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## Women, Migration, and the Body-Less Spirit of Capitalist Patriarchy

[Mechthild Hart](#)

### Abstract

The continuously expanding global free trade in domestic and sex workers intensifies old capitalist-patriarchal forms of extracting women's emotional, physical, and sexual labor. The patriarchal dream of seizing control of impure, unruly life has now entered its neoliberal stage, exemplified by money begetting money in the virtual sphere of financial speculation, and by biotechnology's promise to create a world that is no longer in need of impure female mothering bodies. The very nature of the work associated with unruly life delivers, however, a major blow to the patriarchal vision of a totally controlled, purified, body-less world. Imported female 'servants of globalization' live in a diaspora where different social spaces are stacked on top of each other in the small geographic space of an alien individual household. This home/workplace is mostly a site of exploitation and abuse. It does, however, also contain elements that not only put a brake on the patriarchal project but also allow possibilities of a non-patriarchal, non-capitalist future to shine through experiences of deprivation and misery. Removing dirt and taking care of the employer's children are actions that illustrate life's messy unruliness: Living bodies need attention and care. They challenge feminist movements to construct a transnational home that is bodily, place-bound as well as translocal or 'nomadic.'

### Note on the Author

Mechthild Hart moved from Germany to the United States in 1972, worked in a number of women's and community organizations, and has been teaching and mentoring at DePaul University's School for New Learning in Chicago since 1987. She has published articles, book chapters, and two books on social, local, regional, and global divisions of labor, with special emphasis on motherwork.

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