

# **The power of the invisible dimension**

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## **Electricity and wireless communication**

In our current modern society we have become used to the Internet, which has immensely increased our sense of connection to other people all over the planet. And with the invention of smart phones and wireless communication, which – as we all know – has not existed longer than a few decades, we can even be online while travelling or being outdoors. In a short period of time it has been integrated so much into our lives that most people can hardly imagine anymore how we once could have survived without it. Yet, while using this wireless communication all through the day, we might not be aware of the fact that we humans might have invented the technological devices but we did not create the invisible medium by which this communication is realized, or the electricity that we use to charge them up. About electricity Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird say the following, in their book *The Secret Life of Plants* that was published in 1973: ‘Today, books on what man can *do* with electricity fill thousands of shelves in this world’s libraries, but what electricity *is* and why it functions are as much a mystery as they were in Priestley’s day. Modern scientists still have no idea of the composition of electromagnetic waves. They simply use them for radio, radar, television and toasters.’<sup>1</sup> We have also no idea about the nature of the invisible medium by which wireless messages can travel almost instantly between people over great distances. Just like electricity it is a given from the natural world. Both exist – and have always existed – independent from our human use.

## **The presence of the invisible dimension**

Who can tell what happens exactly when you watch a film on your mobile phone? How does all that complex and constantly changing information of pictures and sound travel so quickly from its place of origin to your little screen? You don’t see or feel it going through space and entering your phone. The space around us must be crammed with this exchange of

information, especially in places where a lot of people happen to be together and all are communicating wirelessly at the same time. Although some people claim to sense the radiation of the waves and get sick from it, most people do not sense it at all. But, of course, wireless communication is only successful because we don't experience the invisible medium powering it.

Yet, it is significant to know that this medium is actually present all the time, and that we witness only the *effects*: the messages received on our phone, the websites that we visit and the films that we watch on our computer screen. I think the day-to-day reality of wireless communication can help a lot to open the human mind collectively to the *true* power of the invisible dimension and to the fact that it is always present around us – and even in us – , also when our technological devices are switched off. We are even starting to realize more and more that people in the (distant) past have been able to use this invisible dimension for communication without the use of any technological devices. As we will see below, even animals and plants appear to have access to it.

### **The world of the imagination and of thought**

A very prominent way in which the power of the invisible dimension manifests itself is through our capacity to imagine and to think. Our mind can create images and words. It is important to distinguish them from each other. For first there was the creation of images and much later humans began to think in words. How far this exactly goes back in time is hard to say. At a certain moment humans started painting images on cave walls or creating statues from bones, wood or stone; and thinking in words led a few thousand years before Christ to the creation of the alphabet and of writing. Leonard Shlain has shown convincingly in his book *The Alphabet versus the Goddess* that created images were part of a more feminine inspired culture and written words were part of a more masculine inspired culture; and that the power of images is not only much older but also much stronger than the power of words.<sup>2</sup>

By the way, images need not be created consciously: as archetypal images they can rise to the surface from the unconscious. A good example is the image of the dragon and the struggle against it by a hero or saint, which has been depicted for millennia in many different ways and under several different names. It is no coincidence that this particular image was

born when humans started to believe that they could live outside nature and exercise control over it; and that it kept accompanying civilizations that were based on the principle of control.

Because our imagination and thinking are mostly continuous processes, we might not realize the enormous power of their invisible presence. Everything that human beings have created was preceded by imagination and by thought, whether it was driven by reason, feeling or intuition. The examples are plenty and various in our direct vicinity: buildings in a city or a town, their paved streets, the cars, the bicycles, the interior of houses, but also books, the words in the books, the laws devised to maintain order, the hierarchical structure of organizations, works of art and – of course – the digital device by which you have downloaded or are reading this article. We might have forgotten that they are all the result of human thought processes, often of stored knowledge that was passed on from one generation to the next. Without these we would not have been able to build our modern society and everything that is part of it.

Of course the reverse is also true: killing our fellow human beings, the destruction of cultures, societies and the environment has also been accomplished by the power of human thought. Although for a long time we believed that we have an inherent violent nature, recent research has made it clear that the ego, which is created by human thought and provides individuals and groups with separate identities, is responsible for all this killing and destruction. Through the ego our thoughts have the tendency to become dualistic, to drive us to polarization between groups of people, and to put us against each other. As researchers like Steve Taylor, Malcolm Hollick and Christine Connelly, or Charles Eisenstein have shown, this dominance of the ego was probably caused by traumatic experiences which confronted the human world about 6000 years ago.<sup>3</sup> This attempt to get control was also directed at the invisible dimension: the ego remained part of this dimension, but came to dominate with its central notion of separation, thereby blocking access to the deeper vision of the interconnectedness of all life. In other words, the ego is part of the invisible dimension but somehow has managed to minimize its potential power.

Considering the fact that through our capacity to think we can build and destroy entire cultures and societies, why do many people – apparently inspired by the still prevailing materialist form of science – object to a

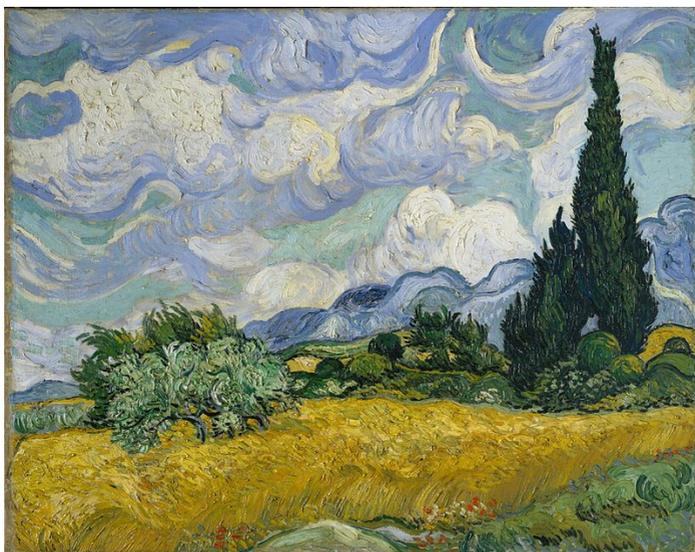
similar capacity inherent in the natural world to bring stars, planet, plants, animals, and human beings to life from an invisible dimension? Why do they insist that everything we sense must have a mere material origin; that our thoughts are products from our brain cells and that beyond matter there is ‘nothing’?

As I will try to make clear in this article, I consider it quite conceivable that the capacity of human beings to create things (and destroy them again) is really a reflection of the power of the invisible dimension which is inherent in nature and forms its metaphysical basis. From this original organic invisible source there is continuous process of manifestation going on from which living beings are born and continue to be stimulated to further development. By not accepting the reality of this source and considering our own thoughts to be mere products of our brain cells, we have reduced our conception of life, including our own, to mechanics. Of course the identification of ourselves with the ego has played a central role in this. As we will see below, our mechanical constructions are essentially different from the organic, living beings that they are trying to imitate: they are not only dead, but are trying to imitate from without what life has evolved and grown from within. This also touches our sense of control and order: through the creation of mechanical devices we are trying to exert control over life, to impose order on it from outside, but sooner or later the roles will reverse and the mechanics will start to control us. In another section below we will pay more attention to our exertion of control over life.

### **Scientific field theories**

For some decades now there are exciting scientific developments that reveal to us the presence of the invisible dimension and its tremendous power. In science this invisible dimension has been integrated in the so-called *field theories*, which continue to develop and make it increasingly clear that not matter but invisible fields are primal in life. Since the period of the Enlightenment four different kinds of fields have been discovered and accepted by science: a gravitational field, an electro-magnetic field, and a weak and strong nuclear field. More recently, however – inspired by the discoveries of quantum mechanics – a new, more mysterious kind of field has been detected that can’t be fitted into those four existing categories.<sup>4</sup>

Different names for this field have been suggested, like: the implicate order (David Bohm), morphic fields (Rupert Sheldrake), the zero-point field or The Field (Lynne McTaggart), the Divine Matrix (Gregg Braden), the Sacred Matrix (Dieter Duhm), the Akashic Field (Ervin Laszlo).<sup>5</sup> The different researchers might not yet fully agree with each other about the exact nature of this field (or, in a plural sense, of these fields). But as far as I can see in their different approaches they have attempted to map the same kind of invisible dimension – some focusing on parts of this field, like Sheldrake’s research into the morphic fields, while others have tried to capture the entire all-encompassing field, like the Laszlo’s research into the Akashic Field or Bohm’s research into the implicate order.



*Wheat field with cypresses, Vincent van Gogh (1889). In this painting, and in several others, he managed to show that the power of the invisible dimension is present in the surrounding landscape.*

The reality of the field can be experienced directly in our own being. Quantum mechanics has shown that matter largely consists of space filled with energy. When we observe our own or any other body from without, it seems to consist of dense matter, but from within it is experienced as spacious, as the space of consciousness. The more we can release our

consciousness from the ongoing thought-chatter (a term I borrowed from Steve Taylor's book *Back to Sanity*), the more we can experience this spacious nature. Experienced from within even the skin then seems to have disappeared and our consciousness to have expanded outwardly into the surrounding world.

### **The resistance of materialist science**

Rupert Sheldrake has argued that *the field* is just a new scientific term for what has been known for many centuries and was referred to as *the soul*.<sup>6</sup> According to our ancestors this soul did not only exist in the individual human realm, but also on a larger, planetary scale, and on that level was called *the World Soul*, or the *Anima Mundi*.<sup>7</sup> It hardly needs be added here that something similar can be argued for the other scientific terms, *the matrix* or *the implicate order*. In other words, in pre-modern cultures the invisible source of life underlying our material existence was already recognized and identified as the (world)soul, and only from the 20<sup>th</sup> century on has been gradually acquiring scientific recognition. And since we are using wireless communication on a daily basis, one would expect a certain openness to it and enthusiasm to be able to add another field to the four acknowledged ones. But among scientists who subscribe to the materialist worldview – which is still dominant in the Western world – there has been a fierce resistance against the acceptance of the existence of this fifth field. Not only has its existence been denied because our current measuring equipment can't detect it yet, but there is another, more important reason for this resistance: its presence cannot be integrated into the materialistic outlook and actually undermines it directly.

But how long will materialistic science manage to hold on to its outdated outlook? History has shown how much damage can be done by not fully integrating newly acquired insights. When the power of the subatomic world was discovered early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, apparently people did not fully realize that this discovery also should have had tremendous implications for ourselves, and should have transformed the basic idea of who we actually are. After all, the subatomic world is also present in our own organism. But, as new discoveries always take some time to be widely accepted, collectively we preferred to stick to Newtonian science, combined with a Hobbesian image of ourselves of being inherently warlike creatures.

And from this outdated mindset we could use the knowledge of the subatomic world to create the atomic bomb, to use it to threaten enemies with and twice even to really kill large numbers of people at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And, as we can witness quite regularly, unfortunately this outdated mindset has still not disappeared completely from the political stage.

It seems that the scientific discoveries presented by the field theories, likewise in a collective sense do not have an immediate transformative effect on our self-image. But there is also some hope: the times really are a-changing. What Bob Dylan observed so well in the 1960s has become even more relevant today. If we continue to refuse to update our mechanistic outlook inspired by scientists like Newton or philosophers like Hobbes and refuse to open our minds to the new paradigm, we cannot get a grip on the major crisis that is confronting us in different ways: rising levels of human isolation and depression, the increase of climate change, the tensions and struggles caused by patriotic protectionism and political polarization, the financial crisis, the spiritual crisis, etc... Does it leave us any other option than to fully acknowledge that we are all inextricably connected to one another and to the world around us; that the answer is not going to be found anymore in separation, struggle and competition, but in connection, cooperation and empathy on a global scale? In the invisible dimension, which the field theories locate at the basis of life, this interconnectedness is already a fact.

### **Hidden worlds**

The five different fields that we talked about above share one important quality: as is the case with wireless communication, we can never experience these kinds of fields directly – they are invisible to our senses – but we know they exist because of the effects they have on our lives. Seen from the perspective of these fields, our material world is a mere world of effects, or (speaking in Bohm's terminology) an explicate order that is an ongoing manifestation of an underlying implicate order.

In a similar sense we can say that when we experience the material world around us *during the day*, we only see the effects of something hidden that we do not perceive. We don't realize that our day time world is born from the much larger expanse of the night; that the light is born from

the womb of darkness. And this process never stops: the light continues to be fed and supported by the dark. The visible, material world can only exist because there is a large invisible dimension of darkness surrounding it all the time. (And in this dimension of darkness there are black holes and dark matter that we do not understand yet.) The invisible and the visible –



*Light born from darkness (photo NASA)*

just like the unmanifested and manifested, or interconnected reality and seemingly separate reality – are not poles that are opposed to one another, but form a dual whole – in the sense of the Taoistic Yin-Yang.

We easily forget this kind of all-inclusive wholeness when we deal with our own lives, the lives of others, human society or the natural world around us. We tend to focus on the day time side of everything, without realizing that they are just a part, even the much smaller part of something immeasurably large – and we erroneously assume that this day time side represents all of reality. When we are awake and deal with our day time affairs – with work, social relations and such – we usually have forgotten that there is a night time version of ourselves: the version in which we dream, lose our day time boundaries, sometimes even get visions, and also heal our body and our mind. This healing capacity of our dreams is confirmed by dream researcher Montague Ullman, as reported by Ervin Laszlo: ‘Even though we live as individuals, separated from the larger whole of our species and our community, our dreams re-establish our connections; they further our efforts to live in harmony with nature and the universe. Unlike Freudian theories that speak of psychic entities in dreams at war with each other, the Ullman kind of dream theories relate dreaming to our interconnectedness with an embracing wholeness.’ Laszlo adds that this view is confirmed by the findings of researchers like Fred Alan Wolf and Stanislav Grof.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes our night time self manages to enter our day time life, and when this happens in a balanced way, we can experience an expansion of our mind, a more intense kind of wakefulness. The expansion of our mind

need not be short lived and can even bring about a permanent mental or spiritual transformation. In this respect the English psychologist Steve Taylor talks about *awakening experiences* that can result in a more permanent state of *wakefulness*.<sup>9</sup> I think the expanded sense of self as a result of near death experiences or outer space experiences by astronauts is relevant here as well: these two experiences we will pay more extensive attention to below.

The hidden darkness of the night and of the human unconscious is closely related to the impenetrable and equally hidden darkness of the earthly soil beneath our feet. It is the world of death which in a healthy state is fully alive as well, with bacteria, insects, worms, etc. This is the fruitful soil collectively created by decayed plants, animals and human ancestors, which provides the necessary organic food for seeds and living plants, and for embryos, mature animals and human beings to grow. In this respect Peter Wohlleben shows in his book *The Hidden Life of Trees* that underneath the surface of the soil trees are connected to each other by a network of roots and fungi. He argues that fungi through the centuries can expand to a few square kilometers and can even connect entire forests. Through this network signals can be spread from one tree to another one and between the trees messages can be exchanged about insects, drought and other dangers. Science calls this interconnected world of the forest a ‘wood-wide-web’.<sup>10</sup> According to Wohlleben, trees support one another: through the roots and fungi strong trees help the weak trees.<sup>11</sup>

It is not the case that in this ‘wood-wide-web’ only tangible, organic processes are involved with the process of growth. Rupert Sheldrake, whom we have mentioned already in the section on field theories, has argued persuasively that morphic fields are involved in all growth processes through the principle of morphic resonance. These fields provide invisible and, as yet undetectable, and ever



*Visible interconnected tree roots at Avebury,  
England*

evolving, archetypal blue prints for each living being, which help them to give form to their specific growth processes. According to Sheldrake the presence of these fields are implied, because the growth processes with all their different, subsequent stages of formation cannot be explained genetically.<sup>12</sup> Morphic resonance does not stop when our body is fully grown, but keeps on assisting us during our entire life with our further psychological and spiritual growth.

### **Our non-rational side**

Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century depth psychology (from Freud to Jung to Hillman and further) has recognized the power of the unconscious, and has done a lot to help us integrate the insights from the archetypal night time world into our daily lives, to create a more harmonious self. But it is still the case that many people often wait as long as possible (until they really have to) with listening to the non-rational voice of their unconscious. To make access to it a little easier the English psychologist Isabel Clarke has suggested to refrain from using the term ‘unconscious’ and refer to it as simply a different kind of consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

In the Western world confrontation with and integration of parts of our non-rational side is not really encouraged. Throughout the day our evasive attitude is confirmed and it is suggested that we need nothing but our rational, day time self to deal with the problems of the world. In news bulletins politicians and experts keep ensuring us that we need nothing but our logic and reason – in other words, a good use of our rational brain – to properly deal with the problems in our society or with the larger environmental problems. We are even told in a popular study by a Dutch neurologist, that in fact we *are* nothing but our brain.<sup>14</sup> And when we cannot help it and want to give the rest of the body a voice as well, we say that we have *gut feelings* – a term that has got a quite negative meaning, in the sense of feelings that should be avoided as much as possible.

By limiting ourselves to the power of our brain, though, and in particular to the rational left hemisphere, we might not realize that we have also cut ourselves off from the deeper source of our being. It means we have chosen to identify with only a limited part of ourselves. But ‘naturally’ the source never disappears. By ignoring the depth and the wholeness of our dual nature, we keep on feeling that there is something missing in our lives. This

has three far-reaching consequences. First, because of this we have started believing that real life only begins in the afterlife, as is expressed in the conceptions of Heaven in the patriarchal religions. Second, we feel driven to go searching for the missing element in the outer world, to find a lost paradise somewhere on this planet. Then we step in the footsteps of the European colonists who felt driven to go searching for ‘the Promised Land’, which they called ‘the New World’ when they thought they had found it. In a similar sense we regularly feel driven to go on holidays to paradisiacal regions with the promise of continuous sunshine. And third, we need to compensate this vague feeling of loss by declaring ourselves superior to others and strive to ‘the top’ in a hierarchical sense – and thereby also engage ourselves in a struggle with ‘competitors’. In other words, by ignoring our *dual nature* we have provided the basis for the creation of a *dualistic worldview*, which stimulates our fight-or-fights response. It ensures that we need enemies and hierarchical organizations.

### **From an open to a closed nature**

By developing an ego identity, we have lost contact with our own source, with the *original openness* of our mind. Unfortunately this is still considered an accepted and necessary form of human development. It is newly recreated in every individual life, but we should not forget that this individual recreation takes place in a context of collective positive confirmation of the power of the ego that has existed for millennia.

When we are born, we are open to the world, to nature and to the underlying invisible dimension. We are fully immersed in life, and experience it primarily from within. Henryk Skolminowski has argued (in his book *The Participatory Mind*) that we begin our lives with a participatory mind. Initially our universe consists of (in the words of Thomas Berry) ‘a communion of subjects’.<sup>15</sup> We experience nature within and without us fully alive, as imaginatively it is given shape in myths and fairy stories.



*Open to the world, to nature and the underlying invisible dimension*

Gradually, as we grow up, our mind closes itself off. The development of the ego, and identification with it, is largely responsible for this. It also gives us the idea that we are experiencing life primarily from without, that we can objectify everything that happens to us, that we can easily control the objects of life from without. The universe has been transformed into ‘a collection of objects’, to quote Berry again.

As we have already mentioned, there is a long history to the rise of the ego. In this respect Steve Taylor has pointed out in his book *The Fall* that from around 4000 BC humankind has been confronted with an ego-explosion, which caused the ego to dominate our civilization until the present time.<sup>16</sup> Charles Eisenstein tells in his book *The Ascent of Humanity* a similar story: the story of separation that was driven by our identity as a ‘separate self’.<sup>17</sup> Next to linear thinking one of the prime characteristics of the ego or the separate self is dualism, which divides the world in us versus them, in good versus bad, and gives rise to destructive polarization processes – as we can see still happening around today. It has also led to an over-emphasis on the power of rationality and to the conviction that human beings are superior to all other being because of the size of their brain. The hopeful thing about the stories that Taylor and Eisenstein are telling us, is that there is a lot of evidence to identify a historical beginning of the ego or the separate self, which suggests that there can be an end to it as well. This is actually the theme that is central in their later books. If you want to know more about their ideas, I suggest that you read their books.

The fact that egocentric consciousness is convinced that we can observe reality from without, and that this is a way we can actually exercise control over this reality, is very important. In the first place it created a division between ourselves and the environment in which we lived, but it also created a division between our mind and our body. Our attention is exclusively focused on matter, on the tangible world. In the ego’s conception of reality there exists no underlying invisible dimension of nature anymore, nature is reduced to the material world we can see and touch. In this approach to reality the sacred element that is inherent in nature is ignored, and projected onto a dimension somewhere outside nature, a heavenly dimension that is believed to exist somewhere high above us, far removed from the earth. In this heavenly realm a masculine God – representing the supreme mind of spirit– looks down on feminine

nature – representing the realm of matter – far below Him, the earthly sphere in which according to Him the Devil is always ready to seduce us with his tricks.

The Christian idea of the heavenly realm could survive until 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Darwinist evolutionary thinking made its existence quite improbable, and many people were left with only a bare meaningless world consisting only of matter. But also the door was reopened to experiencing the sacred once again in nature, as was shown for instance by the Romantic Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as was also argued by Rupert Sheldrake in his book *The Rebirth of Nature*. But until today unfortunately most Darwinists (including the Social Darwinists and Neo-Darwinists) prefer to stick to the idea that life is essentially a material phenomenon.<sup>18</sup>

### **From a closed to an open nature**

It is obvious that we have a lot to win for ourselves when we manage to re-open our mind, to let go of all collective identifications, and to be able to look at everything with fresh innocent eyes again – as if we see it for the first time. For this the continuous thought-chatter, which continually draws a veil between us and the world – has to stop or must be diminished to manageable proportions. The popularity of meditation and mindfulness practices indicate that many people have signaled this problem and are working on it already. That is very good news. When we manage to re-open our mind, this will not only heal our dualistic worldview, but will also stop us searching for perfect paradises elsewhere in the outer world and bring us into touch again with the sacred quality of the landscape in our direct vicinity.

This reopening of our mind to the sacred quality of the landscape is far from easy, as has been shown, for instance, by the Irish philosopher and modern mystic John Moriarty. He tells a story about a Dutch man who was living in Ireland and with whom he used to go for walks. When they walked through a wood together, he noticed that the Dutch man was writing down the names of the trees they came across. Moriarty observed that he did walk *through* the forest, but that he never went *into* the forest.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the Dutch man was still looking at nature from without, and not experiencing it from within. So going for a walk in a living forest is no guarantee to actually make contact with the forest, with its sacred quality.

What Moriarty really wanted to say is that the forest is much more than a collection of individual trees.

Above we have already referred to the book *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, in which he shows that underground trees are interconnected by a system of roots and fungi that enables them to communicate with each other. This book that was originally written in German and other books by Wohlleben appear to be very popular and have been translated in many languages. He shows that by opening ourselves to the magical world of trees and forests, we can learn more about our own social lives and our place in the natural world.



*'Fairy forest' (photo ssndeeep)*

That we have become more aware of the fact that natural places like forests can help to reopen our mind and to heal our wounds, is also shown by the recent popularity of a Japanese way of experiencing a visit to a forest, called *shinrin yoku*, the practice of 'forest bathing'.<sup>20</sup> Through Japan we are reminded of something that is generally human and has also existed in the indigenous cultures of Western society: experiencing the natural world with an open mind. It is an invitation to follow in Moriarty's footsteps and really go *into* the forest.

### **Epigenetic power**

The latest biological insights of epigenetics also reveal that an open mind is essential to our capacity to grow, not only biologically, but also psychologically and spiritually. Bruce Lipton has argued persuasively in his book *The Biology of Belief* that the 'brain' of each cell is not located in the genes, but in the membrane surrounding the genes. This membrane decides whether the genes in the cell are allowed to express themselves or not. It opens or closes itself under influences from the environment. In this respect *openness* is of particular importance. The cell is able to grow only when the membrane is open to influences from the environment. When the membrane

closes itself to protect the cell from harm, its growth stops as well. Then it has to put all its energy into defending, in powering the defense mechanisms.<sup>21</sup>

Lipton believes that whatever happens at the cell level is also meaningful for ourselves as human beings: each of us is in fact a large cooperative community of cells, in which the trillions of specialized cells must harmonize with one another. When we feel threatened by the world around us, and we defend and protect ourselves by closing our minds, we also stop our growing process. Our fight-or-flight response to life is supposed to be exceptional, meant only for moments of real danger. When stress dominates our life, this defensive response is on all the time, and uses all our energy. Only when we have turned this fight-or-flight response off, will we be able to use our energy for growing – first primarily in a biological sense, and later also psychologically and spiritually. To be able to grow, and to mature, we really need to keep access to our spirit of openness, which, as we have argued earlier, actually was our original spirit when we were born with, and have unfortunately lost due to the development of our ego or our separate self.

We all have an inherent natural drive to grow and also possess the capability to reactivate it, however deeply buried it might be. I suspect that closing off our minds, blocking the growth process and activating the fight-or-flight response, might also have been responsible for the fact that scientists and people in general fanatically need to defend the materialist conception of life, while evidence undermining it is accumulating. Who knows to what extent illnesses like cancer and heart disease are mere expressions of blocked natural growth processes?

At the end of the 1960s Lipton performed an experiment that changed his outlook. It formed the basis for his later research that eventually led to the publication of his book *The Biology of Belief*. In this experiment he tried to clone three similar stem cells that he had separated and put into ‘culture dishes’ to let them grow and divide. When he created conditions for muscle growth, the cells evolved as muscle cells, and in the two other artificially created environments they would evolve as bone cells or fat cells. As the initial cells were genetically identical, this convinced him that the environment determines what kinds of specialized cells would develop, and not the genes in the cells.<sup>22</sup> Lipton hit on something that Sheldrake has

called morphic resonance, which is evidence of the presence and power of morphic fields. Lipton and Sheldrake have shown, both in their own way, that science can no longer stick to its materialist outlook and must include the power of the invisible dimension.

### **Matrix developments**

Joseph Chilton Pearce has suggested the term *matrix* to explain the process of growth. By using this term he has shown that there is an important gender element in this discussion about the power of the invisible dimension. To get a clear idea about what the power of a matrix actually is, we have to be aware of the fact that there has been a breaking-point in history, which caused the entire culture to move radically in a different direction.

Inspired by feminist research many scholars have become convinced that an immense changeover from a pre-patriarchal culture to a patriarchal culture has taken place at a particular point in history. They do not agree about the exact moment when this changeover happened – some let it start at the Neolithic Revolution ten thousand years ago and others thousands of years later – but they agree about the fact this changeover did happen at some point in history. In this respect Steve Taylor talks about an ego explosion that happened about 4000 BC; Riane Eisler talks about a change from a partnership culture to a dominator culture; Carol Lee Flinders argues that during the Neolithic values of belonging shifted to values of enterprise; Leonard Shlain believes the advent of the written word brought about a major shift; Joseph Campbell has acknowledged about 500 BC a major cultural changeover took place that he has termed ‘the Great Reversal’; Thom Hartmann talks about a shift from older cultures to younger cultures; and so on.<sup>23</sup> The fact that these scholars differ about the exact beginning of this changeover and also about the kind of changes it brought about needn’t be that problematic, as the process of an all-encompassing cultural changeover can easily last thousands of years to be completed. It’s important to acknowledge that they all agree that a major changeover *did* happen in our culture that has touched every aspect of life. In this respect they differ completely from a still considerably number of scholars who do not accept this idea of a cultural changeover, and believe that the rise of Western civilization has been an ongoing development from a savage,

warlike state to a civilized state. From that position, however, the arguments and the connections I am making in this article will be quite hard to follow, and probably will even raise protests.

I think that originally, before this cultural changeover, the feminine was more connected to the intangible and the invisible matrix that fed all growth processes, and that the masculine was more equated with the world of manifestation, with the tangible. (In the terms of physicist David Bohm we could state that the implicate order has a more feminine quality and the explicate order a more masculine quality.) Importantly, these two qualities were not opposed yet in a dualistic sense. They were still considered equivalent, an inherent part of our dual nature, in which the emphasis was on the feminine, as it was expressed spiritually by the Goddess heritage.<sup>24</sup> Due to the cultural changeover, however, everything was not only reversed in a dramatic way, but both qualities were also split off from each another in an absolute sense and dualistically opposed to each other. Under patriarchal rule women became equated with the body, nature, and matter, and the masculine with the world of the mind, spirit, and culture. As we will see below, this discussion also touches the distinction between immanence and transcendence, and between the cyclical and linear worldview.

We can see, however, that the original position kept on manifesting itself under patriarchal rule – even in the mechanistic view of science. In this form of science, which was devised entirely by male experts in the Enlightenment and has been extended and defended mostly by men since then as well, matter was considered to be the most basic element of life. Interestingly, Sheldrake recognized in this exclusive focus on matter by mechanistic science the unconscious survival of the power of the Mother Goddess, with a one-sided focus on her negative role as destroyer. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this negative role could be expressed in the evolutionary ideas about ‘the struggle for existence’ and ‘survival of the fittest’. But, as we have already mentioned, Sheldrake believed that Darwinism also triggered a rebirth of sacred nature.<sup>25</sup>

It is not a coincidence that the scientific field theories have seen the light in recent decades, in a period when the power of the feminine is undeniably on the rise again (to once again become part of our conscious world). Psychologically this manifests in the form of more openness, receptivity; socially in the form of more cooperation, empathy, giving; and spiritually in

the form of a revaluation of the Goddess heritage, in the rediscovery of the landscape and its inherent sacred quality.<sup>26</sup> It is true that men are largely responsible for developing the field theories and have written about them, and that women have not contributed much to them, but I believe that these men are very aware of the patriarchal burden they carry along with them and that they have dared to open their minds to the feminine in themselves.

Here we return to Joseph Chilton Pearce's ideas about the matrix. I think that in the current climate of a revaluation of the feminine they are important. By using the term *matrix* he has (perhaps unknowingly) emphasized that every field undeniably has a womb quality. As he has argued in his book *Magical Child*, a womb/matrix offers three things to new life: 'a source of possibility, a source of energy to explore this possibility, and a safe place where this exploration can take place'.<sup>27</sup> It is no coincidence that the word *matrix* is connected to both *matter* and *mother*. Every fetus needs the safe space of the mother's womb to be able to grow. Like everything else in life, the womb also has a visible and an invisible dimension.

Pearce shows that the power of this matrix is not limited to the female womb, but continues after birth through what he has called *matrix shifts*. During our entire life we shift between different matrices: family, school, university, (sports)club, friendship, political party, etc. This shifting process indicates that every matrix is always temporary: at some points we have to leave it behind, on our way to another one that will always appear.<sup>28</sup> Not only within the sphere of a matrix do we grow as human beings – biologically, psychologically and spiritually – but as all matrices are temporary *shifting* to other matrices, these in-between spaces are an essential part of these growth processes. (I speculate that the growth process within the safe space of the womb has an obvious feminine quality, whereas the shifts between the matrices can be qualified as more masculine, heroic explorations.) Due to the fact that the ongoing developments throughout our entire life include both the feminine and masculine – both the safe womb spaces and the shifting processes –, I have chosen to refer to this whole process with the term *matrix developments*.

Eventually our entire earthly life is taking place within the matrix of Mother Earth. Of course our bodily existence on this planet is also

temporary, and the process of matrix developments suggests that after death we might just enter another matrix, to allow us to grow further.

### **The near-death experience**

To get an idea about the matrix which might exist beyond our mortal earthly life, two kinds of experiences are helpful to us: *the near-death experience* and *the outer space experience* of astronauts. They turn out to be closely related to each other, as they reopen the modern secular mind to a kind of spirituality that – with the exception of some mystics – had become alien in the Judeo-Christian heritage. This is a new spirituality with ancient ‘pagan’ roots that needs the material, sensual world – with all its cyclical processes – to express itself. The near-death and outer space experiences provide us also with more and more evidence that indeed the essential part of ourselves, our consciousness, quite probably continues after we die and enters in another matrix – in a sphere that probably is also quite unlike the Christian vision of life after death that is characterized by a strictly separation between Heaven and Hell.

Let’s focus first on the near-death experience. Reanimation of people whose hearts have stopped functioning has become much more successful because of the improvement of medical equipment. A significant number of these people report that they have had a near-death experience.



*There is light at the end of the tunnel*

Although Raymond Moody has written a few popular books about this theme in the 1970s, for a few decades the issue remained controversial and was largely ignored by scientists. But he had opened up a new interest, which led to many more publications that have provided more and more believable reports about these kinds of experiences. Gradually more scientists entered this research as well. The Dutch retired heart surgeon Pim van Lommel could provide ‘hard’ scientific evidence. He recorded the consciousness experiences that clinically dead patients had during the reanimation process and checked their content after. In 2002 he published

the results of his research in the magazine the Lancet, and in 2007 in the Dutch version of a book, entitled *Eindeloos Bewustzijn* (which means ‘consciousness without end’ or ‘eternal consciousness’ (in English it was later published as *Consciousness Beyond Life*).<sup>29</sup> He found out that clinically dead people can leave their body, experience a more intense form of consciousness in that state and from a distance can observe what is going on. They could hear what the doctors were talking about and see what they were doing. They were able to observe things even outside the room in which their body was lying – unconscious and without any heartbeat – and this was verified later. Surprisingly, blind people told that they were able to see in the period when they were clinically dead.

Besides books supplying scientific evidence of survival of consciousness after death, also many powerful, anecdotal reports have been published. In this respect the report by Anita Moorjani in her book *Dying to be me* has added a lot to the probability of a continued existence of our consciousness.<sup>30</sup> She writes about her experiences during the final stage of cancer (of which the diagnosis has been recorded). When she entered into a coma, which was assumed to be part of the dying process, she got a powerful near-death experience in which she was ensured that her cancer would go away and that she would continue her life. When she woke up from her coma, which no one had expected to happen, she told the doctor decisively that the treatment could be stopped and that she would be well again. And indeed, within a few weeks her enormous cancer tumours disappeared spontaneously. Like with some many people who have had a near-death experience, this experience has completely transformed her life, which has put her on a mission to tell the world about it. The cancer has never returned and she writes and lectures about her transformative experience until today.

The people who have gone through a near-death experience know that death is not an end but merely a change, to a place that in nearly all cases is indescribably beautiful and irresistibly attractive. But the most important consequence of a near-death experience is that the persons who have experienced them often feel their outlook on life has been transformed completely: they have lost their fear of death. And although their transformed state might gradually lose a bit of its intensity, they never return to their old self again.

### **The outer space experience**

The second kind of experience, the outer space experience, from a completely different angle provides evidence for the survival of our consciousness after we die, and in a similar sense can have a transformative effect on human consciousness. When astronauts enter outer space and look back at our planet from a distance, they have actually left the matrix of Mother Earth that makes earthly life possible. Like the people who have experienced a near-death experience, they often experience a nearly mystical transformation of their consciousness during their time in outer space, which later on after they have returned to earth has permanently changed their outlook on life. Famous in this regard is the astronaut Edgar Mitchell, who has written a book about his life-transforming outer space experience.<sup>31</sup> But he is not the only one. This kind of transformation seems to be the rule rather than the exception.

It is true that not many people have been or will be able to join a mission to outer space. But the astronauts brought back impressive pictures of our blue planet, and since they were published these images have contributed a lot to an expansion of our consciousness, to the rise of an ecological awareness. Paradoxically the outer space journeys have made us aware of the fact that our life on planet earth is what really matters. Something similar has happened to the English scientist James Lovelock, who divided the Gaia theory which states that planet earth is a living organism: Lovelock started with studying the planet Mars for NASA, but it did not take long for his attention to turn back to earth. Perhaps in time the outer space experience and its effect on our consciousness can be brought much closer to a lot of people. The quality of 3-D simulation technique has improved so much, that it is quite conceivable that in the near future the



*The blue planet*  
(photo NASA GSFC NOAA USGS)

journeys into outer space can be simulated so well, that they will become available to a lot of people!

The near-death experiences and the outer space experiences are comparable because in both cases the people having had the experience have temporarily left the matrix of Mother Earth. Taken together we might conclude that consciousness not only appears to survive death, but also does not need to be attached any longer to our planet. In other words, after we die, our consciousness might be anywhere. It might not even be individual anymore and might be merged into a larger all-encompassing consciousness. In fact, this is what the Ervin Laszlo's research into the Akashic Field suggests as well.

Another important consequence of both of these experiences is that the materialist-inspired idea in science that the brain produces our consciousness is no longer tenable. They point instead to an insight that has been expressed in all the field theories, namely that consciousness is more primal than the brain and that the brain only serves as a receiver and mediator of our consciousness.

### **The invisible dimension of the human and animal world**

Sheldrake has shown that in the psychological and spiritual growth process during our life mysterious invisible forces are at work that for a long time have been labeled 'supernatural', including phenomena like telepathy and precognition. He argued that they should not be considered 'supernatural' but an integral part of the natural world. He has found evidence for this in the human and in the animal world. In his book *The Sense of Being Stared at* he showed that many people can feel that other people are looking at them intentionally from a distance.<sup>32</sup> It implied that the human mind does not just reside in the brain but also extends into the outer world and can actually touch the things it looks at. The outward extension of the mind goes even much further: the other people needn't even be within sight. When someone thinks about a friend and decides to phone him or her, it often happens that this friend seems to know who is ringing before they answer the phone.

Sheldrake found out that these powers are not limited to human beings: also animals possess them, and probably even have more direct access to them. In his book *Dogs Know When Their Owner Comes Home* he provided

evidence for the fact that many pets, and dogs in particular, appear to have a telepathic connection with their owner.<sup>33</sup> Dogs often react to the very moment when their owner, who has been away at work for the day or has been away for a longer period, decides to go home. In this respect it doesn't matter when the owner's decision is taken or what kind of distance is between the owner and the dog. This power of telepathy or precognition is also reported among other animals. It is, for instance, known that many animals seem to be aware in advance of earthquakes or tsunamis, and manage to seek shelter or to move to a safer place in time. Modern humans usually do not have this kind of awareness, and have created special equipment to warn themselves and other human beings.

Sheldrake is aware that the evidence of telepathy or precognition among animals is interesting in an evolutionary sense, considering the fact that humans once evolved from the 'lower animals'. When the development of these powers happens to be stronger in animals, this might suggest that these powers once (in the distant past) were stronger in humans as well and have gradually faded away in modern humans. Up to relatively recent times in the more peripheral regions of Europe the Celts still considered telepathy quite a common, natural phenomenon, which they called *the second sight*.<sup>34</sup> Ervin Laszlo has argued that: 'Telepathy, the most common form of ESP, may have been widespread in so-called primitive cultures. It appears that in many tribal societies shamans were able to communicate telepathically, using a variety of techniques to enter altered states of consciousness that seem required to it, including solitude, concentration, fasting, as well as chanting, dancing, drumming, and the use of psychedelic drugs. Not only shamans, but entire tribes seem to have possessed the gift of telepathy. To this day, many Australian aborigines appear to be informed of the fate of family and friends, even when out of sensory communication range with them.'<sup>35</sup> Among other indigenous people living today the power of telepathy is also still accepted as a fact of life. In this respect Laurens van der Post told a nice story (in his book *A Walk with a White Bushman*). When he once decided without any announcement to pay a visit to the Bushmen (who are now called the San) in South Africa, he was surprised to find someone waiting along the road to greet him. Somehow the people in the village already seem to know he was coming and also exactly when, and therefore had sent someone to welcome him.<sup>36</sup> To return to the start of this

section: the capacity to make telepathic contact confirms that at a deeper level, below the rational surface, our mind is capable of extending itself into the outer world.

### **The invisible dimension of the natural world**

Other research has shown that the power of the invisible dimension even exists in the plant world. An overview of research in this field can be found in the book *The Secret Life of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, which we have mentioned earlier. They started their story with a report of the revolutionary discovery by Cleve Backster in the 1960s that plants possess an awareness of our presence. By experimentally connecting a galvanometer, originally designed as a lie-detector, to the leaves of plants, he was surprised to find out that these plants reacted to his (negative) thoughts about them – like the intention to cut off a leaf. Tompkins and Bird suggested that basic to this ability of plants to pick up human thoughts and to even emotionally react to them, must be a kind of energy field of as yet unknown nature. They went on to show how Backster’s research inspired a lot of other researchers and that the conviction that plants possess a mysterious invisible power was not even new in the 1960s, as it had existed

centuries before that. The German poet Goethe, for instance, was aware of it and wrote a book about it. It was acknowledged that caring for plants, giving them attention, really improved their growth. In fact, Tompkins and Bird argued that these force fields have been known already for a long time outside science: ‘That plants, as well as animals and human beings, have fields of fine sheaths of subatomic of protoplasmic energy which permeate the solid physical bodies of molecules and atoms was a centuries-old allegation by seers and philosophers. This extra dimension or ‘aura’ depicted in ancient iconography around the bodies of saints,



*Filippo Lippi – The Virgin and Child Enthroned, about 1430. Notice the halos around all heads.*

with golden halos around their heads, has been referred to by persons gifted with extrasensory perception since the beginning of recorded history.<sup>37</sup>

More recently the research of the Japanese scientist Masaru Emoto has shown – by taking photos of frozen water crystals – that water seems not only to possess memory but is able to pick up human thoughts and record them. Similar to Kirlian photography that had made the invisible ‘aura’ of plants visible in photos a few decades ago, Emoto managed to make the rich variety of the invisible inner life of water visible. He has illustrated by many photos that negative thoughts create ugly, disharmonious crystals and positive thoughts create beautiful, harmonious crystals.<sup>38</sup> It is understandable that people reacted to his research with disbelief, as water doesn’t possess a brain to store memory. Something similar can be said about the mysterious life force in plants that Tompkins and Bird have reported. It should make us wonder to what extent we do need brains to store memory and to be aware. The reports of near-death experiences that we talked about earlier confirm that consciousness apparently can exist beyond our mortal body, without the use of our brain.

### **Reciprocity in the natural world**

When we realize what kinds of mysterious powers are residing in plants, animals and even substances like water, it seems very plausible that the entire natural world that surrounds us is not only alive, but also fully aware of our presence. It points to a reciprocal relationship between us and the surrounding natural world. Interesting in this respect is the insight by the Islam scholar Henry Corbin about the original meaning of the word ‘temple’ that I have discussed in my article about ‘The Rediscovery of the Landscape’. He has argued that the word ‘temple’ originally referred to a high structure from which people could look over great distances, but added that these people believed that the environment could look back at them as well.<sup>39</sup> This implies that in the early spiritual experience of humans the landscape was considered a living, conscious entity. In early pre-patriarchal civilizations people still felt included in the Womb of Life, in the Divine or Sacred Matrix that through an ever ongoing process of manifestation gave expression to the Goddess heritage.<sup>40</sup> Or put differently, they still felt *at home* in the natural world – in the embracing whole which they felt part of.



*Gorm Goddess Mountain, Lake Lugu, Yunnan province, China*

This is so different from the mechanical scientific view that has dominated our Western outlook for centuries, by which we imagined ourselves to be objective observers outside the realm of nature. Objectifying the natural world means reducing everything to objects. The new insights actually revive the very ancient conception of the inherent sacred quality of the natural world, in which we are always fully embedded.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that in this time, when our survival is threatened directly by several crises, we reconnect with something very old. It is known that indigenous people all over the world considered the landscape they lived in to be sacred. Although considerable ecological damage has been done to landscapes in the distant past as well (like disappearing forests that have turned into desert-like regions), the sacred experience of the landscape somehow has prevented the large-scale exploitation and pollutions that has been the result of the modern Western way of living. Of course, we may wonder whether we are not just dealing here with an enormous increase in the number of people on planet earth, suggesting that we have always been a non-ecological species and that this only manifests itself clearly in our time – in which we have to share the planet with more than 7,5 billion people. (In this view it is assumed that there have been a continuous cultural development all the way from ‘the beginning’, so without the major cultural changeover that we talked about earlier.) Yet I am convinced that experiencing the sacred quality of a

landscape makes a huge difference in the way we treat the land on which we are living and on which our very lives depend.

The first characteristic of a sacred landscape is that the inhabitants are really living in it, are embedded in it. In this view the land only apparently exists outside of us, and is actually an integral part of our own being. Valerie Andrews has captured the essence of this view nicely in her book *A Passion for This Earth*: ‘The land is truly the larger body that contains us, it is our second skin.’<sup>41</sup> Because this landscape in which we are embedded consists largely of space, it has an expansive effect on our consciousness. (And, as we mentioned earlier, we already experience ourselves in a material flesh-and-blood body in a spacious way.) Actually, it is almost self-evident that the large landscape-body is also conscious of our presence in her being. Perhaps it is particularly difficult for many Western people, especially when they live in an urbanized area, to acknowledge and observe this reality, because in the still prevailing scientific tradition ‘inanimate matter’ is considered passive and certainly not capable of conscious interaction. It is quite conceivable that this conviction is really blocking their view.

### **The Dreamtime and the Otherworld**

Indigenous cultures have always treasured the power of the invisible dimension. Well-known, for instance, is the *Dreamtime* which the Australian Aboriginals consider the source of their culture and which they believe is still present around them ( and therefore also around us). As the concept indicates, the symbols and messages of dreams are taken serious in this culture. If we go back to the roots of European culture we can find a similar and very interesting concept among the Celts. They believed that the material world was born from and still embedded in a powerful *Otherworld*. Different to the Christian conception of Heaven and Hell, the Celtic Otherworld was only separated from material existence by a thin veil and it was possible for human beings to visit this Otherworld during their life and for the Otherworld beings to pay a visit to the world of people. On some places in the landscape – particular hills, wells, mountains, rivers, or forests – the presence of the Otherworld was easier to experience than on others. Also on specific days of the year, like *Samhain* (later called *Halloween*, marking the beginning of winter) or *Beltaine* (marking the beginning of

summer), contact between this world and the Otherworld was easier than on others. But for the Celts the Otherworld was also present during the other days of the year and they always paid respect to it. It is no coincidence of course that the power of this Otherworld was experienced most intensely outside the human-inhabited world of villages and towns, in natural places, in the wilderness. Far away from the urban world the fairies or the sidhe reminded the people of the nearness of the Otherworld. In Celtic society habitation was of course still very sparse and we can see that in countries like Ireland, where the urbanization process has been relatively modest and many uncultivated regions have remained up to today, some people have managed to continued the Celtic belief in the power of the Otherworld. In this respect I think of the mythologist Sharon Blackie who has settled in Connemara, the Irish ex-catholic priest John O'Donohue who popularized Celtic spirituality, or the Irish philosopher and mystic John Moriarty.<sup>42</sup>

It is understandable that educated secular Western people, who have only recently managed to free themselves from the chains of Christian institutions, cannot take people who still believe in the power of the Otherworld very seriously. But they do not realize that the Celtic experience of the presence of Otherworld is very different from the dualistic Christian conception of Heaven and Hell, which only became a reality at death, in the afterlife. The Celtic experience of the Otherworld, however, is an expression of the way the power of the invisible dimension gives meaning and depth to our mortal life *in this world*.

### **Immanence and transcendence**

In a previous section we have mentioned that thousands of years BC a great cultural changeover has taken place. This changeover has also affected qualifications like *immanence* and *transcendence*. In the patriarchal outlook, that rose as a result of it, the invisible dimension was disconnected from nature, and elevated to a transcendent position, to a realm existing somewhere outside the world of nature – in Heaven, the home of God, who was depicted in a masculine way. In fact, immanence was more or less abolished then and nature was degraded to a feminine realm. The patriarchal conception of the transcendent dimension is still passed on to us by the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has even influenced people with a secular outlook. In this secular outlook the transcendent dimension as it was

expressed in the (patriarchal) religions was considered an illusionary realm, a mere way of escape from the ‘real’ material world and its problems. Yet paradoxically the people in this secular tradition, including the materialistic scientists, took over the role of the transcendent God and stepped into His shoes by being convinced that they could observe and control life from the outside.

People who experienced a near-death experience and the astronauts who experienced an outer space experience have shown us what it really means to temporarily observe earthly life from the outside. They have come to realize what it means to live our life within the matrix of our mortal earthly life. They became aware that the underlying invisible dimension is real, and is working like a matrix both from within and from without, both immanently and transcendently.

In our time we appear to rediscover the pre-patriarchal vision on immanence and transcendence: once again our minds are opened to recognized and experience the invisible dimension in the surrounding natural world. We can see this, for instance, in the rediscovery of the Sacred Landscape that makes us feel like being included in a larger body that – like a mother – truly cares for us. It makes us realize that all life is truly interconnected and the outer world is not separated from the inner world, and so in fact is experienced as a kind of inner world that we naturally want to take care of as well.

### **Who is controlling who?**

The difference between immanence and transcendence is illustrated well when we compare the phenomenon of natural growth with human construction. To get a good idea about the difference between natural growth and human construction we make a distinction here between within and without. But as we have pointed out in the previous section, in fact nothing can be exclusively located within or without. It is only a difference in emphasis: from which position do we start?

When we research life from without and try to imitate the natural accomplishments – and, as we have mentioned earlier, thereby as scientific creators step in the footsteps of the transcendent God – we tend to forget that nature has taken a very long time to evolve these accomplishments in an evolutionary sense, from within, but also nourished by matrices. When we

imitate them, we usually start by looking at the finished thing, at the material manifestation, and try to recreate it from the outside, yet powered by inner thinking processes.

Many years ago I have read the very interesting book *Mother Nature of Invention* by Felix Paturi about this theme.<sup>43</sup> He argued persuasively that the major difference between growth and construction is that natural capacities created by growth do not leave behind any environmental damage, whereas our human mechanical imitations do. Our ancestors, for instance, have observed the wings of birds and managed to recreate them mechanically as the wings of airplanes. The difference between the two is the environmental damage that flying with airplanes does to the planet. We imitate the fast movement of animals (who can outrun us and also can fly) but



*One of the first airplanes in Canada  
(John Boyd, 1911)*

we need fuel to provide the necessary power, leaving behind a trail of environmental pollution. Once we fully realize in what sense organisms are different, we are in a much better position to take effective measures to limit the damage or stop it. This might make us aware that we should only use the sun, wind and water directly as an extra source of energy!

Mechanical imitations of natural accomplishments do not only create environmental damage, the control they give us over reality at some point shifts back to reality controlling us. This process was already revealed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*. Trying to mechanically imitate a human being might start with an increase of control over reality, but necessarily must shift to a reality in which the mechanically created monster starts to control us. In our time we can see how the creation of mobile phones at first seemed to give us more control over our reality, to increase our capacity at making contact with others, to feel connected to people spread out over the planet. But it won't be long before the use of the mobile phone starts to control us: we get addicted to its use, feel continually drawn to the little screen, while ignoring the living world around us, in

which we still are 100% embedded. So through our focus on expanding our capacity of making contact, we are actually losing contact in another sense. In any kind of addiction this process has manifested itself, to more or less powerful extent.

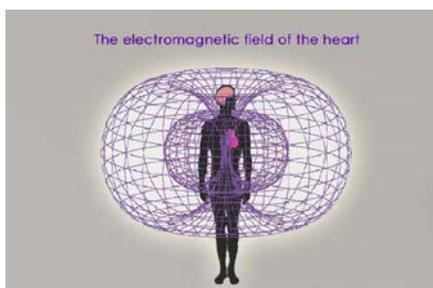
René Dubos shows in his book *A God Within* that creation of our mechanical constructions have served our control over reality, our exploitation of nature, and that there is another way of creating things, which artists have often understood and from which we can learn a lot: 'Instead of posing our will on nature for the sake of exploitation, we should attempt to discover the qualities inherent in each particular place for their development. Human life should not grow quantitatively through conquest of nature, but qualitatively in cooperation with nature.'<sup>44</sup> In fact, it all comes down to what we consider *order*. If we assume life to be inherently chaotic, then order must be imposed from without. This is what we have done for millennia on a large scale and has been the major drive behind the success of Western civilization: a gradual process of civilizing our original savage state, and in passing also of civilizing the 'savage' people of surrounding regions/countries. This has made empires great, and our legal system is still based on it. What this idea about order means is illustrated well (and quite humorously) by 'the Speaker of the House of Commons' in the British parliament when he repeatedly shouts 'order!' to calm down heated debates.

In our attempts to control reality – to master it, to impose order from without, to exploit nature – we have forgotten that the invisible dimension is still a reality that underlies the material world, and has never stopped exerting its power. It orders life spontaneously all by itself. And always it turns out to be more powerful than we are. If we only acknowledge its existence and respect it, it will never turn against us. That is what the Celts were already aware of when they respected the power of the Otherworld and its beings. It means releasing our masculine life approach that is perpetually focused on striving for (more) control, and turning instead to cooperation with nature. We can activate this attitude by breathing new life into the more feminine attitude of *surrender*. Or, in the words of Paul McCartney, by making space for the open, receptive attitude of *let it be*, words of wisdom from Mother Mary that at the time have inspired him to write that song.<sup>45</sup>

## Healing from the heart

To allow our closed-off mind to re-open again – to surrender – , we have to realize that the problem is really our persistence to hold on to the obsolete belief that the brain somehow exists separately from the rest of our being, and is fully in charge of our body and the environment. The most recent scientific discoveries, however, show that the heart is in charge and not the brain. For centuries the heart has been misunderstood and degraded to a mere mechanical pump for the circulation of our blood. Gregg Braden reported in his book *Resilience from the Heart* that scientific research has revealed that blood circulates of its own accord. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a Harvard scientist, J. Bremer, has filmed ‘the movement of blood flowing through the body of a chicken in its early development. So early, in fact, that the chicken’s heart had not yet started functioning. What made this film so exceptional is that Bremer was able to document the chick’s blood moving through its body, *on its own, without the aid of the heart pumping it.*’ (Emphasis by Braden) Later research has shown that blood didn’t move in a straight line, but ‘flowed as a series of spiral motions, like small eddy currents’, and that the movement even continued for minutes after the heart had been removed from the body.<sup>46</sup> With regard to the relationship with the brain, Braden has pointed out that the brain certainly ‘doesn’t act alone’, as the neurons in the heart are in fact brain-like cells, which give the heart the capacity to memorize.<sup>47</sup>

Another researcher, Joseph Chilton Pearce (whom we have come across earlier in this article), has argued – also based on scientific research – that the brain is part of a whole, open system that includes the heart. In his view it is a system in which the heart is even the

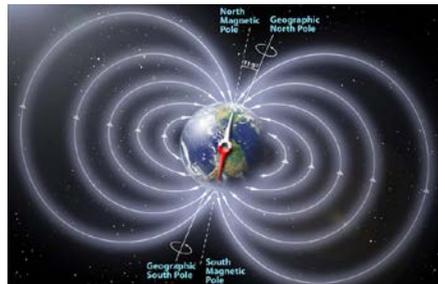


central organ. He has called it *the Heart-Mind Matrix*, which is also the title of his book about this theme.<sup>48</sup> He found out that the heart is in charge and the brain/mind is a mere servant; the heart is a centre of intelligence and the brain a centre of the intellect. He argued further that it is natural to let our intelligence guide our intellect: the primacy of our intelligent heart goes

down to the roots of our being, and of life in general. Therefore we'd be wise to listen to it.

Gregg Braden has argued that the heart is the one organ in the human body designed to communicate with what earlier we have called *the field* or *matrix*, in which our life is embedded. According to him, the heart has the strongest energy fields in the human body, 40 to 60 times stronger than the brain.<sup>49</sup> Pearce added to this that through the heart we can feel intimately connected to the world around us. He mentioned new techniques that have made the invisible electro-magnetic field surrounding visible, manifesting in its harmonious state as a beautiful *torus*. This torus happens to be very similar to the electro-magnetic torus that surrounds planet earth: when both are in a harmonious state, they are *coherent* with each other. And when they are not, then synchronization of their energy fields creates healing to both ourselves and to the planet!

Pearce emphasized that we should not assume that the electro-magnetic torus pattern really shows the energy field that is involved here: we only see what our instruments can register. What he wanted to say is that the invisible dimensions of the heart and the planet might still be largely undetected and might even be of a completely different nature, not yet detectable by our instruments. But the registration by the instruments does clearly show that there *is* an invisible dimension to both our heart and the planet. This all means that a coherent, harmonious exchange between the human heart and Mother Earth is very important, as through this invisible dimension intelligence is spread out over the entire world.



*Electromagnetic field of planet earth*  
(Picture: P. Reid, University of Edinburgh)

The many centuries of over-emphasis on the brain – in particular on its left hemisphere, on its rational capacities and ego identification –, which has intensified since the period of the Enlightenment, has disturbed the harmony both within ourselves and the harmony between us and our environment. This disharmony has manifested within ourselves as mental or

spiritual problems, socially as different forms of crime and on a planetary level as climate change. Scientifically the disproportional emphasis on the capacities of the human brain have made us cling to the material world as the only existing reality, thereby assuming that the invisible dimension is not important to us, because it is not part of the tangible world that we can sense and touch. Yet, our heart knows better and acknowledges the power of the invisible dimension. Therefore we need to reevaluate the power of the heart. The idea that the heart is a mere pump for circulating our blood was of course cleverly devised by our egocentric brain that needed to elevate itself to a superior position.

It is actually quite obvious that the heart, and not the brain, exists much nearer to the centre of our body and our being. The real (spiritual) centre of our being and our inner power is actually located below the heart, a little below the belly button, and is called *hara* (a term borrowed from Eastern spirituality). It is no coincidence that the female womb is located at this level as well. Once we have descended from the head to the heart we are also on the way to re-open ourselves to our *hara* centre, to reawaken our womb power.<sup>50</sup> Experiencing power coming from the centre of our being will make us aware of the fact that outer hierarchical forms power, called *power over* by feminists, are poor (and destructive!) substitutes, signs of having lost contact with our inner *hara* or womb power.<sup>51</sup>

### **The cyclical and linear worldview**

Earlier in this article I have pointed out how important it is to acknowledge that nature is essentially a dual nature, which manifests in different forms and on various levels: the day time version of our ourselves is incomplete without our night time version; our being consists of our waking hours and sleeping hours; next to a waking consciousness we have another, more hidden type of consciousness, identified by depth psychology as ‘the unconscious’; we are both connected and separate beings; in a seasonal context we have to go through both summer and winter periods; all living beings need the fertility of the dark soil underneath, which shows that life and death are interrelated. There is of course the ongoing process of breathing in and out in our own body. And women in their fertile years go through their monthly cycles, and like the tides of the sea are connected to

the cycles of the moon. The dual way in which nature expresses itself is beautifully depicted by the already mentioned Yin-Yang symbol.

What all these processes have in common is that the natural world expresses itself essentially in a cyclical way, as the ongoing movement through cyclical changes on various levels. There are the cycles of day and night, of being awake and being asleep, of the changing seasons, of breathing in and out, etc. The awareness of these cycles has always been part of a *cyclical worldview*, which has been prevalent among indigenous cultures, from the distant past until present. A cyclical worldview can only exist when people consider their lives to be fully embedded in nature; when they consider themselves to be part of nature, to be living in partnership with it and with all living beings in it. In this worldview it is obvious we cannot step outside the cycles to observe them or control them from without.

The rise of the *historical linear worldview* could only come into being after humans had started to believe they could position themselves outside nature, and could dominate it from without, as we know has been the case since the rise of the human ego from about 4000 BC.<sup>52</sup> That's why it is not so strange that in Western civilization there has been a very limited awareness of the inherent cyclical character of nature. The dominant power of Christianity, which subscribed to a linear worldview, to the idea of an historical movement from a beginning towards an end, has not helped much either. But with the revaluation of indigenous cultures in our time, we gradually manage to descend from our elevated position and also to open our minds again to the cyclical character of the natural world.

### **Turning points**

It is interesting for our story that in the cyclical worldview some specific moments in the cycles were recognized as moments in which the power of the invisible dimension could be experienced more directly. And these happened to be also the moments that could become *turning points* in the lives of the people. Above we have referred to the Celtic belief that the surrounding material world was born from an immaterial Otherworld and remained embedded in it. Samhain, marking the start of the Celtic year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, was a moment in the year when contact with the Otherworld was considered to be easier than on any other day. The fact that

it was continued under in the form of the Catholic festival of All Souls, when the dead are remembered – which is still celebrated every year one day later, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November – shows this concept was very powerful and deeply rooted. Gregg Braden has pointed out that indigenous traditions all over the world believe that there is a mysterious space between things, for instance, when the day turns into the night, and the night into the day. These moments of change are ‘cracks between worlds’ that, according to Braden, hold ‘the power of new possibilities’.<sup>53</sup> They provide potential turning points, moments in which the power of the invisible dimension assists us with opening up our hearts, with growing, with maturing, with changing our outlook.

These turning points can occur individually, but also collectively, opening the way to creating a more balanced and sustainable society. Yet we should not underestimate the fact that individual turning points can affect the collective level directly. The near-death experiences and outer space experiences we talked about earlier provided turning points on an individual level but have also started to affect the collective level, in the sense that they have been changing our idea about the true nature of consciousness and what it means to be living together on a fragile planet. Personally I experience the time of waking up in the morning as a particularly creative moment that I cherish a lot – which, for instance, has provided some important insights for the current article – and I suspect that many other people recognize it. We do not all need to strive just like Martin Luther King did in 1963, to have a dream that decades later still influences the lives of people all over the world. But it should be clear that, with regard to creating a better world, any individual contribution matters. Or in the words of Waterboys’ singer Mike Scott:

Well here we are in a special place  
What are you gonna do here?  
Now we stand in a special place  
What will you do here?  
What show of soul are we gonna get from you?<sup>54</sup>

A few time we have pointed to the major cultural changeover that took place a few thousand years BC and laid the foundation for the patriarchal

nature of Western civilization, for its dominator culture. I hope to have shown in this article that there are enough indications that in our time we see this millennia-long process coming to an end. Another thing I hope to have made clear is that the power of the invisible dimension does not infer that we must focus directly on this dimension, somewhere beyond life, but that that we must focus instead on the way this dimension enriches and animates *our current life*, inspiring us to make a positive and constructive contribution to it.

Leiden, March 2019

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants*, Penguin books, 1978, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess. Male Words and Female Images*, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Steve Taylor, *The Fall, The Insanity of the Ego in Human History and the Dawning of a New Era*, O Books, 2005; Malcolm Hollick and Christine Connelly, *Hope for Humanity. How understanding and healing trauma could solve the planetary crisis*, Earth Books, 2011; Charles Eisenstein, *The Ascent of Humanity. Civilization and the Human Sense of Self*, North Atlantic Books, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Ervin Laszlo, *The Whispering Pond. A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science*, Element, 1996, p. 174 and further.

<sup>5</sup> David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. Routledge, 2002; Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past. The Habits of Nature*, Park Street Press, 1995; Gregg Braden, *The Divine Matrix. Bridging Time, Space, Miracles, and Belief*, Hay House, 2007; Dieter Duhm, *The Sacred Matrix*, Verlag Meiga, 2008; Ervin Laszlo, *Science and the Reenchantment of the Cosmos. The Rise of the Integral Vision of Reality*, Inner Traditions, 2006; Laszlo, Ervin, *The Chaos Point. The World at the Crossroads*, Hampton Roads, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Rupert Sheldrake & Matthew Fox, *Natural Grace. Dialogues on Science & Spirituality*, Bloomsbury, 1996; Rupert Sheldrake & Matthew Fox, *The Physics of Angels. Exploring the Realm Where Science and Spirit Meet*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Sardello, *De ziel in de wereld. Een andere, spirituele benadering van het dagelijks leven*, Dianthus Uitgevers, 1998. (Dutch translation of the English original.)

<sup>8</sup> Ervin Laszlo, *The Whispering Pond. A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science*, Element, 1996, p. 211-213.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Taylor, *The Leap. The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening*, New World Library, 2017; Steve Taylor, *Spiritual Science. Why Science Needs Spirituality to Make Sense of the World*, Watkins Publishing, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees. What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries from a Secret World*, Greystone Books, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees. What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries from a Secret World*, Greystone Books, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *The Presence of the Past. The Habits of Nature*, Park Street Press, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Isabel Clarke, *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God*, O Books, 2008.

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- <sup>14</sup> Dick Swaab, *Wij zijn ons brein*, Atlas Contact, 2010.
- <sup>15</sup> Henryk Skolimowsky, *The Participatory Mind. A New Theory of Knowledge and of the Universe*, Arkana, 1994. The famous saying by Thomas Berry is: 'The universe is not a collection of objects but a communion of subjects.'
- <sup>16</sup> Steve Taylor, *The Fall, The Insanity of the Ego in Human History and the Dawning of a New Era*, O Books, 2005.
- <sup>17</sup> Charles Eisenstein, *The Ascent of Humanity. Civilization and the Human Sense of Self*, North Atlantic Books, 2013.
- <sup>18</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature. New Science and the Revival of Animism*, Rider, 1993.
- <sup>19</sup> Mary McGillicuddy, *John Moriarty. Not the Whole Story*, The Lilliput Press, 2018.
- <sup>20</sup> I have enjoyed a Dutch book about this theme: Annette Lavrijsen, *Shinrin Yoku. De helende kracht van bosbaden*, Ambo/Athos, 2018. But there are many other books about this theme, also in English.
- <sup>21</sup> Bruce Lipton, *The Biology of Belief. Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter and Miracles*, Mountain of Love/Elite Books, 2005.
- <sup>22</sup> Bruce Lipton writes about this experiment in an article on his website: <https://www.bruce-lipton.com/resource/article/the-wisdom-your-cells>. He also talks about it in the documentary *Heal*, from 2017, directed by Kelly Noonan Gorres, which (in 2019) can be watched on Netflix. A few other interesting writers that I have referred to in this article are interviewed in this documentary: Anita Moorjani, Gregg Braden, David Hamilton. There is a website of this documentary: <http://www.healdocumentary.com/>
- <sup>23</sup> Steve Taylor, *The Fall, The Insanity of the Ego in Human History and the Dawning of a New Era*, O Books, 2005; Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade. Our History, Our Future*, Pandora, 1990; Carol Lee Flinders, *The Values of Belonging. Rediscovering Balance, Mutuality, Intuition and Wholeness in a Competitive World*, HarperSanFrancisco, 2002; Leonard Shlain, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess. Male Words and Female Images*, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1998; Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology*, Penguin, 1976; Thom Hartmann, *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight. Waking up to Personal & Global Transformation*, Harmony Books, 1999.
- <sup>24</sup> More about the Goddess heritage in my article 'The Rediscovery of the Landscape', and about the equivalence of the feminine and masculine in my article 'The Hidden Wealth of the Virgin Mary', both downloadable from my website: <http://eng.wimbonis.nl/articles>.
- <sup>25</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *The Rebirth of Nature. New Science and the Revival of Animism*, Rider, 1993.
- <sup>26</sup> More about this in my article 'The rediscovery of the Landscape'.
- <sup>27</sup> Joseph Chilton Pearce, *Magical Child. Rediscovering Nature's Plan for Children*, Bantam Books, 1980, p. 18 and further.
- <sup>28</sup> Joseph Chilton Pearce, *Magical Child. Rediscovering Nature's Plan for Children*, Bantam Books, 1980.
- <sup>29</sup> Pim van Lommel, *Eindeloos bewustzijn. Een wetenschappelijk visie op de bijna-dood ervaring*, Uitgeverij Ten Have, 2009.
- <sup>30</sup> Anita Moorjani, *Dying to be me. My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing*, Hay House, 2014.
- <sup>31</sup> Edgar Mitchell, *The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey Through the Material and Mystical Worlds*, G. Putnam & Sons, 1996.
- <sup>32</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *The Sense of Being Stared at. And Other Aspects of the Extended Mind*, Crown Publishers, 2003.
- <sup>33</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home. And Other Unexplained Powers of Animals*, Hutchinson, 1999.

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- <sup>34</sup> Rupert Sheldrake, *Dogs That Know When Their Owners Are Coming Home. And Other Unexplained Powers of Animals*, Hutchinson, 1999, p. 67.
- <sup>35</sup> Ervin Laszlo, *The Whispering Pond. A Personal Guide to the Emerging Vision of Science*, Element, 1996, p. 103.
- <sup>36</sup> Laurens van der Post, *A Walk with a White Bushman*, Penguin, 1988.
- <sup>37</sup> Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants*, Penguin books, 1978, p. 181.
- <sup>38</sup> Masaru Emoto, *The Hidden Messages in Water*, Atria Books, 2005. He has published a good few other well-illustrated (little) books.
- <sup>39</sup> I quote Corbin from a book by Robert Sardello: *Love and the Soul. Creating a Future for Earth*, Goldenstone Press, Heaven and Earth Publishing & North Atlantic Books, Berkeley 2008, p. 132.
- <sup>40</sup> Zie mijn artikel 'De herontdekking van het landschap'.
- <sup>41</sup> Valerie Andrews, *A Passion for This Earth. Exploring a New Partnership of Man, Woman and Nature*, HarperCollins, 1990.
- <sup>42</sup> Sharon Blackie, *If Women Rose Rooted. The Journey to Authenticity and Belonging*, September Publishing, 2017; Sharon Blackie, *The Enchanted Life. Unlocking the Magic of Everyday Life*, September Publishing, 2018, John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara, Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World*, Bantam Press, 1997; John O'Donohue, *Eternal Echoes. Exploring our Hunger to Belong*, Bantam Press, 1998; John Moriarty, *Dreamtime* (revised and expanded edition), Lilliput Press, 1999.
- <sup>43</sup> Felix R. Paturi, *Mother Nature of Invention. The Engineering of Plant Life*. Harper & Row, 1976. I actually read the Dutch version of this book (*De plant als bouwmeester. Geniale ideeën in de natuur, voorbeelden voor een leefbare wereld*, Ankh Hermes, 1975). The book is originally written in German.
- <sup>44</sup> René Dubos, *A God Within. A positive philosophy for a more complete fulfillment of human potentials*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1972, p. 12.
- <sup>45</sup> I refer here, of course, to the Beatles song *Let it be*: 'When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary come to me, speaking words of wisdom, let it be...'
- <sup>46</sup> Gregg Braden, *Resilience from the HEART. The power to thrive IN LIFE'S EXTREMES*, Hay House, 2015, p. 4-5.
- <sup>47</sup> Gregg Braden, *Resilience from the HEART. The power to thrive IN LIFE'S EXTREMES*, Hay House, 2015, p. 21-22.
- <sup>48</sup> Joseph Chilton Pearce, *The Heart-Mind Matrix. How the Heart Can Teach the Mind New Ways to Think*, Park Street Press, 2012.
- <sup>49</sup> Gregg Braden, *Resilience from the HEART. The power to thrive IN LIFE'S EXTREMES*, Hay House, 2015, p. 10.
- <sup>50</sup> Azra and Seren Bertrand, *Womb Awakening. Initiatory Wisdom From The Creatrix Of All Life*, Bear & Company 2017.
- <sup>51</sup> For more about hara power, see the book *Power and Sex* by Scilla Elworthy: Scilla Elworthy, *Power and Sex. A Book about Women*, Vega, 2003; The American psychologist Dacher Keltner has argued in his book *The Power Paradox* that 'power over' is really a loss of authentic inner power: Dacher Keltner, *The Power Paradox. How we Gain and Lose Influence*, Penguin, 2017. I have included their ideas in my blogpost, entitled 'Male privilege and the abuse of power' on Leiden Law Blog, and related them to the current #MeToo discussion: <https://leidenlawblog.nl/articles/male-privilege-and-the-abuse-of-power>
- <sup>52</sup> Riane Eisler's well-known book *The Chalice and the Blade* gives a very good description of the change-over from a partnership culture to a dominator culture, which not only triggered the rise of patriarchal societies but also the establishment of a linear worldview. Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade. Our History, Our Future*, Pandora, 1990.

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<sup>53</sup> Gregg Braden, *Resilience from the HEART. The power to thrive IN LIFE'S EXTREMES*, Hay House, 2015, p. 209 and further.

<sup>54</sup> 'Don't bang the drum', from the 1985 Waterboys album *This is the Sea*.