature: An Analytical Critique of Patriarchy in*

*the Ötztal Region*. She is professionally active in the areas of project management, communications und public relations, and is a certified mountain hiking guide.

### **Dr. Irene Mariam Tazi-Preve**

Dr. Tazi-Preve was born in Innsbruck and currently resides in Florida and Austria. She completed her PhD studies in political science/women's studies und romance philology at the University of Innsbruck. Thereafter she conducted research and taught in Vienna at the Austrian Academy of Science, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute and the University of Vienna (1993-2013). During the 2011-2012 academic year, she held the Marshall Plan Chair at the University of New Orleans. She had previously gained international experience as a guest researcher at City University of London (2002), the Australian National University in Canberra (2005) and Pampeu Fabra University (UPF) in Barcelona (2010). Since 2011, she has been teaching at the MCI, Innsbruck and the University of New Orleans. In 2004, she authored *Mutterschaft im Patriarchat*. In 2007, she co-authored *Väter im Abseits*. In 2009, she edited *Familienpolitik – nationale und internationale Perspektiven*. She has also published numerous articles and lectures in both Europe and North America. A grant from the Vaughan Foundation allowed her to present the her book *Motherhood in Patriarchy* (2013), the English-language translation of *Mutterschaft im Patriarchat*, at universities, conferences and other forums in the USA and Canada. Her key areas of research are “politics and reproduction” – motherhood, fatherhood, abortion and family and population policy – and women and Islam. She is currently working on a new book addressing the nuclear family from the perspective of the critique of patriarchy.

### **Professor emerita Dr. Claudia von Werlhof**

Dr. von Werlhof was born outside of Berlin in 1943, as the bombs fell. She has been a lifelong opponent of war and violence. The foundation of the “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth” in 2010 was a reaction to the renewed development of military means for mass murder and the destruction of the Earth, in both the East and the West.

Werlhof completed a degree in economics, with a sociology specialization (1968) and received a PhD in sociology (1974), both from the University of Cologne. In 1984, she received her “Habilitation,” a post-PhD degree in political science at the University of Frankfurt. She has conducted extensive empirical research in Central America and Venezuela. This latter experience served to make the importance of the women's question for all scientific disciplines more apparent. It also served to make clear the patriarchal roots of capitalism and its definition in a global context. These two insights opened the way for the formulation of an all-encompassing approach to the development of an alternative civilization.

Werlhof has been the single mother of a son since 1982.

While at the sociology faculty of the University of Bielefeld (1975-1986) Werlhof worked with Dr. Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and Prof. Dr. Maria Mies to develop the “Bielefeld approach” which provided the basis for the “Critical Theory of Patriarchy”

(KPT). It is a new scientifically unified paradigm developed with Dr. Renate Genth at the University of Innsbruck's Institute for Political Science, where Werlhof has been a political science and women's studies professor since 1988. She was the first occupant of a "Chair of Women's Studies" in Austria. Dr. von Werlhof has been an emeritus professor since 2011.

In 2007, Werlhof founded the Research Institute for the Critique of Patriarchy and Alternative Civilizations (FIPAZ), in Innsbruck. She has been an active opponent of neoliberal globalization since 1997, and has been working in the area of research into matriarchy since 2003, addressing the issue of matriarchy and patriarchy at numerous congresses, most of them international in nature. She has also worked on post-capitalist, post-patriarchal, pro-matriarchal alternatives, participating in four World Social Forums (Brazil, India, Mali, Kenya) and organizing the international "Towards a New Civilization" conference at the University of Innsbruck, in 2010.

Dr. von Werlhof has given many guest lectures and public speeches and has published in numerous languages. She is the editor of the Peter Lang International Academic Publishers' "Beiträge zur Dissidenz" (Contributions to Dissidence) series, with twenty-nine volumes to date. Werlhof has been a certified Dorn-Breuss therapist since 2012.

### **MMag. Simone Wörer**

MMag. Wörer was born in Bruneck/South Tyrol, and has lived in Innsbruck since commencing her studies. After matriculating, she made a short side trip into the world of technique and technology, completing a course of study and qualifying as an IT specialist and programmer. Knowing that she had to leave the world of machines behind and pursue her calling to understand the world on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels, she enrolled at the University of Innsbruck with high hopes. It was at the Institute for Political Science that she made the greatest discovery of her life, when she found both a teacher and a mentor in Claudia von Werlhof, who taught her to think critically and supported her in her search for an alternative world and a new approach to scholarship.

The focus of Wörer's research has been both the debate around theories and practices of gifting in the context of an analysis of alternative approaches to politics and economics and the critique of science. While working on her thesis, for which she later received an "advancement award for scholarly work on the theme of equal opportunities for men and women" from the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, she also published several articles on the Critical Theory of Patriarchy. Wörer is currently working on her PhD dissertation on the topic "The Crisis of the Gift," and on a number of articles that will be published in 2015. As well as being an active independent scholar, she works full-time for an event management company. At the point that this journal was founded she was immersed in alternative scholarship, with a particular focus on astrology and herbal medicine.

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