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Kaarina Kailo  
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**TITLE: Honour Related Violence and/or Shameful Femicides within Patriarchal Sex/Gender Systems**

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**BRIEF BIOGRAPHY:**

Kaarina Kailo, Ph.D. has taught languages, literature, psychology and women's studies in Canadian and Finnish universities (eg. University of Toronto, 1982-1990; University of Quebec in 1990-91; Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia Univ., Canada 1991-1999; Oulu University, Chair of Women's Studies and Multiculturalism 1999-2004). She is now independent researcher associated with Oulu University. Kailo has published over 60 academic, popular and grassroots articles in international, national and local journals or anthologies and has edited 3 journals. She has co-edited 4 books (Helander & Kailo, 1998, 1999, No Beginning—No End. The Sami Speak Out; Gender Equality in the interface between the Local and the Global, Kailo, Sunnari & Vuori 2004; Sweating with the Finns. Finnish-Canadian sauna stories (with Warkentin & Halonen, 2005) and Finnish Ecopsychology (with Irma Heiskanen, 2005). Forthcoming is in 2005 The Gift Gaze. Wo/men and Bears. Transgressing Back into Nature as Culture. Kailo has served as the European Chair of the International Order of the Helen Prize for Women from 1999 to 2003 and has been coordinator of the Finnish FemAttac since 2003. Since 2000 she has also been a member of the World Wise Women (WWW.WOMEN) and of Feminists for a Gift Economy.

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**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this text is to make more visible the asymmetrical gender relations, which underlie shameful femicides, often referred to as "honour" related violence. It is important to investigate and consider the multidimensional way in which honour and shame as mechanisms of socialization and psychological control ground hidden and more explicit gender contracts within the continuum of patriarchal sex/gender systems. It is most important for students, teachers, educators and other professionals to recognize and act to prevent the perpetuation of this and related manifestations of gendered violence rooted in abusive property-relations, which serve male institutional power and hegemony. This text introduces key terms and concepts to help identify this phenomenon. By discussing the shameful femicide ("honour murder") of a Kurdish immigrant, Fatima Sahindal, I provide a case study to illustrate how "strong", open and more subtle patriarchal systems supported by the ideology of a Master Imaginary collude to render invisible the continuing institutionalized violence against women. honour/shame systems?

The article describes honour related violence without specifying any one historical society. The point of the article is to help better identify the often concealed or naturalized, "taken for granted" asymmetries of patriarchal gender-related value systems, practices and modes of behaviour. I have outlined male and female dimensions of "honour" and "shame" in their most extreme forms and manifestations: however, the double morality and asymmetrical gender relations described are based on research into many different societies where honour-based behaviour codes and social scripts are in vigour, even when the most extreme practices such as the shameful femicides are on the decline. The chart of gender-appropriate behaviour serves as a heuristic model that might be applied to any one identifiable society, although there are cultures and countries with more extreme honour-based systems than is the case in the "civilized" Western welfare democracies. It is important to recognize the subtle legacies and traces of the honour/shame systems in the most advanced and egalitarian countries whose male members often themselves excuse, trivialize and belittle shameful femicides by appealing to such unconscious or cynical excuses as the "clash of cultures" and the need to take into account different "cultural customs." The aim of the text is to enable also professionals working with immigrants to better identify dysfunctional and anti-democratic "cultural practices" that have less to do with custom than with male supremacy, abuse masked as "social contracts" and patriarchal strategies for controlling women and blocking their

rights to bodily, cultural and spiritual self-determination. It is important for members also of “host societies” to recognize the affinities that honour-based aggression and violence have with gender issues and relations in their own allegedly “civilized” patriarchal legacies.

## **GLOSSARY: EOLSS 39.A7**

**Ecosocial Sustainability:** Ecologically, socially, culturally and economically sustainable actions, policies, attitudes and values that enhance and maintain gender- and ecosensitive, ethnosensitive and responsible relations between all members of society and the broader ecological cosmos.

**Gender:** Sex has to do with physical sex differences while gender refers to the values a particular culture ascribes to these differences, and to the differences that are culturally constructed.

**Gendered Violence against Women:** Violence in feminist discussions is defined as any action or structure that diminishes another human being and as a brutal means through which people seek control over the other. Violence is thus discussed as bound with power. It is seen both as a reflection of unequal power relationships in society and as serving to maintain those unequal relationships.

**Honour-based Patriarchy:** Honour-based patriarchy is related to the Master Imaginary to the extent that the former is as a structure and institution rooted in a sharply dualistic and hierarchical outlook and the politics of “power over.” Its special features within patriarchal systems have to do with the centrality of the concepts of male honour and female shame, expressing and epitomizing the asymmetrical power relations/property relations between the sexes. The Master Imaginary condenses the psycho-social unconscious, implicit and explicit worldview and values while honour-based patriarchy represents its concrete manifestations and structures.

**The Master Imaginary:** The concept condenses the artificial and arbitrary dichotomies that have allowed white heterosexual elite men to dominate nature, women, native populations and people of colour, as well as men defying the heterosexist/heteronormative and often homosocial gender contracts. This imaginary has at its core a dualistic, dichotomous ordering of reality and of the sex/gender system.

**Patriarchy:** Patriarchy refers to a social system where men are seen and valued as heads of both families and institutions and women are defined in relation to men, whereas men are defined as subjects in their own right. The relations between the sexes tend to be asymmetrical within patriarchy, with men holding the positions that have more prestige and power than those associated with women or “the feminine.”

**Patriarchal sex/gender systems:** The sex/gender system in Hirdman’s (1988) interpretation is regarded as a socially constructed order regulating and structuring men’s and women’s thoughts and actions to gain societal acceptance. Hirdman claims that the gender system is based on two principles, segregation and hierarchy, which structure individuals’ ideas and actions, both horizontally and vertically. The first principle says that what men do, women do not, and vice versa. The second principle, the hierarchical dimension of the gender system, determines the power distributed between the two genders.

**Shameful Femicides:** the murder of women and girls under honour-based patriarchy and its system of values stressing male honour and female shame. “Honour murders” is the term used to describe the murder of women by their male relatives or husbands to punish them for shaming the family or

the husband. The very term may legitimate the view that it is honourable to take a person's life using the excuse of cultural customs. I call these murders "shameful femicides" because from a human/woman rights perspective, one cannot accept ANY excuses for the murder of a society's members, particularly the most vulnerable ones (women, girls, children).

**Social contract theory.** According to Carole Pateman, the original contract said to initiate civil society is both social and sexual. It creates what Pateman calls the law of male sex-right, which men exercise by sexually subjugating women, that is, by becoming they sexual masters: The sexual contract...establishes and democratizes "male sex-right" as the right of individual men to command individual women in labour and especially in sex. It institutes a series of male/female master/subject dyads.

## I. Introduction EOLSS 39 A 7

The purpose of this text is to make more visible the asymmetrical gender relations, which underlie shameful femicides, often is referred to as "honour" related violence. (The text was originally circulated as part of AwareII. Increasing Teacher Trainees' Awareness of Sexualized and Gendered Violence—International Training Course on Sexualized and Gendered Violence. 2004. Coordinated by Oulu University, Women's Studies: <http://wwwedu.oulu.fi/aware>). It is important to investigate and consider in a multidimensional way how honour and shame as mechanisms of socialization and psychological control ground hidden and more explicit gender contracts within the continuum of patriarchal sex/gender systems. It is most important for students, teachers, educators and other professionals to recognize and act to prevent the perpetuation of this and related manifestations of gendered violence rooted in property relations. This text introduces key terms and concepts to help identify this phenomenon. By discussing the shameful femicide ("honour murder") of a Kurdish immigrant, Fatima Sahindal, I provide a case study to illustrate how "strong", open and more subtle patriarchal systems with their Master Imaginary collude to render invisible the continuing institutionalised violence against women.

A Resource Book for Working Against Honour Related Violence (hereafter abbreviated as RBHRV) based on the project "Honour Related Violence in Europe/Mapping of Occurrence, Support and Preventive Measures" (Funded by the European Commission, DG Social Affairs and Employment, Kvinnoforum, Stockholm, 2003) approaches honour related violence (abbreviated as HRV) through interviews with organisations that work to prevent and support those suffering from HRV. They describe and discuss the situation of HRV as well as the preventive and supportive work (see the link <http://www.kvinnoforum.se/English/index.html> and Mannerheim's League for Child Welfare in Finland). I have included some terms and suggestions from this project, but emphasise more strongly the affinities regarding violence that I perceive in the zone of contestation between "host" and immigrant communities: here the assumption of significant cultural differences to do with male power and control of women's sexuality and socio-psychological self-determination are in my experience overdrawn, even counterproductive as regards the struggle against gendered violence.

The DG Social Affairs and Employment project addresses HRV in the context of the European work to combat poverty and social exclusion. My own goal is to provoke teachers, students and professionals of any field to consider the threat that HRV poses not only to its immediate victims--mostly girls and women, but also those boys and men who do not embrace the patriarchal values. I

also evoke the threat that honour-based systems stressing private property rights pose to humanity at large, to future generations and even the ecosystem. My claim is that HRV exists and manifests itself on a broad gendered, ethno cultural and historic continuum from the most old-style traditional Muslim and southern patriarchal cultures to the most "modern" and "egalitarian" welfare countries of the Western world, including the allegedly equality-oriented Nordic countries. My starting point is that recognizing the shared rather than differential features of cultures condoning HRV to a varying degree can best ensure that minority cultures are not stigmatised and labelled, or perceived as radically "other" in comparison with the host countries. On the other hand, I do not wish to deny, belittle or downplay the serious and concrete threats that the most extremely honour or property-oriented patriarchies present to women, homosexual men and women, and to "outsiders" to such cultures.

In this module, I will consider the background, manifestations and pervasive impact of HRV, identifying at the same time the following terms: the Master Imaginary, Patriarchy and Honour/Shame traditions, Shameful Femicides (the case of Fatima Sahindal) and very briefly, alternative notions of Honour (Ecosocially sustainable worldviews).

## **2. The Master Imaginary and Patriarchal Sex/Gender Systems**

Theories and views differ as to what might well be the first and grounding principles of violence and oppression and of violent, asymmetrical social relations: gender, age, the heterosexual imaginary, patriarchy, class or different combinations thereof, plus other variables. Many post-modern feminist theories as well as men's studies analyses have foregrounded the discursive, historically and culturally, locally and individually contingent formations of violence and "patriarchy." The theories incorporating more of the overlapping and intertwining intersectional elements into the analysis of patriarchal hierarchies and structures, for example, have led to a more nuanced and complete understanding of social exclusion; however, the fact still remains that the systems of domination across time and space have been mostly male-defined, even if many women have embraced their values uncritically, themselves colluding with various oppressive practices. I refer to the worldview reflected in Western legacies of hierarchical, dualistic ideologies (running from Plato through the Church fathers to enlightenment philosophies, Max Weber and many modern market economists) as the Master Imaginary. The "imaginary" itself is a Lacanian term borrowed by many theorists from social science to literature and educational science and generally refers to the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. In such a view the imaginary is that image or representation of reality, which masks the historical and material conditions of life. By "imaginary" I refer to the dominant representational and discursive orders of thought and ideological practice that the hegemonic groups of particular times and locations have managed to consolidate as somehow more "natural" than other ones. The Master Imaginary, for all of its historic and geographic specificities has in my definition at its core the protection of a hegemonic group's property rights and monopolies, including spiritual, religious, psychological and epistemic capital and resources, as well as their regulation and control. This imaginary has at its core an arbitrarily hierarchical ordering of reality and of the sex/gender system. It is also essentially based on an understanding of power as power over, rather than as solidarity politics or the notion of the interconnectedness and inherent value and rights of all citizens or members of a broad community (including the ecosystem). The Master Imaginary is also characterized by a dualistic worldview and the espousal of monoculture forms of rationality based on One truth and monolithic conceptions of right and wrong, "true" and "false." It is often also characterized by an either/or way of seeing life involving a fragmented, compartmentalized relatedness to the world, to mind and matter, the soul and the earth. At worst, it is intolerant of other ways of perceiving and evaluating life, denigrating other forms of rationality (For more on the master identity,

read Val Plumwood, 1993; Kailo, 2000, 2004). I stress the link between private property and the notion of a “master”, for in my opinion it is the economic motivation for this ideology and vision that grounds it, even though the desire to control the “other” (women, Native, animal for example) also has sexual and socio-political dimensions. Many women and feminists also embrace the values of the Master Imaginary, not hesitating to treat less privileged men and women, as well as nature as the “other.” When it comes to defining the roots of property-related shameful violence, I find it more useful to evoke the Master Imaginary than a static, ahistoric patriarchy, since women, too, can be part of the problem by identifying with the master identity and its hierarchies of self and other. The forms of patriarchy have changed with women now being heads of families or even political fields of life; however, the Master Imaginary as the subtle, partially preconscious, fluid and changing order of asymmetrical class, gender and sexual relations adopts new ways of expressing its hierarchies. Val Plumwood’s theories (Plumwood, 1993) are useful for tracing the genealogies of the master identity across Western history of thought, although I do not myself limit the phenomenon to Western colonial philosophies; the Master Imaginary expresses itself in any and all historic and spatial enclaves where it meets appropriate conditions. Like Plumwood, I find it important to expose the roots of violence in hierarchical material AND symbolic structures in both Western cultures and those labelled as the other. Furthermore, it is important to theorize the multidimensional links between physical, emotional, economic, cultural, religious and psychological violence that constitute the oppressive systems. Plumwood suggests that in order to “shake the conceptual foundations of these systems of domination we must unmask more fully the identity of the master hidden behind the neutral guise of the human and of the ideals of rationality” (Plumwood, 1993: 68). Plumwood’s view that dominant Western culture has systematically inferiorised, backgrounded and denied dependency on the whole sphere of reproduction and subsistence is echoed also by Genevieve Vaughan (1997) and by the writings of many Indigenous women (eg. LaDuke, 1997). This denial of dependency and appropriation of women’s gifts (Kailo, 2003; 2004 on the Gift Imaginary) is a major factor in the perpetuation of the non-sustainable modes of using nature and abusing women as resources, which loom as such a threat to the future of all societies (Plumwood, 1993: 21). Catherine MacKinnon states that “women/men is a distinction not just of difference, but of power and powerlessness...Power/powerlessness is the sex difference” (Allen, 1999: 12). Another analyst of power and gender relation, Pateman has also provided a critique of the classical social contract theory, which she criticizes. According to her analysis, the original contract said to initiate civil society establishes and democratises the “male sex-right,” the right of individual men to command individual women – in labour and especially in sex. It institutes a series of male/female master/subject dyads (Allen, 1999: 14). In the sections that follow, I will show the links between the Master Imaginary and patriarchy, as well as the honour related violence, which scholars such as Baker (1999) see as a particular subcategory of patriarchy. I will refer to both patriarchy and the Master Imaginary according to the context defining patriarchy as father-led and male-dominated social order that has the values of the Master Imaginary at its heart. Often not only men but also women who are not conscious of a hidden gender contract or Imaginary end up accepting and embracing these values as “natural”, thus lending it support.

### **3. Patriarchal Sex/Gender systems. “Honour” Related Violence**

Patriarchal sex/gender systems vary according to time and place. My purpose is not to present any one historical patriarchal society or one practicing the honor related violence as part of its sex/gender system. Rather, through a classification of the most extreme and typical aspects/values, I hope to increase sensitivity and help students and scholars better recognize the explicit and open, as well as the more subtle and hidden aspects of “social contracts” that impact on women and the “other” in violent ways. The chart, which follows, does not claim to represent in pure form any one patriarchal society; its usefulness is meant to reside in the way in which it allows students and researchers to test and measure the contents in relation to particular historic and geographic

manifestations of patriarchal sex/gender systems. Although the chart may seem overdrawn and caricatured, it was designed on the basis of scientific research on southern, mostly Italian communities with strong honour/shame systems and sanctions (Giovannini, 1981; see also the other references in the list of sources for societies with these elements). Elements of this extreme system can no doubt be found in the most egalitarian patriarchies. I will first define “honor related violence” as defined by the RBHRV, followed by my critical comments on these “shameful femicides or murders”, and then followed by the chart on male and female-specific traditions of honor and shame.

### 3. 1. Defining Shameful Femicides/"Honour murders"

According to RBHRV, “Honour related violence is common in many Mediterranean countries, the Middle East and parts of Central Asia, and also in other parts of the world such as Ecuador, Brazil, Egypt, China and Uganda. In the last years the problem has been identified as extensive in many parts of Europe as well (2003: 7). The United Nations also estimates that as many as 5000 women and girls worldwide were killed in 1999 by family members (Women’s international Network News 1999). *The RBHRV* defines HRV as follows:

Honour related violence (HRV), with honour killing as its most extreme manifestation, is a form of violence against girls and women. It can also affect boys and men, within strong patriarchal family structures. Honour related violence is one of the darkest aspects of strong patriarchal traditions and of failed processes of intercultural meetings. Both host and immigrant communities can gain greatly from this knowledge. (2003: 7)

The RBHRV argues that HRV must be separated from other forms of gender violence:

In this project honour related violence has been defined as the “violence occurring when families with ‘honour-norms’ violate girls’, women’s and boys rights”. (UN Convention on Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and laws in the country of immigration.) Honour related violence can be distinguished from other kinds of violence when the violence is “excused “ by the perpetrators’ culture. Not by all its members, but “understood” by most in the light of their collectively based culture. (2003: 7)

According to the RBHRV,

In order to make sure that those who suffer from HRV get the right support, and in order to prevent HRV from occurring, it must be seen as vital that HRV is distinguished from other kinds of violence against women. One helpful perspective is when it comes to ‘normal’ [sic] violence against women; the act of the perpetrator is usually condemned by the perpetrators and the victim’s family. In the case of honor related violence the act of the perpetrator is usually encouraged by his/her family and in some cases is the same as the very victim’s family” (2003: 9)

It is worth questioning whether it is useful to refer to “normal violence” even in a context that condemns violence in all of its forms. Most international studies on gendered violence reveal, after all, that the most “normal” (or rather, “typical”) form of violence against women is perpetrated by close male partners or husbands, with much woman -blaming accompanying the situation of violence against women. Echoing my own findings and theories, Baker (1999) suggests that the killing of women by close family members throughout the world can indeed be explained with reference to underlying honour/shame systems as a subcategory of patriarchal ideology. However, she shows that a similar perspective can be applied to many such killings in English-speaking countries

such as the United States. Baker (1999) uses the traditional theoretical concept of male behavioural control as the first of three comparative areas that help demonstrate why honour should be part of any conceptualisation of patriarchy. After focusing on the control of female behaviour, she extends the conceptualisation to include an understanding of male feelings of shame when that control is lost. She concludes her comparison with a focus on the level of participation by the larger community in enhancing and controlling this shame (Baker, 1999: 2). Baker further argues that in the English-speaking West, including the United States, the locus of honour has shifted from the traditional extended family (the case in the Middle East) to the individual man. The first two dimensions of traditional family honour/control of female behaviour and attendant shame when that control is lost--operate with many men relative to their female intimates in Western nations. However, in the transition, the third dimension of community involvement has been substantially decreased if not lost, which in the context of new individual honour systems paradoxically may make the home an even more dangerous setting for women (Baker, 1999: 2). Baker makes a significant point, for it is widely recognized in studies on gendered violence that the home is a most dangerous place for women around the world (Lundgren & Westerstrand now challenge the earlier view that the home is THE most dangerous place; they argue that in Sweden research shows streets being equally dangerous to women, 2003). However, I would challenge Baker as to overemphasizing the lost role of the surrounding community. It is well recognised, after all, that even societies ranked as highly progressive and equal, eg. the Nordic countries have high tolerance for violence against women both on the institutional level and in terms of the attitudes of neighbours, relatives, even friends. I also challenge her view of the honour/shame system as a mere subcategory of patriarchy. It seems to be to a much greater extent an underlying dimension, which is part and parcel even of the Nordic sex/gender systems, even though this is no longer as visible and recognized. The criminalization of rape inside marriage is fairly recent, and it is only today that the Finnish government has begun to punish violence against women when the woman has not herself filed a complaint. What does distinguish the "traditional" honour killings and Nordic sexual violence, however, is the role of the family as primary executioner. Instead of the fathers, brothers or uncles it is mostly the husbands or boyfriends that murder the "disobedient" women. As for the role of shame as a psychological trigger for violence, for men shame is defined either as a signal of danger to one's sense of self or as emotional anguish from the exposure of one's failings. This is not an abstract, timeless "male" self but one rooted in hegemonic masculinity/patriarchy where specific power relations between the sexes make of a woman's independence a threat to certain men's sense of identity. For Baker, it is an integral part of Western society but it is less familiar because it has become hidden in the smaller family or individual units of society (1999: 8). The operationalization of traditional honour and shame has thus been changed in many ways in Western societies. Without denying the importance of distinguishing between sex/gender system with stronger or weaker Master imaginaries or honour/shame subsystems, I stress the similarities between male-legitimated and defined sex/gender contracts in order to keep gendered violence more visible, also in the Nordic countries. I replace the notion of a "honour related violence" with SHAMEFUL FEMICIDE to foreground that we are not dealing with cultural customs but quite specifically, with male violence against women. The term (should the very term be useful) serves to send a much stronger message reminding us that shame should be attached to misogyny and murderous customs instead of it being projected on innocent victims of control and sexual mastery. We must send a strong social signal in the name of women's human rights that the concept of honour can have no place in the context of violent relations and actions.

Before elaborating on how Sahindal's shameful murder led to complicity between Kurdish and Swedish men in denying male violence, I wish to introduce a chart on male/female honour and shame as a helping tool for identifying stronger and weaker or more subtle elements of patriarchies or of the Master Imaginary. In a nutshell, in strongly patriarchal societies women as citizens (epitomized by the female body) are made to embody and represent the unity and purity of the society and to shoulder its

projections of the ideal and of the feared and demonised aspects (virginity, whoredom, purity, corruption) (Giovannini, 1981). Although men and boys, too, undergo strict control of behaviour to identify with the honour-system, their sexual and social freedoms are not nearly as controlled and restricted. They also have a much greater scope for economic freedoms and ownership although their marriages, too, can be fixed and forced. Overall, however, both genders are at risk for violence in honour-based cultures, and risk having their self-determination and human rights subjected to the elite's power over - and social contract/politics.

### **Female Honour**

- a) Moral strength
- b) Obedience, submission and loyalty to the prevailing sex/gender system and patrimony
- c) Loyalty to the abstract institution of family, nation and family honour more important than one's own life or health on the concrete level
- d) Acceptance of one's submission to the male members of the society and the notion of their superiority and leadership (father, husband, brothers)
- e) Submission to the principle that a family's honour is dependent on the social and sexual behaviour of the women
- f) Internalization of the ideal of women's virginity or motherhood within the dualistic conception of womanhood (the whore/Madonna dualism)
- g) Heroic willingness to die rather than allow oneself to be 'defiled'
- h) Irreproachable reputation (adopting and accepting the role of the virgin or the mother vs. the whore or the wicked step-mother or single woman)
- i) Physical impenetrability and intactness
- j) Role as docile, hard-working, tireless and obedient servant at the household (good at and willing to perform domestic duties and care labour, nurturing and emotional labour)
- k) Food provision for family
- l) The ability to create and protect life (particularly sons)
- m) Reproduction of heterosexual (even xenophobic) patriarchy and transmission of its values
- n) Chaste and modest behaviour at all times
- o) Heterosexuality as the normal, unchallenged form of sexual orientation
- p) Softness, emotionality

### **Female Shame**

- a) Embodying the uncontrollable forces undermining family unity
- b) Failure to live up to the cultural sex/gender system (deviance from social and sexual mores)
- c) Rumours or proven failure to live according to the gender-specific social norms (eg. being labelled or "deserving" the label of whore, engaging in inappropriate activities such as swimming or studying, wearing inappropriate clothing, going out with friends etc.)
- d) Illicit sexual relations
- e) Withdrawal of material necessities such as food and affection
- f) Loss of reputation as virgin, good mother or spouse (regardless of actual truth or one's actions)
- g) Loss of virginity particularly by a non-kinsman through own fault or through rape (including the shame attendant on brides who fail to bleed on the wedding night as proof of virginity)
- h) Shaming of family men through disloyalty to patriarchy and acceptance of other cultural norms

- i) Shaming of family men (eg. being more successful or educated than the men in the family)
- j) Defying the overriding authority which the nuclear and extended family wields over individual members
- k) Pre-marital or extra-marital sexual intercourse (based on direct or indirect evidence)
- l) Improper social or sexual behaviour of one's female relatives
- m) Being seen in the company of unrelated men without chaperon
- n) Socializing without permission with men not approved by family men
- o) Malevolent extra-human powers wreaking havoc, causing accidents for the family (having "the evil eye")
- p) Independence of male support and/or control and supervision
- q) Homosexuality
- r) Causing male infidelity
- s) Inability to give birth (particularly to sons)

### **Male honour**

- a) Strength, power, success, competitiveness, and "cunning"
- b) Stoicism, rationality, control of oneself, self-discipline, unemotionality (armored masculinity)
- c) Protection, defence and perpetuation of the patriarchal sex/gender system and male honour with its heteronormative and hierarchical norms, property rights and entitlements
- d) Defence and upkeep of the hierarchical male order of the culture through physical, psychological, material and juridical means (rewards and punishments)
- e) Ability to provide for the family
- f) Ability to protect family patrimony from predatory outsiders
- g) Ability to protect one's wife, sisters and other family females from defilement
- h) Status safeguarded by the honourable sexual comportment of one's female kin (the real man and family virgins metonymically linked)
- i) Protection, control and regulation of the chastity of the women and of the honour of other members in one's family and group
- j) Loyalty to patrimony and its naturalized heteronormative, homosocial and heterosexual sex/gender system
- k) Blood revenge for crimes of honour or shaming of members of the family or oneself
- l) Other punishment of those transgressing against the honour of the family

### **Male shame**

- a) Cowardice, emotionality, "softness" or emotionality
- b) Inability or failure to protect family patrimony or honour
- c) Inability or failure to prevent sexual penetration of female relatives or spouse
- d) Inability or failure to punish, revenge the assault on one's honour
- e) Being labelled "cuckold" by the unacceptable behaviour of female relatives (becoming linked with the family "whore")
- f) Loss of control and power over the behaviour of female relatives (wife, sisters in particular)
- g) Losing one's face through the female relatives' independent, transgressive behaviour and values
- h) Failure to prevent loss or transformation of one's cultural mores

- i) Loss of one's material, spiritual and religious property and resources (including the women)
- j) Social exclusion (Main source, Giovannini, 1981)

As the honour/shame system implicitly reveals, both men and women are subjected to collective shaming which is beyond their personal control; both men and women can lose their reputation for deeds on which they have no control, and which they have had no stake in provoking or bringing about. Having to monitor the sexual behaviour of one's sister, and having to take radical action (even a murder) in response to her possible "defilement" is no doubt a position of moral conflict, particularly for men living in a new country and host cultures whose moral mores would strongly condemn such behaviour (even when it might be based on a double morality, one not applied to the host country). A man whose refutation is lost owing to female relatives independent actions is in the same subject position as the woman who loses her status, value and even health by being raped or assaulted through no fault of her own. Still, women by virtue of their more dependent position are more at risk for threats and physical harm, including murder by close relatives. Men defying the heterosexual code and the dominant gender contract are, however, also at risk for the harshest forms of punishment for their deviance. More than the leading men, however, this system blames women and those who are the most vulnerable members of the community in terms of access to power and resources ("gypsies", "deviant" individuals, outsiders). They are often made to carry the projections of the group and receive collective blame as scapegoats. Older women without power or protection, for instance, are vulnerable to unfounded accusations of demonic powers, the evil eye or their modern variations. These can be seen as projections of the main groups own guilt and fear of retaliation. This phenomenon appears to have been as common in agrarian Finland as in Italy and I suspect it has been widespread not only in modern Africa but also on the other continents. Blame tends to be heaped on those groups that have the least power or clout to resist or prevent it.

#### **4. The case of Fatima Sahindal. Men's complicity in concealing gendered violence.**

Alerting educators and others to the features of HRV as a particular issue in immigrant communities can be counterproductive in terms of the global/local campaigns, aimed against gendered violence as well as racism. The research on the interpretation of Fatima Sahindal's femicide, its roots and difference from Swedish misogyny is a useful case in point. As Eva Lundgren and Jenny Westerstrand point out in their article "Fadime, patriarkatet och våldet" (2002), the debate around Sahindal's murder reflected two forms of patriarchal logic (one appropriate for the host, the other for the home country), both of which had the impact of rendering the gendered violence invisible. Sahindal's father, accused of murdering her own daughter, tried to fall back on both "logics" as an effort to avoid responsibility for the killing, and to escape imprisonment. Although he failed to convince the Swedish courts, he revealed the patriarchal mechanisms of avoiding responsibility both in terms of the Swedish and the Kurdish patriarchal contexts. The murder of Sahindal happened in the context of the woman's attempt to liberate herself from her cultural patriarchal mores. She refused to marry a Turkish man chosen for her, went out instead with a Swedish boyfriend and began studying at the University. The relatives of Sahindal apparently pressured her father to punish the daughter for these transgressions, which also threatened the reputation of the other sisters. Sahindal, who was famous in Sweden for her courageous appearances on TV, making public the threats she had received from her male relatives, was stalked and ultimately murdered by her father while visiting a sister.

This "shameful femicide" led to a public outrage and provoked debates across Nordic countries as to the role of "cultural customs" in excusing gendered violence. As the attention was focussed on gendered violence within immigrant communities, the honour-related male violence of Nordic men received little press. The question that needs to be researched in more depth is whether, indeed, questionable and even perverse notions of male honour motivate femicides even in the so-called

advanced welfare states, like Sweden and Finland (where gender equality is now being dismantled). Indeed, what role does the notion of male honour as mastery over women play in the Finnish culture of violence? It is worth considering the statistics about the number of femicides in Jordan per year, one of the alleged hotbeds of "honour murders" and Finland, where the male-specific dimension of "family violence" is covered over with gender-neutral language, as if gender did not matter. The striking statistical fact is that as many honour murders, about 30, happen in Finland as in Jordan, although the concept of honour is not attached to them. Might there not be affinities, however, considering that so many women are murdered by their boyfriends or husbands at the very moment when they seek to leave the relationship, something that the men experience as a loss of face, as shame, as loss of power, control, even "property." In Finland, some men have killed their children rather than give them up for the mother's custody and for the care of their mother's new family or partner. Likewise, men with similar mentality have been known to destroy their lands rather than leave them for the public to enjoy in case of land areas being threatened with EU regulations (Nature-sites or the like). In both cases we are dealing with "pre-emptive violence" (cf. the Finnish concepts of "aavistushakkuut", "pre-emptive felling of trees and "ennaltaehkäisevät naismurhat" "pre-emptive femicides"—terms I use to underline the property interests at the root of femicides or ecocidal acts. Both reflect the notion that a man will not give up objects he considers his monopoly, even if it means their ultimate destruction).

Although the Swedes portrayed the Kurdish honour murders as a reflection of a barbaric immigrant patriarchy the opposite of the Swedish equality based welfare state, in fact many Swedish men colluded with the very principles of the Master Imaginary or gender contracts in which honour/shame systems are the hard core of female oppression. In fact, the assumption that Nordic countries with their long histories of equality are not guilty of similar honour/shame practices can be counterproductive; they may well conceal even more deeply the many ways in which there are strong similarities rather than differences between the stronger and less obvious systems of gendered violence. According to the first logic reflected in Sahindal's case, as Lundgren and Westerstrand note, Sahindal was blamed for transgressing against her cultural codes by having a Swedish boyfriend and behaving like a "whore" (2002: 169). Her father sought understanding by evoking the Kurdish honour tradition against which the "whore-like" Sahindal had transgressed. He received much understanding from Swedish men who were in many cases willing to look upon the cultural tradition as an extenuating circumstance (Elden, 1998). She was blamed on the basis of the logic of the classic madonna/whore paradigm and her failure to accept and respect the cultural double standard (whereby a self-determining woman is by definition a "whore"). In the second logic her father had tried to invoke a Swedish discourse on male violence, the first strategy not helping him get off the hook. He now changed his story completely and evoked the excuses of an "insane man" with a drinking problem ("Can you shoot your own child if you are not sick?"). By appealing to social exclusion and illness, the father now tried to get the sympathies of the Swedish legal system, which indeed, has looked upon such factors as extenuating factors. Although Mr. Sahindal did end up with a prison sentence, his clumsy efforts to excuse his own violence made more visible the strategies of both Kurdish and Swedish men for keeping gendered violence invisible or excusable. I underline that much more research has to be done into exposing the more hidden aspects of HRV in transformed or less strong patriarchies.

To sum up, in the case of Fatima Sahindal's murder, we are dealing with male violence against women, which should not be excused or covered over with any mitigating factors. I think it is important to stress that this is not the same as a culture clash between societies stressing individuality or communal values. In either type of society women tend to be treated differently, and violence, not culture, is the issue (cf. Kauhanen, 2002 who evokes the cultural differences – discourse, failing to take into account the gendered aspects of "culture"). As time moves on, those upholding a particular hegemony and class structure find new ways of applying the patriarchal logic, new expressions of violence against women, which they also often manage to conceal in new ways (Lundgren & Westerstrand 2003: 176). The myth of achieved "womanpeace" and equality in

the North poses a real threat for it involves the risk of further concealing the continuing reality of violence against women in both the private homes and in the streets (Lundgren & Westerstrand 2002: 171). Gendered violence has increased, rather than decreased in terms both of location, degree and expression in the recent neo-liberal times. Focusing only on strong patriarchal violence can mean no longer seeing the more subtle and hidden forms of honour-related violence in mainstream Nordic societies. Where traditional Nordic patriarchy may have become weaker, the Master Imaginary still thrives in the unconscious and even fully conscious acts of many men—and women.

### **5. Why should teachers and other professionals recognize and act to denounce honour/shame systems?**

"Honour" killings and related forms of violence are extreme methods of consolidating and upholding the veiled gender contract. It is of great importance to analyse the grim affinities between wars, the upbringing of boys and the attitudes towards women and groups portrayed as "enemies." The honour of men features strongly as a motivating force in both public and private violence around the world. Through what forms of socialization do men come to internalise the perverse notion that there is honour in killing more vulnerable groups, particularly female members of one's own family? Through what logic does one secure "honour" when it consists in flagrant abuse of power and status--masked as "cultural custom"? What motivates warring men and nations in their aggressions against neighbours and vulnerable groups such as women has much to do with such specifically masculinated values and attributes as "not losing one's face", "being on top", securing mastery over resources (including women as cheap labour and as circulators of the free gifts of emotional, domestic and nurturing labour) and most centrally, safeguarding one's masculine or national honour. Male cultures based on the exchange of women as currency of power, honour and property have existed for centuries; however, it is in the context of today's economic and religious fundamentalisms, exemplified by the Bush administration and Muslim extremists that peace and women's rights are under an unprecedented global threat. Unless we tackle the deep roots of "male" or nationalistic pride and honour, we cannot tackle and transform this misogynistic and ecophobic culture, in which men, too, are victims--sacrificed by their own dysfunctional ways and values, and a concept of honour that is at close scrutiny based on the most shameful of values.

In today's global village people, goods and cultural influences travel more freely than ever in history. As schools and working places are also becoming more multicultural thanks to the increased mobility of immigrants, it is important for the citizens of the "host" countries to have intercultural training and ethnosensitive understanding of cultural differences. Unfortunately, too often this "understanding" has taken two extreme forms; either a racist dismissal of the "other" as primitive or uncivilized or for example the adoption of a stance called "cultural relativism." The latter refers to the acceptance and tolerance of the other culture's value system or sex/gender system ("culture") as just a set of ethno-cultural customs and traditions even when it involves beliefs and practices that are opposed to the respect of human rights, women's rights and international agreements. Finnish officials, for example, have colluded with patriarchal misogynist cultures when sending back to honour-based countries women whose lives would thus be endangered (Kailo 2004).

The RBHRV believes that "Another risk factor that has been identified as contributing to HRV is growing up in a vulnerable family. A vulnerable family can be understood as one affected by divorce, single parent households, poor households with numerous children, jobless households, or households in which there is domestic violence. These factors are also attributed to poverty and social exclusion. Added to these factors can be a background in dictatorships, living as a refugee and traumatic experiences in war" (2003: 9). In my view, it is necessary to carry out more extensive research on HRV

to find out whether it is as related to class as it may appear. After all, international studies on gendered violence have found instances of gendered violence in all levels of society. The violence experienced by more affluent women may go unnoticed because they may have financial means allowing them to get help in locations and ways other than women's shelters. Still, it is important to remember that violence against women in all of its manifestations is a crime against women's human rights and basic freedoms. It is also a barrier to the development and collective well-being of societies. It is important for educators to be sensitised to and recognize the symptoms of violent treatment not only of immigrant but also of the "host" society's women's for several reasons all of which have to do with basic rights. Thus, it may simply be that records are lacking of wealthier women in exile who escape gendered violence into hotels or other spaces representing their alternative to women's shelters. Finland, among other countries has signed the UN agreements on human rights, which include combating gendered violence. Apart from women's rights being a matter of human rights, condoning or turning a blind eye to immigrant or other cultures' oppressive and (hetero) sexist values means contributing to the social exclusion, possibly even poverty and poor health of the girls and women, also of the boys and men. As evidence shows from Swedish studies, women from honour-based cultures are often prevented from using their full educational opportunities, time and other resources necessary for integrating into the host society. In many strongly patriarchal families or cultures identified with a strong Master Imaginary, women's fears of violence and the omnipresent climate of threats pose severe limits on their freedom of movement and activity outside the home, as well as their integration into society. I agree with the RBHRV's view that both women that are experiencing violence and men that are using the violence are at risk of social exclusion and poverty, although the gendered implications are quite complex. Violence against women in patriarchal families is therefore a great socio-economic loss to society. It translates also into physical and mental health problems for the girls, who often run away from the homes and at worst, become vulnerable to sexploitation and prostitution, even homelessness. It is necessary for educators to react promptly when they witness boys or girls being threatened with violence on the basis of "cultural tradition." It is as important for them to learn to recognize the "naturalized" violence of their own cultures. Studies suggest that educators are not either able to recognize the danger signals or to intervene, due to fear, indifference or lack of ethnosensitive and human rights sensitivity and responsibility. As most of the information available about immigrant cultures is from the male perspective, I suggest that educators make an effort to locate introductions to different cultures specifically from gender-sensitive points of view. One good example is an introduction to Kurdish women's philosophy by Ceni (2003) which shows the women as agentic and as active creators of the culture, not just as victims.

## ***Conclusion***

In this module, I have created a chart of strongly traditional patriarchal and gendered systems of honour and shame, which I see underlying many sex/gender systems, particularly those with the most visible cultures of HRV. The purpose has been to alert educators to the reality of this hidden gender contract in its myriad forms on the spectrum of patriarchal systems in their more and less extreme forms. What needs to be further researched in matters of peace and masculinity is the relationship between the frail masculine identity and the subsequent "need" many men feel to consolidate it through violence. Many Western men's studies scholars have hinted at the role of shame and humiliation. It is important to recognize that men would not feel humiliated so easily, if the notions about "male honour" were not so exaggerated, unrealistic and contradictory. Boys are brought up on notions that they have to constantly prove themselves through heroism, fast action, bravery. No wonder it is predominantly men and boys that kill themselves in speed related motor vehicle and adventure related accidents. In many cultures, honour and heroism are to boys what nurturing and sacrifice are for girls. Both lead in their exaggerated forms to self-destructive behaviours.

One factor is the adherence to traditional views on male and female sex roles. A man who believes that males are naturally dominant and females submissive will not only feel deeply hurt or “violated” in his male identity if his wife or girlfriend leaves him or if she does not submit to his wishes, but he will also experience her behaviour as a humiliating insult to his manhood (Miedzien 1991: 98). At the same time, in addressing the threats to an eco-social sustainable future today, one has to take issue with the processes that have led to globalisation and the dominant neo-liberal ideology: they are intimately connected with current trade and economic wars, and on another level, with violence in all its other forms--not least violence vs. women. Today's global economic agenda is neither value-free, free of cultural assumptions, nor gender-neutral. It can be seen as the epitome of a centuries-long colonial Master Imaginary, condensing the evolution of capitalistic ways and values, and patriarchal fundamentalisms in East and West, North and South. While space does not allow me to describe alternative sex/gender systems or social contracts rooted in the Other Honour system, I wish to trigger interest and an intercultural openness to the value of these more peaceful and eco-socially oriented cultures. I have stressed the links between economic interests and the Master Imaginary, suggesting also that the honour/shame systems echo back to property rights. While I do consider capitalism to have gendered links with patriarchy and the Master Imaginary as its unwritten code, I do not restrict it to that; clearly, as Allen (1999), Miedzien (1999) and others have demonstrated among many other famous classic feminist analysts of violence (Griffin, 1981 and Brownmiller, 1971 to name just a few), gendered violence is rooted in sexual and social, not only economic motivations.

I will conclude with the comments of Anishnabeg Native Winona LaDuke who criticizes not only the property-related capitalistic worldview of the Western world, but quite explicitly its understanding of “honour”:

The last aspect of industrial thinking I am going to talk about (although it's always unpopular to question it in America), is the idea of capitalism itself. In this country we are taught that capitalism is a system that combines labor, capital, and resources for the purpose of accumulation. The capitalist goal is to use the least labor, capital, and resources to accumulate the most profit. The intent of capitalism is accumulation. So the capitalist's method is always to take more than is needed. Therefore, from an indigenous point of view capitalism is inherently out of harmony with natural law. Based on this goal of accumulation, industrial society practices conspicuous consumption. Indigenous societies, on the other hand, practice what I would call “conspicuous distribution.” We focus on the potlatch, the giveaway, an event that carries much more honor than accumulation does. In fact, the more you give away, the greater your honor. We make a great deal of these giveaways, and industrial society has something to learn from them. (LaDuke 1997: 28)

A final note to ponder, the Native peoples' potlatches and give away ceremonies were outlawed in Canada, in the 1800s. They were seen as a threat to the very notion and ideology of private property rights, and, of course, of capitalism as the doctrine for accumulating rather than distributing goods and collective forms of well-being. The peace guru Gandhi was once asked what he thought of Western civilization. In this well-circulated quotation, he is reported to have answered “A good idea!” The same no doubt applies to all male-dominated “civilizations”. They have a long way to go before the barbaric behavior manifesting itself as male violence against women has been eliminated.

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