

Luciana Percovich

The Once and Future Mother: in the Beginnings, towards the Future.

While pondering about the fifty years spent within the Women's Movement and referring to my own experience in Italy in the early Seventies, I clearly realized how ignorant we were about our history and the roots of human civilization and how our agenda for a new society contained a strong list of things we didn't want any more, but very few proposals, suggestions, visions – in my words "concrete imagination" – about how to build a different future.

Totally deprived of our ancestresses' knowledge and wisdom and fiercely determined in denouncing patriarchy as the origin of all our disease and malaise, in Milano the first group which began to meet at the end of the Sixties was called Demau (which synthetically means: demystifying patriarchy). More widely, we were a generation without doubts about the toxicity of the nuclear patriarchal family, about the unnatural treatment of our bodies torn between modern medicine and church, about the dramatic consequences of lacking economic independence.

Suddenly, we were digging within ourselves in our wild consciousness rising groups, learning to find words to speak to each other after millennia. Sexuality became the core and the symbol of our gender oppression, and there we stayed and practised.

Then, in the Eighties, from the protect places we had built for us and around us (bookshops, women's houses and documentation centres, self-help services and so on), we began digging in the various fields of (male) knowledge and to discover the infinite censorship, lies, and tricks imposed on our "difference".

The first forerunners in disciplines like anthropology, theology, science, archaeology, ecology started publishing what they were discovering in their fields: how female voices and intelligence had been constantly ignored - even when recorded -, how the male part alone had access to the construction of the symbolic world, "walking on just one leg". Women had to be excluded and raised as much ignorant as necessary to the success of patriarchal *Weltanschauung* (a popular word in those years).

A clear image rose in me, of flowers in a vase, drowned in water, the roots cut. No roots, no Mothers, no past with female presence and wisdom, the European Christian male way of thinking and behaving imposing as the best and universal model for every time and latitude.

Our frozen memories were at last recovering: a big thaw after the Ice Age!

The most practised instruments had been, in those years, Marxism for the political struggles and Psychoanalysis to let the unconscious emerge. Both, I discovered later, banned the most needed dimension to be retrieved, Spirituality (the immaterial dimension which permeates the cosmos, connects everything, and gives sense to everything).

Every step of my own personal path has been forged by “quintessential encounters” with great women/Magic Sisters, and this time I met first Marija Gimbutas and immediately after Heide Goettner Abendroth and Genevieve Vaughan (“quintessential” is borrowed from Mary Daly).

I was ready to sense and understand that to heal their never ended wounds, women need to establish again their interconnection with the cosmos, with the energies which move the stars, need to re-member the interdependence of all. They need to apply their ability in nurturing life and caring to Nature and all her creatures, to develop again their Long Sight and their talents of Seers -- which simply means being able to see beyond the immediate and beyond survival or egotistic advantage, being aware of the long-term consequences of every action that in the present might appear great and turn in tragedy in the long period. The lifelong research of Marija and Heide has brought this Sacred Dimension back, freeing it from the control of male religions, particularly of the monotheistic religions.

Today we are here to thank and celebrate one of these Beloved Sisters, whose work has been constantly inspired by the pursuit of freeing women and their minds from the patriarchal dichotomies, from the artificial, treacherous, and necrophilous system of patriarchal thinking. Through the “discovery” of contemporary matriarchal societies and the precise re-definition of the word Matriarchy itself, Heide has given us the most precious gift, that is the concrete possibility to imagine a future -- for us and for the whole planet -- based on the certainty that another world has existed, exists, and will exist if we work together imagining.

What do I mean with the term Imagine? A creative process through which you create in your mind concrete forms (of organization, of action etc), to be shared with others who actively contribute with their own imagination, and to be applied now, through small or large actions in everyday life, powered by a common intention.

When I was in my teens, a deep sense of solitude and discomfort used to fall on me sometimes, until a sudden conviction dissolved that desperate feeling of being different and alone: there were, sparse around the world, in the far continents, women who were my similar, and one day I will have met them. And it really happened since the Seventies and we have been working together, each of us with her own talent, to a new tapestry of interwoven threads. Heide is undoubtedly one of these Soul Sisters, the one who has pursued and given form to the most complete Vision of what humankind can be and achieve when in-formed by a biophilic common maternal wisdom.

She has hardly worked around the world to re-trace the Creations of the Mothers in the beginnings of our species and to re-connect them with us, awakened women of the present; to re-enact a process necessary to build a future, after some millennia of waste, exploitation, violence and death under the rule of gangs of arrogant males. In the beginnings, the Wisdom of the Mothers succeeded in channelling the energies of a much vulnerable species -- as

humans are in front of the power of animals and natural elements -- towards a fully human species.

She has patiently observed how matriarchal societies practise what she calls a dynamic polarity -- much different from the patriarchal philosophy based on exclusivist binarity, or binary thinking, how they shared for ages a cosmovision based on Regeneration: time is cyclical as the phases of the moon every month in the sky are, and doesn't follow the abstract linearity of the modern conception, how in the egalitarian aggregations Crones had a major role, sharing accumulated knowledge and prevision talents in the care of the community. And how gift-giving economies assured a "transitive" resource (would add Genevieve Vaughan).

They succeeded in inventing social structures able to contain and transform women and men, young and old, into differently talented individuals able to live in reciprocal balance: whenever it happened in human vicissitudes and ages, civilizations flourished.

The forced silence of the Mothers during the last millennia interrupted the process of Creation and brought us through a deep planetary imbalance to a present more and more dis-human and unsustainable for the majority of the peoples and of the species of the world, reasonably without a future. Mothers are emanations of the Creatrix and She, as Nature, contains all the possibilities in an uninterrupted cycle of Regeneration. So that we can still hope and most of all imagine.

In her last book, Heide magisterially affords the big question: how did it happen that such a refined architecture fell, and warlike, aggressive, dominant forms of aggregation prevailed, destroying in a handful of millennia the patient construction of civilization, the only real civilizations known by humankind? And she describes very convincingly how it could happen and how different forms of patriarchy rose in Europe and West Asia.

In so doing, she deconstructs the propaganda aimed theory of eternal patriarchy/eternal war, embraced by most of the male scholars, especially in the academia. She is well conscious that freeing our minds from induced automatic presuppositions re-opens wide room to imagination and action, and she offers, in other works of her, many suggestions and a methodology, a real starting point for discussions and projects.

Nor it is secondary that we live now in a new phase of climatic change - and she illustrates how deeply these recurrent events influenced the dramatic transformations of the past. Now we are less ignorant, have gained in awareness, our roots touch again the Earth. From the Wisdom of the Mothers we have received the most precious information that from catastrophic periods new beginnings arise. Her political legacy shows us the direction for our energies and desires, and the wisdom of still alive Indigenous matriarchal cultures represents for us a treasured nourishment towards a new beginning.

Thanks, Heide!

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