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From the Guest Editor: Caring Democracy

Riane Eisler

Center for Partnership Studies

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FROM THE GUEST EDITOR: CARING DEMOCRACY

Riane Eisler, JD, PhD (hon)

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The *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* was launched in the fall of 2014, and as Editor in Chief, I am happy to report that since our launch we have had more than 10,000 downloads of articles by readers all over the world. I also want to take this opportunity to welcome our new Managing Editor, Heidi Bruce, and to thank her for being part of the wonderful team producing this journal, which, among others, includes Liz Fine Weinfurter, Marty Lewis-Hunstiger, Teddie Potter, Peg Lonquist, and Virajita Singh of the University of Minnesota.

I am honored to be the Guest Editor for our first themed issue on Caring Democracy, a subject that is especially timely at this historic juncture, and to have so many distinguished contributors to it. Here is a brief outline of its contents.

COVER ART

Finestra del Oro (Window of Gold) is an acrylic painting on canvas by Barbara Schaefer. Like many of her artistic creations, the work evokes the luminous possibility of a more hopeful future when our human yearnings for beauty and caring connection can be more fully realized.

ARTICLES

To set the stage for the content of this issue, I wrote the lead article, “Building a Caring Democracy: Four Cornerstones.” The article examines why free elections alone are not sufficient to build humane, inclusive, and caring societies that promote the wellbeing and full development of all people, regardless of sex, race, class, and other differences. It then proposes a long-term strategy to lay foundations for such a caring democracy, focused on four core areas: family and childhood, gender, economics, and narratives and language.

The next article, “Getting Back on Track to Being Human” by University of Notre Dame professor of psychology Darcia Narvaez, looks at the first of the four cornerstones, family and childhood. It probes the question of why some humans routinely behave in selfish and even violent ways, preferring dominator culture to partnership culture; examines childhood and parenting from the perspective of what the author calls “missing developmental supports”; and describes educational interventions that can help teachers support and sustain the wellbeing of children as they learn.

The article that follows, by George Mason University professor of sociology and anthropology Lester Kurtz, focuses on the second cornerstone: gender. He argues that we need to re-emphasize the concept of human rights for women and children as a path to constructing a caring democracy, using conceptual tools from Mahatma Gandhi (the connections between human rights and duties), Johan Galtung (different kind of violence: direct, structural, and cultural), and Riane Eisler (partnership rather than dominator societies). Moreover, declarations of women’s rights as human rights are important, but will be actualized only with the mobilization of nonviolent movements that transform dominator societies and facilitate the emergence of new social fabrics.

Next, in “Roadmap to a Caring Economics: Beyond Capitalism and Socialism,” I address the third cornerstone of caring democracy: a new economics. It proposes that to design an economic system that promotes not only human survival but full human development, we have to move beyond both capitalism and socialism, as neither recognizes the economic value of caring for people starting in childhood, and caring for nature. It analyzes obstacles to a new economy of partnerism and describes avenues and resources to advance its creation.

Then, two members of the University of Alabama Department of Anthropology, Douglas Fry (Chair of the department) and Geneviève Souillac, address the fourth cornerstone: narratives and language. Their article, “The Original Partnership Societies: Evolved Propensities for Equality, Prosociality, and Peace,” draws from extensive research (including their own) on foraging cultures - the kinds of cultures that prevailed over millions of years before recorded history. This narrative about human nature shows that, far from being chronically violent, male-dominated, and authoritarian, for most of our species’ history societies were generally egalitarian and peaceful, with both childhood and gender relations as well as economics orienting to partnership rather than domination.

The next two articles provide additional research directly relevant to creating an equitable and sustainable caring economy and democracy.

In “Core Support for the New Economy,” economist Neva Goodwin, Co-Director of the Global Development and Environmental Institute at Tufts University, details how a guaranteed annual income - a subject that is gaining increased attention as more and more jobs are lost to automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence - can be used to reward care work in families.

In “The Possibility of a Pluralist Commonwealth: Evolutionary Reconstruction Toward a Caring and Just Political Economy,” Gar Alperovitz, professor of political economy at the University of Maryland, details how cooperatives, public banking institutions, and other decentralized structures that support democratically held ownership can be, and have already been, used to move toward a caring economy and democracy.

COMMUNITY VOICES

In “Case Study: Care as a Political Winner,” Meredith Loomis Quinlan of the Michigan People’s Campaign describes how caring economics was successfully used by her team during the U.S. 2016 campaign to elect a state candidate who ran on a platform of helping with the costs of child care, long-term care for elders, and paid family leave, showing the receptivity to a caring economics by people who do not refer to themselves as liberals.

In a personal account, in “The Path Forward,” Sharon Sund relates how she is applying cultural transformation to partnership in her own life, work, and community.

MEDIA REVIEW

“Three Books on a New Economics: A German Perspective” by German journalist Ulrike Brandhorst, is a review of three books on alternative economics that envision a more caring and equitable society.

CONCLUSION

I again want to thank the contributors to this issue on caring democracy, which is so timely at this challenging time in history. I look forward to comments and other responses from readers and invite you to apply and adapt its contents in

your own disciplines and communities. Please let us hear when and how you do this.

Riane Eisler, JD, PhD (hon) is President of the [Center for Partnership Studies \(CPS\)](#) and Editor in Chief of the [Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies](#). She consults on the partnership model introduced by her research, teaches in the [CPS online Leadership Training Program](#), and keynotes conferences worldwide. She has been a leader in the global human rights movement and has received many honors, including honorary PhDs and the Distinguished Peace Leadership award. She is the author of numerous books and hundreds of articles drawing from her research. For more information, see www.rianeeisler.com and www.centerforpartnership.org.

Correspondence about this article should be addressed to Riane Eisler at center@partnershipway.org