

8 Pillars of Gynarchy

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These eight pillars are the foundation and framework of any Gynarchic community. You may note that the metaphors I use to help describe these pillars exist in nature, as Gynarchy is a natural and earth based system. We realize that humanity is an integral part of nature, not its master, nor its foe.

With each scaffolding in place we can build a million variations of society on a small scale and link them up through this common ideology, each new iteration adding knowledge and resources to the rest. Every new success will open the eyes of others to see what is possible. No aggressive or bloody revolution will be needed, just growth of interconnected and related systems that work better than patriarchy. The lifecycle of the male dominated paradigm is coming to an inevitable end.

1. CONSENT

“There is no legitimate authority except that to which you consent with open eyes and an open heart.” (from *150 Years of Gynarchy*)

Authority without consent is tyranny, and we’ve been subjected to it most of our lives in the form of patriarchal religions and governments. It stomps out our intrinsic morality, deadens our internal compass. It’s imposing, not welcoming. Without consent to authority, free will is a meaningless platitude.

In patriarchal religion we are told that we are inherently bad, inherently sinful. We must change to fit an unreachable ideal, a state of purity. Our desires will lead us away from conforming to the plan of an abstract “god.” In Gynarchy, authenticity is paramount. If you cannot know yourself, and know what you want, how can you even begin to have empathy for others, or understand the nature of our relationships and our very existence? We must be aware of our authentic desire (not fleeting impulses, but our true north, our heart), for it is the life force moving through us. Bypassing consent makes us soulless and mindless. It dumbs society down as a whole. It breeds anxiety and depression. How can you genuinely commit to something, how can you be devoted to someone, if you don’t really want it? Devotion is not real without enthusiastic consent.

Consent to authority without manipulation or coercion is a great gift of trust. It must be given with our full awareness of both the self and the authority (open eyes) and with sweetness and surrender (an open heart). Forced authority looks pathetic and twisted in comparison. Imposed power is the disease of a ruling class unconvinced of its own credibility. Authority without consent breeds contempt and resentment, or at best limp heartless compliance. It does not connect the ruling and the ruled in a dance of symbiosis, it puts a wall between them.

Consent can be given in broad strokes as with blanket consent, or given with conditions. And it can be withdrawn any time if the trust required is broken. In this way it holds authority accountable to that over which it rules. It’s a built in mechanism to topple tyranny before it gets a foothold.

2. BODILY AUTONOMY

Along with consent comes bodily autonomy. It is patriarchy’s peculiar fixation to monitor, manage and control women’s bodies. Our bodies are the one possession we have that comes with us throughout our lives. Most humans are heavily identified with our bodies. We shape them, change them, decorate them. We put them through tests of stress and strain and find out just how resilient they can be. We should get to know our bodies intimately and learn what they need and care for these amazing flesh machines better than any other object. Everything else is replaceable.

The human body is miraculous. It contains a human brain which is a device more sophisticated than any computer and has the ability to give us access to knowledge quite literally beyond

reason. We each get only one. To think that one is owed use of someone else's body is the worst kind of arrogance. Just like consent, if someone wants to give you use of their body because they desire it or feel it is right, then one should take it as a gift unlike any other.

Autonomy in the most basic sense means self-governance, or the ability to make decisions for oneself. However, to philosopher Immanuel Kant, autonomy is the capacity of the individual to act in accordance with an objective morality and not just according to his own whims. Autonomy is the ability to control ourselves, but also to have self-control in a way that allows us to act in the way we know is right. We put our bodies to tasks that we feel will be best for us, and for our society as a whole. Autonomy need not always be self-centered. Freedom is also to be free from impulsive internal forces that might lead us away from our core values. In terms of bodily autonomy we deserve to be free of addiction and compulsions that block us from being the best and most morally attuned versions of ourselves.

Try to remember that if you find you drink too much, or smoke too much weed and get hazy, or if you load up on sugary sweets. Think of the man who engages in cheating, or breaks the bonds of a consensual contract between he and his partner, and then says that he just could not help himself. Doing those things just because you felt compelled to in the moment is not true bodily autonomy, because you're being ruled over by your fleeting impulses.

The Gynarchist knows the value of clearly communicated agreement taken seriously. Pledges and contracts are our tools to help maintain autonomy, to articulate our needs and core desires and reinforce them when we forget. It also prevents our boundaries and limits from being trampled. And with continual communication these agreements can be modified and amended as we move forward and grow.

3. COLLABORATION

Competition may be fun when taken lightly, as sport. But the one quality of the human race that has enabled us to survive for as long as we have is collaboration. We need one another. The sooner we acknowledge it and begin taking other's needs as seriously as our own, working toward mutually beneficial goals, the more readily we can advance as a species.

"If we Homo sapiens want to continue our fascinating, yet so far relatively short, evolutionary success story, we have to evolve wise societies characterized by empathy, solidarity and collaboration. Wise cultures are regenerative and protect bio-cultural diversity as a source of wealth and resilience (Wahl, 2016)." [source:

<https://uplift.love/evolution-shows-collaboration-not-competition-helped-us-evolve/>]

In the backwards world of patriarchal capitalism, “Fuck you I’ve got mine,” is the common refrain. Competition is seen as a prime motivator for progress. Isolation, as rugged individuals or singular nuclear family units, is the norm. And it is killing us.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the view was that competition was born of scarcity. Maybe in desperate situations that’s true. But the oversimplification of “survival of the fittest,” meant that we are all just looking out for our own in a world of lack. We are now beginning to realize that the reverse is true. This planet has an abundance of resources which, if managed well, could provide for all of us. Scarcity, it turns out, must be artificially manufactured in order to perpetuate the drive for competition. Patriarchy warps the narrative to suit a more masculine disposition.

It has been observed by those who study human social systems and biology that women are generally more collaborative as a group than men. We tend to take the concerns of those around us into consideration and work toward win-win situations and a harmony of needs and desires. There’s a reason they call compulsive competition a dick measuring contest. Men took the childish game of comparisons and made it their m.o. But their hormones are at least partially to blame.

“On average, women release Oxytocin more than men. Men release more Testosterone than women and it competes with Oxytocin, so Oxytocin can be stifled. Oxytocin shuts down under high stress and extreme competition. One stimulates competition while the other stimulates collaboration and co-operation. As Ken Nowack of Envisia Learning observes:

Zak’s findings support the observation that women tend to release more oxytocin than men, thus they directly contribute more empathy, cooperation and trust in interpersonal interactions. These hormonal differences might help explain the observed tendency for women to deploy more participative leadership behaviors relative to their male counterparts and naturally use transformational practices that emphasize teamwork, cooperation, networking and interpersonal support.” (source:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/women-more-collaborative-men-competitive-david-shindler>)

Given that men stripped us of autonomy, women fell into the competitive patriarchal trap in one obvious respect. We became dependent, required to attach ourselves to men in order to survive, and so we had to compete for men’s approval. That worked out great for men, of course, in terms of squeezing whatever uses they wanted out of us and keeping us under control. But as the yoke of dependence is being lifted from our shoulders, more and more women are realizing how humiliating that really was. And we’re done. We’re demeaned and exhausted from going against our collaborative nature and being competitive pick-me-ass bitches (PMABs in colloquial terms). That era is coming to an end. We are now painfully conscious of our knee jerk back biting responses to one another instilled in us by our mothers or grandmothers and we talk through it. We are once

again returning to the comfort of the bosom of sisterhood. As the feminine consciousness evolves, hurting another woman to gain the attention of a man becomes downright pathetic.

A Feminine style of relationships and leadership is beginning to be recognized as effective, even within classically patriarchal systems like business. We are in a transitional period wherein organizations are rethinking old biases.

“We found showing sensitivity and concern for others—stereotypically feminine traits—made someone less likely to be seen as a leader. However, it’s those same characteristics that make leaders effective. Thus, because of this unconscious bias against communal traits, organizations may unintentionally select the wrong people for leadership roles, choosing individuals who are loud and confident but lack the ability to support their followers’ development and success.” University at Buffalo School of Management

All of the Pillars of Gynarchy bring humans closer together for our collective fulfillment. We acknowledge our interconnectedness. Competition has a tendency to separate us. And so in Gynarchy a bias in favor of collaboration is only natural.

4. ABUNDANCE

Are you aware of how retail stores will damage unsold merchandise, painting or cutting brand new clothes, shoes, and other products just so they cannot be salvaged by scavengers and dumpster divers? You can be arrested for digging through retail garbage in some places, but there are no penalties for destroying twenty pairs of perfectly good sneakers and sending them to the landfill. The bean counters have figured out that such “losses” are better for the company's bottom line than making charitable donations.

Do you know how much food is thrown out by our expansive supermarkets, or by farmers when stores keep bidding under cost for their produce for so long that it rots in heaps? Have you ever been to a garbage dump, and seen the mounds of waste? Not just bags of common household trash but furniture, electronics, appliances? Do you know about the shops overseas where low wage workers risk their health to extract precious metals from our refuse? We throw away more value in a year than those workers could consume in their lifetimes.

We produce so much more than we need in every aspect of life, and yet some people go without basic necessities. This is just the result of inefficient and haphazard resource management which has plagued us since the industrial revolution and before. And the driving forces behind this waste are competition and greed.

Patriarchal capitalism invented artificial scarcity. We have more than enough, but a handful of people are going to lock it all up behind paywalls. The CEO of the company Nestlè even wants to take control of water. These corporations simply toss out the excess if it can't grow their bank accounts. Excess that required raw materials and labor to produce. All of that, wasted.

How is it not a crime that one person has more money than they could spend in 100 lifetimes, while whole families struggle to pay for housing and utilities? Billionaires could wipe out world hunger and homelessness in a day, but they won't. Because they somehow see themselves as deserving of and entitled to the abundance created by their workers' labor, upon whose backs they built their fortunes, more than the workers themselves. The only difference between you and a billionaire is that they don't care how many people they exploit. The myth that they work harder than you is absolute bunk. They simply convince others to do the work for them as cheaply as possible. And to admire that kind of sociopathy as "success" is to buy into the brainwashing and lose connection to your humanity. As human beings go, billionaires are miserable failures. They are nothing more than hoarders.

Nature provides us with nonstop sun, wind and hydroelectric sources of power. Agriculture, when managed properly, is a freely available self-perpetuating resource to feed us all. Plants make the seeds to keep growing more plants. The soil regenerates its own nutrients through incorporating decaying matter. This planet is rich! What happens when humans abandon an area? Nature envelopes that area in rich lush growth teeming with life!

We are the only animals on earth who have to pay rent or mortgages, though nature provides us the raw materials to build shelter. Raw materials that also build the tens of thousands of houses that sit unused and empty in this country. More waste.

"We should do away with the absolutely specious notion that everybody has to earn a living. It is a fact today that one in ten thousand of us can make a technological breakthrough capable of supporting all the rest." Buckminster Fuller

We could all live in abundance. We have the knowledge and technology now to do everything efficiently and sustainably, with very little waste, and provide for everyone. We just choose not to. Because not doing so keeps the market competitive. We are taught from birth that it's our duty to add value to the lives and financial portfolios of corporate shareholders, and yet they are under no obligation to return the favor.

Our communities must be acutely aware of this and do all we can to reverse it. We must not fear lack nor live yoked to the anxiety that drives hoarding. We must use human intellect and innovation in concert with nature to maximize sustainability, not profit. **Profit motive is the enemy of abundance.** When humans come together and pool our resources and begin to create new resources through our collective efforts, no one goes hungry. This is how we were able to survive and evolve in the first place. The more we give to and share with one another, the less survival stress we are all subjected to, and the more we have in terms of the human capacity to create and cultivate abundance.

And before the words leave your lips, this is not "Marxism." This is Gynarchy. Don't make the mistake of giving a man credit for what women have always known. Think of a woman's breasts, so naturally filling with all the sustenance needed to feed the being that she grew within her. Women are naturally regenerative and sustainable. Our very bodies are abundance personified.

5. NETWORKS

You know about the internet, but have you heard of the "Wood Wide Web?" A tree looks like an independent majestic thing that stands alone. But in reality, under our feet, trees are in regular

communication with other trees across vast landscapes in a web of mycorrhiza - “fungus root.” In a symbiotic relationship, fungus feed trees nutrients and in turn receive nourishment from the trees’ photosynthesis. Through fungal threads, trees also send and receive resources such as sugars and carbon from one another, and send messages about potential dangers such as insect invasions. In fact, trees can even send chemical messages to animals, like hungry birds, to help them when they are overrun with damaging bugs. In forests, nodes called “Mother Trees” standing tall and reaching toward the sun send carbon to younger trees that are under the shade of the canopy overhead, unable to catch direct sunlight. Dying trees can disperse their carbon to their living cousins across the network.

As a young woman in college studying philosophy and social sciences, I became enamored with the idea of the rhizome as an alternative to hierarchy. Rhizomes are common among grasses, and send root systems underground capable of popping up and propagating whole new plants in new locations. It’s a way of organizing life horizontally, with multiple connected points, and not in a top heavy pyramid. It seems so natural, and so in tune with the design of the universe.

Lines should vibrate and connect, not block and divide. Remember, everything in Gynarchy is about interconnectedness.

Borders may prevent the crossing of humans from one place to another, but they don’t prevent the crossing of any other life. Not birds, nor bees, not the seeds and roots of plants, nor even the communication of individual free standing trees. Borders may at one time have been lines drawn on paper by map makers demarcating the more or less natural divisions in the landscape. But the way they are believed in as a real and heavily policed now, they’ve become unnecessary and artificial walls, perpetuated, like most patriarchal concepts, out of anxiety. Borders speak of fear. They say “Gotta protect what’s mine.”

Nationalism is a mental illness. When one suffers from it, it has the effect of making other humans seem alien and threatening. It causes the afflicted to judge others on arbitrary criteria like location or language. It creates delusions of superiority. It is a contagion that slips into the psyche through positive feelings of pride and then covertly infects its host with paranoia, hostility and aggression. It is the cause of both discrimination within borders (against immigrants - the other) and war between geographic neighbors.

Networks morph and expand, always finding new trajectories. It is an outward movement which seeks not to conquer but to share and include. If you’ve ever watched a murmuration of starlings, you can see the beauty and synchrony of a network in motion. Each individual bird pays attention to the movements of the seven birds closest to her, and together they orchestrate breathtaking shapes that swoop and float across the sky. Networks are not rigid and divisive. Like those of swallows, human networks are shifting, adapting, changing and ever alive.

Gynarchy is a network, always seeking new connections and inviting new nodes.

6. THE HIVE

Networks are made up of nodes and within Gynarchy I call these nodes Hives. I use the imagery of the beehive because bees have survived 30 million years, 5 times longer than homo sapiens, and the shape of their societies have not changed much over time. In hives the members all strive to support the hive as the whole, and their motivation at the center of it all is the Queen. The Queen

sets up camp and the hive forms around her. Move the Queen and the hive follows. She is the central symbolic and practical focus that holds the hive together. Their *raison d'être*.

Bees are also known as not only a sustainable species, but an ULTRA sustainable species. That means they provide more value to the environment than they take from it. In gathering their nectar, they pollinate plants, assuring more than enough plantlife to sustain their needs and that of other animals. And with their excess food production they provide us with their delicious honey. Bees are a symbol of sweet abundance.

And though the comparison has been made to systems like monarchy, bees don't reflect a hierarchy. It is said that no bee starves unless the whole hive starves. Each and every member of the hive has an important role, and each and every member of the hive is cared for just as they all care for the Queen.

Their communication methods are also quite efficient. When delivering messages via their vibrations and dances they do it in such a way that it effectively tags only those bees who need the information, the others then know the message does not pertain to them and their work is undisturbed by it. Bees also create elaborate "phone trees" of pheromones with messages passed from hive to hive to lead lost bees back home to their Queen. After 30 million years, they've got it all down to a fine art. Isn't it telling then, that only recently, at the peak of the reign of patriarchy when monoculture and pesticides and lawns grown for status encroach upon the previous more organic farming methods, our human presence threatens their survival. It threatens our survival as well.

At any rate the hive model with its central female leader (or small group of female leaders, depending upon the size) is the structure of the individual communities within the Gynarchic network. These are individual sects within the wider religion. Each woman who wishes to lead makes herself known and gathers others around her who will live to serve her unifying vision. She provides the purpose and the focus around which others can contribute their efforts in their particular roles. And the Queen's job is to provide authority - that is to be the author of the story and the designer of the shape of her community, and to connect and communicate with other Queens to share knowledge and resources.

The Queen does not become Queen for status, nor for attention, nor for wealth, although one or more of those things may come with the job. The Queen becomes Queen because she thinks about the big picture and knows what a thriving hive will look like - one that is beneficial for all members. She becomes Queen out of the heartfelt desire to lead. Others trust in her judgment enough to surround her, support her, and serve her goals. Each hive will be different, attuned to the desires and personality of the Queen, and some may even have a pair or a small group of Queens who share a common vision. Women within the hive may use their first hive as a training ground and later branch off and build their own in the future. This prevents hives from becoming too large and unmanageable. And since other hives are automatically seen as collaborators and nodes in the same network rather than competitors, battles between hives would be almost unthinkable.

7. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There's a Canadian relationship coach named Chantal Heide who teaches that a "no fight relationship" is the goal for long term intimate partners. This sometimes befuddles those who come into her live streams online. How can any two people live together and never fight? And she says that if you lay the groundwork in the beginning of the relationship, know who you are getting involved

well with before getting serious, and confirm that they meet your predetermined criteria for what you want in the relationship, then there may be some disagreements, but they will never devolve into yelling and fights. Shouting matches and threatening behavior should never be tolerated. If a man doesn't meet your criteria over a three month vetting period, then move on. Having too many points of incompatibility between you is just trouble waiting to happen.

This works well for dating and romantic relationships, and particularly for FLR where the woman's desires are centered. But we can't make sure everyone we encounter in life meets our requirements for harmonious communication, and depending upon the situation, dismissing them and moving on is not always an option.

"You can't win fights, but you can win allies," says Kasia Urbaniak, a women's power coach. In her classes she teaches about the importance of locating and approving of someone with whom you are in a disagreement. This means confirming with them that what you hear them saying is accurate, and empathizing with them before presenting a conflicting point. Only then can you influence them and help them see your point of view. Everyone likes to know that they've been heard, understood and that the opposing party has empathy for them. Connection, not division, is the way of Gynarchy.

Beyond one to one relationships, how would the Gynarchist leader avoid things like war? I like to point out that Gynarchists are actively anti-war, not passive. One way to avoid war is to avoid conquering or encroaching upon the free will of others. The Gynarchist has no use for colonization. Gynarchy draws people in through attraction and invitation, it doesn't go around imposing itself. There should be no revolt from within our communities since we hold fast to the pillars of consent and bodily autonomy. And because gynarchy is predicated on networks and not borders, and the coexistence of different groups with differing ideologies is not resisted, but accepted as normal, there is less reason for violence to erupt. We value authenticity. We're not butting heads with other groups. We don't make any attempt to forcibly convert them to our way of life. It's a very live and let live approach.

That eliminates at least 50% of the reason for going to war with another group. We simply don't go around starting fights, stealing land and property, or hurting others. In fact we should be available to help others refine their own communities, advise and solve problems through education if asked. Knowledge should be freely shared.

But what if someone tries to encroach upon our communities? What if some other group wants to start trouble with us? First, we call upon our network of support to exert pressure from the outside and to collaborate on solutions. Gather witnesses to the conflict. When it's clear that our small communities are not vulnerable and alone, it reduces the appeal of bullying.

Secondly, we find out what the need or want of the other group is. There is usually some underlying motive. We locate and approve of it, just like in interpersonal conflict. We figure out why they are on the attack, and how we can resolve or mitigate any aggravating factors. People will attack either what they don't understand or what they feel threatened by. Both of those motivations are reasonably easy to remedy through connection and discussion.

So what's left are the tiny percentage of groups and people who will attack just because they are intrinsically aggressive and wish to conquer someone. First, you must infiltrate the group and find out if all members are in agreement with senseless escalation. Chances are you'll discover some

dissent, some who feel their voices are not being heard, and the dissenters are the ones you want to get close to. Find potential allies within.

And at last, if all else fails be prepared to put up a strong defense and gather round all of those willing to help. In the process you will have been getting to know your opponents inside and out, trying to understand what makes them tick. Find their vulnerabilities and fight smart, not hard. Every group has its weaknesses and those with the conqueror mentality are not that sophisticated to begin with. Their competitiveness and need for ego validation will likely be an achilles heel.

In the midst of battle minimize harm so as not to breed contempt and resentment among those more neutral. Maintain a reputation for compassion. Turn people. Make being a prisoner of our side more pleasant than being a soldier for the opposition. Deprogram any zealots. With our immense capacity for empathy, Gynarchists should become adept at intense psychological warfare as a means of self defense. Use manipulation over physical violence. Mind fuck techniques can be far more effective than brute force.

It is important for women to know some form of violent self-defense to use in a pinch. But if ever we have the need to turn to serious physical warfare we should employ the Feminine art of Witchcraft. Like the ancient Witch Goddess Circe, we can make ourselves familiar with the catalogues of pharmacopeia - plant medicine. Turn the tables with intoxicants, sedatives, mood enhancers, laxatives, hypnotics, hormone disruptors, and psychedelics all delivered discreetly through touch or food, or helpfully carried on the elements, in the air and water. Any combination of those are effective at neutralizing aggression. Remember to fight like a woman.

Always keep in mind, however, that the ultimate goal is never to have to fight at all. The ideal is to create allies, not enemies, even in times of conflict. And doing so can be as simple as never encroaching upon others free will and letting people be. Draw close to us those who are capable of harmonious relations and share knowledge and good will, be selective in our communities making sure that all members understand and are attuned to our ideology, and those who adamantly reject our ways can be left to their own devices. In conflict, use empathy as a superpower, figure out the underlying motivations and needs, and treat the source not just the symptoms of aggression.

8. THE FEMININE AS DIVINE

“To the Queen of Heaven, The Goddess of the Universe, the One who walked in terrible Chaos and brought life by the Law of Love; And out of Chaos brought us harmony, and from Chaos Thou has led us by the hand.” Babylon Eighteenth to Seventeenth Century, BCE. (source: *When God Was a Woman* by Merlin Stone)

In the beginning woman was god. Every one of us, every living human being, cannot enter this earthly realm but through the body of a female. A woman is literally your creator. Before formula and baby bottles women's breasts kept us alive until we were able to eat solid food. They magically concoct the perfect sustenance for the growing baby, adjusting to their individual dietary needs.

But beyond the physical manifestation, if we look to the religions predating Abraham and his jealous god (jealous of whom, I wonder?), on the Indian subcontinent, the Feminine, as a more abstract concept called Shakti, is known as the energy that creates all things from the silent

nothingness. It was Her desire to know Herself that created binaries and then ever unfolding multiplicity.

When the Feminine is acknowledged as divine - as the source - women are protected, cherished and sacred. They are central to life's meaning. They are powerful, their will to create unhampered. Harmony and beauty exists for all when the force of creation is not blocked or locked away. We cultivate abundance.

When the Feminine is maligned both women and men suffer. Power turns perverse and anxious. Fear, competition and comparison are used to control. Fingers are pointed at anyone who lives fearlessly and doesn't conform as the source of all woes. There is nothing left to do but conquer and hoard in an attempt to relieve the anxiety, to serve the need to feel that man's existence is justified and important. He becomes disconnected from his source, lost in struggle. The patriarchal man may be terrified of hell, though he himself has created it for himself and for those around him.

In pagan times religion was a connection to nature, religion was philosophy, religion was culture, religion was therapy before therapy existed. Religious adherents passed down knowledge about the origins and nature of our existence, about how we may know ourselves. Religion has been the glue of societies and helped those in chaos find purpose and meaning in life. And so it is with the tool of religion that we build this movement. But it must be a religion that proclaims what we knew before that knowledge became shamed and repressed - that the Feminine is divine.