

Actually, my desire to write this post today was to some extent triggered by the podcast I listened to from *Emerging Women*, hosted by Chantal Pierrat, where Susie Herrick and Elle Luna discuss their new book, *Your Story is your Power* (you can listen to the podcast at: https://emergingwomen.com/podcast/elle-luna-susie-herrick/?utm_campaign=Emerging.....), along with the film *Mary Magdalene* directed by Garth Davis, which I watched a few days ago. In the film, which is a biblical drama with a strong aesthetic aspect (really beautiful to watch) and a feminist angle, Mary Magdalene, resisted patriarchal control so that she could travel her own path and follow her deeper calling and heart, and as a result she suffered violence and was denounced by her kin. The portrayal of the dynamics in her family and small community, as well as, the stories of the women of Jerusalem; stories of abuse and violence inflicted upon them by the men as a means of control and punishment, did not seem that different or distant to today's practices in diverse contemporary cultural contexts and societies.

There are many theories of the origins of patriarchy and most of them would agree that there are political and economic implications in men's control over women. 'Hartmann (1981) looks at the link between patriarchy and capitalism and argues that patriarchy links all men to each other irrespective of their class. A woman's work benefits both capital and her husband. Hartmann defines patriarchy as a set of relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them, which in turn enable them to dominate women. The material base of patriarchy is men's control over women's labor power' (cited in Abeda Sultana, 2010). An earlier significant explanation for the origin of patriarchy was given by Frederick Engels in 1884 in his well known book, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Engels believed that women's subordination began with the development of private property and claimed that the subordination and domestication of women, as well as, the division of classes developed historically. Abeda Sultana writes that according to Lerner (1989) 'patriarchy was not one event but a process developing over a period of almost 2500 years (from approximately 3100 BC to 600 BC) and a number of factors and forces that were responsible for the establishment of male supremacy as we see it today. Gerda Lerner (1989), begins by emphasizing the importance of women history in women's struggle against patriarchy and for equality. According to her, patriarchy, in fact, preceded the formation of private property and class society' (2010, *Patriarchy & Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis*, retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a1a1/956fe39a514e5128ec48b29fab7f45b1848e.pdf>).

One would imagine that socially and economically, masculine value systems, which are more head-centered, rational, hierarchical, competitive and war orientated increasingly dominated all levels of society, and that the feminine, which could be defined as more heart-centred, intuitive, life-giving and nurturing, was gradually and over time suppressed, devalued, silenced and persecuted. This gradual implementation of a patriarchal system, allowed for the generation of material, technological and scientific accomplishments and growth, but its inherent arrogance, competitiveness, need for dominance and separation, and disregard of the feminine and what it stands for, has ultimately brought the planet to its current state. Animals and plant species are becoming extinct at increasingly terrifying levels and resources are plundered without consideration for future generations, while weapons of massive destruction are developed. Poverty and unnecessary suffering is growing even though we have the knowledge and the resources to alleviate this suffering if a new way of doing things prevailed. So maybe it does not serve us anymore to look at our broader social and planetary problems from a disconnected, short sighted, narcissist and self-serving view

of life. Perhaps we need to cultivate a way of being that strives for connection, honors intuitive knowing and differences, and fosters a consciousness that allows us to experience ourselves as part of a much bigger whole. Perhaps we should invite the feminine principles of birthing, of nurturing, of inclusivity, of connection and protection, of sharing, caring and compassion to the table. Perhaps the time is ripe for us to shake ourselves out of our numbness to the pain of the earth and to the fact that wildlife is disappearing dramatically, to the suffering of people in warzones and people forcefully dislocated from their communities and native lands, to the deprivation of freedoms and human rights and to the oppression of the Other, whether that is based on sex and gender, colour, nationality, religion, age, interests or any difference that we may perceive as threatening.