

Why ecosocialism is not enough: ecofeminist reflections on another value form¹

Ariel Salleh²

In the context of contemporary social movement politics, the paper offers an ecofeminist argument that globalisation should be analysed as the effect of a single entangled system, a unity of 'patriarchal-colonial-capitalist' practices. On this basis, the author reflects on the emergence of time dissociation and spatialised abstraction as constitutive of the globally dominant patriarchal episteme; 'a libidinal rift' projected in the dualisms of Masculine vs Feminine, North vs South, Production vs Reproduction, Humanity vs Nature. With reference to feminist thinkers from several traditions, the author speculates on the origins of this exploitive '1/0 imaginary' wherein the distinction between production versus reproduction is pivotal. A case is made that to build movement unity in a time of ecological crisis, ecosocialists should recognise dissociated constructs as appear in Marxist productivism and orient their politics around the reproduction of Life-on-Earth. The 'meta-industrial labours' of household care-giving and indigenous subsistence economies exemplify this holistic, time sensitive attunement to living processes. An 'embodied materialism' would replace the Left focus on use and exchange value with a regenerative eco-centric value form, a 'meta-value'.

Keywords: time/space dissociation, libidinal rift, 1/0 imaginary, meta-industrial labour, embodied materialism, meta-value

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- 2 Ariel Salleh is a recent Distinguished Visiting Scholar in the Centre on Labour, Sustainability, and Global Production, Queen Mary University of London. She is a Founding Member of the Global University for Sustainability, Hong Kong; Visiting Professor in Humanities, Nelson Mandela University; former Associate in Political Economy, University of Sydney and Senior Fellow in PostGrowth Societies, Friedrich Schiller University Jena. Her work focuses on finding a common denominator for the politics of workers, women's, indigenous, and ecological movements. E-mail: arielsalleh7@gmail.com

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In these times, a planetary scale polycrisis threatens to unravel Life-on-Earth; to borrow sociologist Alan Schnaiberg's (1980) famous image, modernity has become 'a treadmill'. All the way down what wise men named The Great Chain of Being, from daily workplace exploitation to colonial dispossession, from hidden domestic reproductivity to intergenerational cost shifting, the system relies on a 'matrix of debt' (Salleh 2009). Who can show a way out? For sure, Karl Marx's (1976) analysis of capitalism is still inspiring innovative political ideas. John Bellamy Foster's (2000) attention to Marx's notion of 'metabolic rift' helps open the labour theory of value to ecological concerns. The thesis extends the understanding of materialism by showing that beneath the linear logic of market accumulation, life-sustaining circular flows between soils, water, plants – and bloodstreams – are severed by resource extraction. The entropy is furthered by an endless output of waste. But the regular capitalist response to this fractured society-nature metabolism is technological innovation, which means both more investment in extractivism, and more thermodynamic drawdowns from living bodies. Meanwhile, international policy initiatives take the form of 'new deals' for clean green power, genetically engineered crops, and desalinated drinking water. Even some activist NGOs will argue that putting a price on nature can help to conserve it. Now the digitalisation of everyday life, a very high-energy move, is locking the global economy into an impenetrable medium of cybernetic control.

Entanglement

Ecosocialists acknowledge the bleating intersectionality of class, race, and sex/gendered 'minorities'; but is attention given to how 'patriarchal-colonial-capitalist' energies function as a single system? The baseline, patriarchal power, goes back at least 6,000 years and remains the most entrenched aspect of everyday global domination, including the destruction of nature. As the Olympian myth told it: Zeus swallows Metis who is pregnant with Athena, then births the child himself from his head. He next completes the matricide by raping her dead body (Cavarero 1990). In the Christian iteration, this would turn into a story of virgin birth at the will of God. A millennium passes, but the oppositional pattern is forever replicated in the trope 'Man over Woman, Mind over Body, Humanity over Nature'. While not necessarily universal, similar formulae are found in other cultures and have served historically to legitimate the capture of women as a reproductive resource. Women's bodies have been routinely traded as 'goods' from man to man. Such practices fix sex/gender othering in place, but mastery is not simply an agreement among brothers. Social mores have a 'materially embodied' aspect beyond ideation; visceral, and maintained by preconscious libidinal energies. Masculinity is not a given, but generated through interaction. The Argentine anthropologist Rita Segato (2013) breaks the silence over such things

with her notion of “a mandate of masculinity” conditioning the layers of political violence observed across her region. Toxic versions of masculine power have a history – and a geography. However, this essay addresses a far more diffuse kind of violence; one embedded in the identitarian logic of the dominant global culture as it constructs ‘this not that, self not other’. The dualism is so pervasive that what dialectical reasoning circulates in modernity remains a minority tradition.

In order to unpack patriarchal conventions and structures, including the academic ‘disciplines’, it is important to draw on evidence from all the embodied senses. In particular, the ecological crisis makes it critical to refuse ‘sociological hesitancy’ in the discussion of things biological. Over the years, this intellectual protectionism has resulted in wide public confusion over when to use the word ‘sex’ and when to say ‘gender’. Even though it is plain that bodies and meanings shape each other in everyday life, this does little to slow the compulsive labelling of persons as ‘masculine vs feminine’. Humans are born into the world as an assortment of shapes, sizes, organs, capacities, and inclinations; some may be sexually reproductive, others not. But the dualist classification of people under the ‘1/0 imaginary’ is imposed on biological bodies worldwide – with the exception of one or two remote cultures accommodating ‘a third sex’. The absolute distinction between binary sex/genders has legitimated patriarchal power for a very long time, and so political conversation about this is important. Here the contemporary ‘trans’ movement is doing its best. Conversely, biology as such, can play a role in politics. The existence of some bodies that are larger and heavier than others, or bodies that are incapacitated by pregnancy, allows some humans to coerce others. Structural power can be based in biology, as testified by the ongoing use of rape in war. Beyond this, sexuality even when gentle can challenge equality. Take the act of fertilisation: for one partner it will mean a very long-term involvement in metabolic processes; a kinaesthetic engagement across many dimensions of reproductive time. The other partner, the one who leaves the seed, misses out on this temporal knowledge of becoming.

Already in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Friedrich Engels (1972) had noticed an association between the childbearing capacity of women and continuing misogynistic practices. Looking a little deeper into this, part of the problem might arise from the fact that the experience of paternity is constituted in a ‘libidinal rift’. It is reliant on visual or spatialised cues in the first instance; later constituted as belief. The acting-out and elaboration of this physical and phenomenological asymmetry has been foundational to the patriarchal sensibility as the abstraction of ‘fatherhood’ becomes reified in institutional form. This accords with the French psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray (1985), who describes the typical patriarchal orientation to the world as ‘specular’. It is reliant on the eye over all other sensory modalities; and indeed for Plato and

Aristotle, sight was claimed to be 'the noble sense'. Another feminist, Canadian philosopher and former midwife, Mary O'Brien (1981), has surmised that the prioritisation of 'space over time' common to many patriarchal cultures likely encapsulates the experience of being a spectator at the birth act. This moment of 'alienative consciousness' involves an awareness of being at once part and/ not part – a primordial confusion. To probe this existential moment is neither to affirm nor deny the popular sociobiological account of sex/gender difference as an expression of hormonal biochemistry, nor differences in brain lateralisation, nor the effect of having an X/Y as distinct from XX genetic base. Explanations of how patriarchal attitudes have developed historically are likely to be multi-causal or overdetermined. There was a time when poststructuralist scholars insisted on the sex/gender formative role of language, although standing alone, this is surely a one-dimensional and circular argument. O'Brien's social constructionist thesis rests on psycho-dynamics. The numbing experience of marginality at the appearance of new life is dissociated, repressed, then projected in a reversal whereby the confusion is received by ego and compensated as control. Her conjecture is that over millennia, the alienative consciousness was sublimated in compensatory 'principles of continuity' – monotheisms, dominions, laws, mathematics and philosophy. By definition, the 'higher faculties' were split-off from sensual experience. In the Abrahamic tradition, Nature including women were distanced as Other, while Self entered into the category of Humanity. In classical Greece, the line of denial and its perennial dualisms found logical form in the philosopher's law of identity over non-identity; value over non-value; 1 over 0.

How absurd it is that a woman should be perceived as 'a mutilated man'. Dissociated reasoning and its regime of the eye – from Democritus' atoms to Leibnitz' monads – is a form of rigidity that favours severance from living flows. As such it is at home with abstraction, reductionism, accumulation, and measurement. The spatialisation of what some guy avoided calling 'the thing in itself', makes visible one unit, one ego, one nation-state, as greater than another. For Milic Capek, a mid-20th century philosopher of science,

[This] perennial tendency to spatialisation of time ... can be traced to the very dawn of Western thought ... [This] static interpretation does not eliminate becoming; it merely relegates it to the subjective, 'phenomenal' realm ... [In] this way it creates an intolerable dualism of two completely heterogeneous realms without any attempt to relate them in some intelligible way (Capek: undated).

The line of argument being made here resonates with Rosewitha Scholz's perception of what she calls "value dissociation" in the historical construction of modern social relations. She turns first to Sigmund Freud's writing on sex/gender in the *Three Essays on Sexuality* and commends his non-essentialist stance:

[O]bservation shows that in human beings, pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found either in a psychological or a biological sense. Every individual on the contrary displays a mixture of the character-traits belonging to his own and to the opposite sex; and he shows a combination of activity and passivity whether or not these last character-traits tally with his biological ones (Freud: quoted in Scholz 2009).

Although Freud's text subsumes women under the pronoun 'he' in the conventional way, his psychoanalytic view is neutral and flexible on both embodied sex differences and socially constructed genders.

Scholz will amend Freud however, by pointing out that socialisation of the masculinist ego demands an enhancement of 'difference'. For a Marxist feminist, this helps explain why 'value' is accorded to the production of 'goods' but not to the reproduction of 'life'. Hence, she adds,

[t]raditional Marxism only problematizes a part of this system of correlations, namely the legal appropriation of surplus value by the bourgeoisie, thus focusing on unequal distribution rather than commodity fetishism. Its critique of capitalism and imaginations of postcapitalist societies are consequently limited to the goal of equal distribution (Scholz 2009: 3).

The implication is that quantity - spacialised extension not quality - determines the form of analysis. Scholz infers that the repeated practice of 'value dissociation' sets sex/gender in place as a fundamental social structure. In the patriarchal-colonial-capitalist imperium this process is fully contemporary. The sensual, emotional, ambivalent, and unquantifiable aspects of experience are disavowed in a system designed for measurement by the 1/0 imaginary. In Scholz' words: 'Such relations [the temporal and non-identical] constitute a facet of capitalist societies that cannot be captured by Marx's conceptual apparatus' (Scholz 2009: 4). The dark underbelly of society is simply passed over as 'nature'. In related vein, Enlightenment philosophers spoke of the household as a site of ethical impoverishment, a primitive phase to be transcended by 'higher order principles' of civil society and the state. Yet now, as women enter the paid labour force, the logic of value dissociation takes on new forms. Meanwhile, for the ordinary workingman under capitalism, the weekly football match displays his measure, and thereby ensures his compliance.

Following the bioenergetic 'primal contradiction' at the heart of patriarchal power relations, it is but a small step to the calculus of tribalism. Now the mantra of 'Man over Woman, Humanity over Nature, Mind over Body - is extended to Spaniard over Moor, White over Black, with the latter racialised category invariably patronised and diminished. Often, the Oriental man is said to have 'feminine' attributes. For thousands of years, colonial raids, even ethnic cleansing, would be sanctioned by what O'Brien named the 'alienative consciousness' and its 'principles of continuity' carried forward in great world religions. At least from Biblical times, the originary othering of women provided a model for othering of peoples near and far, with theft of lands for resources and bodies for labour. In the plunder of Africa and Asia, slaves were taken and sold for life as objects or chattels. Moreover, given the short lifespan of captives in the Atlantic Triangle, the bodies of Black women shipped to the American plantations were used at their owner's pleasure to breed additional labour supplies. This intimate manufacture of blood money would fund new landed estates and mansions back home. The British offered muskets to Black patriarchs as an enticement to send their own people into slavery. In Birmingham, the famous Galton family, eugenicists no less, were said to manufacture 150,000 guns a year, as well as fabricating trinkets to exchange along the Guinea Coast (McQueen 2023). If the colonial invasion and imperial adventures were already thriving in ancient times, modern coloniality was formed with the rise of capital around 500 years ago. The slave trade boosted both the circulation of exotic goods as well as industrial innovation. Returning to Liverpool, slave vessels carried imports of timber and ores. In Cornwall, mines and smelters were geared up for factory manufacture. Soon enough came banking and insurance, with war a sure backup for failing commerce. In the 21st century, coloniality thrives on new spatialisations - Chinese forays into the Pacific; Islamic reach across Africa; and 800 US military bases encircling the globe. The regime of patriarchal-colonial-capitalist relations is indeed a man's world: a dominion secured by map and drone. It is legitimated by secular and religious states alike, not to forget the corporate-capture of humanitarian agencies like the UN.

The courageous Marxist feminist Rosa Luxemburg (1968), and later the German ecofeminist Maria Mies (1986), pioneered the integrated analysis of patriarchal-colonial-capitalism as a single process. In Mies's words: there will be 'no decolonisation without depatriarchalisation':

[V]iolence against women is the 'necessary' method for maintaining the exploitative international and sexual division of labour. Housewifization and colonization are part of the world market system. Both are necessary for capital accumulation. In the modern colonies, this violence takes the form of mass rapes, dowry killings, forced sterilization, sex tourism, use of Third World

women as guinea-pigs for testing drugs, pro-natal and ante-natal technology by transnational concerns ... [T]hese manifestations are neither the result of some inborn sadism in men, nor remnants of feudal backwardness. They are the result of the ongoing process of primitive accumulation of capital, which has always been *dependent on direct violence* ... [Colonised] men play the role of agents for capital; the mediators (Mies 1990: 77) [italics added].

In India, where Mies lived for a number of years, she was impressed by the smooth 'elective affinity' of patriarchal-colonial-capitalist relations.

[P]owerful industrial interests ... invest a lot of money in temples and religion. By burning a widow, a new suttee-shrine can be established, a new cult can be created. Pilgrims flock to the new shrine and bring money. Neo-patriarchy and religious fundamentalism go smoothly together with modernization and capital accumulation (Mies 1990: 78).

Spoken three decades ago, her account is even more apposite in 2024.

When Marx, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1971) commented that individuals under capitalism had come to be ruled by abstractions, whereas earlier they depended upon one another, his observation was partly true but sanitised in a masculinist way. For as revealed by critical thinking feminists such as Irigaray and O'Brien, the tendency to abstraction has far deeper sources than monetary exchange. As noted, abstraction is visceral as much as intellectual, and held in place by a deeply institutionalised libidinal rift. In a comment on the intermediation of patriarchal and capitalist relations, trans-theorist Raewyn Connell (2005) highlights the 'psychological dividend' that men enjoy in a system shaped by hegemonic masculinity. Meanwhile, mainstream Marxists look into many forms of labour – slavery, convict, bonded, contracted – but where is the embodied thermodynamics of childbirth or domestic labour discussed? Socialist feminists such as Mariarosa Dalla Costa (1985) and younger ones like Tithi Bhattacharya (2017) have attempted to make clear to comrades that in the final analysis, it is the unpaid reproductive work of women in the home that ultimately makes capitalism function. Women labour biologically to birth each new generation of workers, and a wife's freely provided domestic management of use values meets her husband's livelihood needs, so that in turn, his workday output can produce the economic surplus value enjoyed by his capitalist master. He is waged of course; she inhabits the shadows.

Whichever way a woman turns, she is encircled by the double bind. Thus a sympathetic Engels intuited that historically, women themselves likely chose to enter marriage and give up property rights, rather than remain prey to random

lust. But Marxist feminists Silvia Federici (2004) and Alessandra Mezzadri (2019, 2022) note that domesticity is scarcely a salve. Each unpacks a history of capitalist economies built on enclosure, bodily abuse, and primitive accumulation. Mezzadri adds that under neoliberalism, '[t]he rise of global commodity chains and production networks, in particular, has produced endless circuits of propagation, redefinition and expansion for informal labour relations' (2019: 38). Mezzadri is especially impatient with the Marxist tendency to 'wage fetishism' and she quotes ILO (2018) statistics showing two-thirds of women in the global South still recorded as informal labour. Capital wields a sophisticated machinery of abstract exchange value, but one ultimately dependent on provisioning by its 'peripheries' scattered down along The Great Chain of Being. Meanwhile, tried and tested local models of ecosufficiency and indigenous self-governance are demeaned, and emptied out by colonial dispossession. Under the regime of patriarchal-colonial-capitalist reductionism, 'reproductivity' means economic yield; and since abstraction rules, the system is described in reified fashion as 'reproducing itself'. Within the Man over Woman, Mind over Body, Humanity over Nature ideology; living nature is merely a passive material resource. As ecofeminist historian Carolyn Merchant (1980) explains: a major new principle of continuity was brought into play with the 17th century scientific revolution and its laws of motion. Now nature was to be understood not as organism, but as machine. Simultaneously, the British Royal Society would reduce the human body to an assemblage of component parts, so foreshadowing the contemporary capitalist drive into computational medicine – molecular genetics, designer babies, and ultimately posthumanist lifestyles. By the 20th century, and despite the exposé of Western instrumentalism by critical Marxists such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1973), it was simply common sense that the Earth should be broken-up to release energy for 'man's industrial progress'.

In a telling reflection that speaks to this historical mis-measure of man, Capek writes:

The main reason why it is so difficult to give up the applicability of mathematical continuity ... is that it would imply the admission that there is an irreducible qualitative element in nature, which resists a complete mathematization or formalization (1991: 54).

Again, to cite feminist philosopher Michelle Boulous Walker, a scholar of Irigaray:

We have developed a language more appropriate for objects than for our intersubjective exchanges of listening and speaking with others (Boulous Walker 2018: 115).

Boulous Walker goes on to explain how a relational logic has been suffocated by the globally dominant culture with its emphasis on visual confirmation of 'objectivity'.

In fact, she adds, reflecting on the patriarchal rejection of multi-sensory being in the world, listening is associated with passivity, receptivity, femininity. Of course the reciprocity of listening requires an understanding of time and pulse, all but forgotten in today's metered world. The dissociated phenomenology of othering as operationalises the masculinist system of expansion and growth, has now pulled the global economy into a new conjuncture. Yanis Varoufakis (2023) from the Progressive International movement, calls it 'techno-feudalism' and explains that following the neoliberal financial crisis that overtook the world in 2008, money that should have re-floated the global economy went to the Big Tech corporate sector. The liberal idea of 'the market' is now replaced by platform rents, wherein every digitised click accrues value to the entrepreneur.

One astute Australian social critic, John Rundle, brings the argument back to selfhood, as everyday people struggle to join back together what has been pulled apart by the 1/0 imaginary.

[The] universalised network of social media and mobile phones is now so deluged with multiple streams of text and image that the [daily] task ... becomes a vast process of synthesis, categorisation and construction, conducted at an ever greater velocity (Rundle 2023: 58).

Quintessential internet prey, today's youth enter an arbitrary culture wherein self-identity is confused with curating and establishing one's brand across social media. Under the totalitarian numeracy of AI, creative freedom is illusory since consciousness is all but reduced to data; and entertainment mutates into surveillance. Performing the dualist logic of 'this v that', the electronic culture inevitably revives old tribal habits, as one narrative hits another in the absence of any time for deliberation. In this acceleration, the material anchors of Right and Left politics can blur. Scholz and colleagues judge this a 'collapse of modernization' and an associated inversion, or better said, a 'randomisation' of rationalism v irrationalism (Hain et al. 2023). As the intricately evolved world of natural beings is re-jigged for sale in the name of biosecurity, humanity is reborn a cyborg. The dependency of every social practice and institution on digital abstraction is the midwife-philosopher's alienative consciousness writ large. Its positivist logic ensures the death or irony, and more concretely the death of humanity-as-nature-in-embodied form. That said: the patriarchal-colonial-capitalist imperium is fragile. It is fully dependent on an unspoken order of time, which is everything in living ecological processes. According to Mary Mellor (2009) an ecofeminist political economist: women's perennial gift to the society of men has been to carry the burden of time.

Another value form

Given the entanglements of biology and society, body and mind, reproduction and production, global politics today cries out for a transdisciplinary analysis of qualitative flows. Too often, popular Left arguments say, the case for postcolonial reparations merely remediate liberal identity politics, doing little to throw off the energetic machine of exchange value. Even the case for degrowth tends to be argued in a spatialised distributional way. Without a strong sense of the subliminal workings of patriarchal-colonial-capitalism, ecosocialist politics will remain unevenly developed, just as environmental politics is right now. But it is not easy to ask the fraternity to re-examine the basis of its democratic solidarity, and women thinkers can risk theoretic oblivion for daring to interrogate the libidinal *status quo*. Nevertheless ecofeminist thinkers insist that social change movements across the board need more cultural reflexivity, if challenges to the global polycrisis are not to be undermined by the displacements and sublimations of alienative consciousness.

Even critical Marxists like Carl Cassegard can sometimes write as if his reader – the radicalised human subject – is gendered-masculine and non-racialised. This despite his welcome to Nancy Fraser's Marxist feminist call for attention to the significance of domestic labour in 'capital's hidden abode' (2014/2018). Indeed, he points out that:

For a value-form analysis to be useful to comprehend the reality of capitalist societies, the question of *how to relate these backstages* to capitalism is clearly central (2021: 41).

The idea of wide green nature as a backstage seems even more difficult to grasp, although ecosocialist scholars articulate various approaches. In the US journal *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, founding editor James O'Connor (1988, 1989) designed the famous 'second contradiction' thesis to account for capitalism's direct impacts on ecology. His successor, Joel Kovel (2005), went further; encouraged by women editors, he actually acknowledged ecofeminism as 'the ground of eco-socialism'. Leading ecosocialists among the *Monthly Review* team acknowledge feminist thinkers, but have not explained how the 'metabolic rift' between industrial cities and wild hinterlands is at once a patriarchal-colonial-capitalist problem. It is not enough for Paul Burkett (2014) and others to rely simply on Marx's androcentric labour theory of value; not to forget the popular economism of Jason Moore (2017), wherein women feature on a list of seven Cheap Things. If the idea of capital continues to serve patriarchal power as a principle of continuity, so equally might eco-socialism as its mirror image. The nonsensical eurocentric divide of Humanity vs Nature will not be resolved without recognising its indispensable historical and psychological functionality in

the control of women. Marxist scholarship is taking colourful steps toward a red-green politics, although the purple strand is too often missing. First generation ecosocialists did not mention women's scholarly contributions to the field. The second generation would cite ecofeminist authors but without engaging with their texts. The third generation would marry women's ideas to their own, with predictable effect. In short, the ecosocialist literature remains deeply marked by epistemic rifts, libidinal at source.

With this in mind, it is heartening to encounter recent ecosocialist scholarship from Kevin Anderson (2010) in the US and Kohei Saito (2017) in Japan. Their respective readings of Marx's late manuscripts converge on the master's interest in avoiding 'metabolic rift' by attending to the biogeochemical conditions of production. They argue that towards the end of his life, Marx's interest turned away from capital's industrially produced surplus, to reappraise the metabolic rationality of subsistence economies in communal models such as the traditional Russian *mir*. This repositioning by Marx offers contemporary ecosocialists an opportunity for strategic alliancing with ecofeminist and other alternative globalisation activists. Already, four decades ago, Hilikka Pietila (1984) in Finland and Vandana Shiva (1989) in India, advocated regenerative economies based on the dialectic of timely reproductive labours. They saw clearly how the system of capitalist exchange value fully depends on an eco-centric, life-affirming labour by mothers, peasants and indigenous nomads, which generates what I name the 'meta-value form' (Salleh: 2010). A fair part of the lack of theoretical movement in ecosocialism has been its tendency to wage fetishism and the essentialisation of labour in a productivist framework. There are at least four kinds of labour to take into account. Productive labour may be instrumental, manipulating objects, human or non-human; or it may be discursive, describing objects, human or non-human. Reproductive labour may be regenerative, facilitating growth, human or non-human; or it may be affective, enhancing potentials, human or non-human (Salleh in Legun et al. 2020). I propose the term 'meta-industrial' to describe the class of workers whose labour exemplifies the latter 'ecological holding' capacity. The term 'meta' implies that these lowly activities in domestic and colonial settings synchronise the very living material flows that make capitalist production possible (Salleh in Albritton et al. 2004).

Beyond the 'fetishism of the wage', reproductive labours in the household or peasant village open their senses to the movement of time in materially embodied processes or in the pulse of ecological flows. This awareness makes possible 'another value form' – broader than everyday 'use value' and deeper than capitalist 'exchange value'. A life affirming 'metabolic value' is relational and grounded in a logic of non-identity. So what are the rift-healing characteristics of this meta-industrial epistemology?

- First, a phenomenology of attunement identified in/with natural processes is key. This integrative holding is multi-sensory, kinaesthetic, and intuitively learned. An eco-centric class analysis will depart from the compensatory abstractions of mastery and treat the society-nature metabolism as a flow of material energies in time; a holistic form of closed-loop production and reproduction, a real circular economy. Such livelihoods are ecosufficient, with direct satisfaction of needs and without costs externalised on to others.
- Meanwhile, the communal scale of this *buen vivir* is intimate and responsive, so avoiding the entropy of *ad hoc* spatially measured technological production with its ever-expanding growth and ramifying supply chains. Note the distinction between space, which is conceptual, and place, which is inhabited. With a small local consumption footprint, resources can be monitored daily with care. As with parental nurture, judgment is learned by trial and error, in long term cradle-to-grave observation.
- This orientation is synergistic, applying multi-criteria decision-making. Such regenerative work recognises the unique rhythms of generations or species and as such it is intrinsically precautionary. Moreover, it gives rise to a uniquely grounded form of self-in-reciprocity with nature, with community. Without hierarchical control – that is without a division of labour by sex/gender or mental over manual skills, meta-industrial responsibility is transparent. Such work is not alienated but empowering and its product freely shared.

Only in local self-governing communities that have escaped the global patriarchal-colonial-capitalist imperium are ecosufficient economies found to survive. If the Man vs Woman, North vs South, Humanity vs Nature mantra still rings out loud and clear, increasingly it is heard as a fictional principle. Meanwhile, around the world, a plurality of peoples is striving to protect nature's intentionality (Kothari et al. 2019). The movement is often led by women and is powerfully counter-hegemonic, embracing an eco-centric rather than anthropocentric logic (James and Broome 2023). In Ecuador, *Accion Ecologia* is an exemplar; and in South Africa the WoMin network leads the paradigm shift. They contest millennial domination by the father-world, and its matrix of thermodynamic debt to workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, mothers, youth and other living forms. Their struggles for nature bring coherence to feminist, decolonial, and socialist politics.

To synthesise patriarchal-colonial-capitalist relations as an entanglement is not to totalise, but invite a deconstructive de-totalisation of multiple intersecting instruments of power. An emancipatory theory and strategy will not be effective without looking into all dimensions of the mega-system, not least the fractured but materially embodied libidinal energies at its psycho-dynamic core. At some point in history, a primal contradiction ensured the suppression of lived time in favour

of a spatialised object world of measurable units like money. Acknowledging that libidinal rift and its ontological blindspot will be critical to forming an eco-centric political alliance. Some ecosocialists may resist having their analysis reframed as a systemic entanglement of patriarchal-colonial-capitalist energies. They may even argue that a proper materialism cannot rely on 'transhistorical' factors outside of capitalism as such. But then again, who is to decide what is outside?

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