

A short review of:

The Daughter of Gaia
Rebirth of the Divine Feminine

Marko Pogačnik
(prepared for translators
(from English to Slovenian language))

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1. The Goddess Now

Yesterday I received a mysterious cylinder in my daily post. Renate, a friend of mine from Bavaria, had sent me a reproduction of a Russian Black Virgin icon. It was a 16th century Madonna of Mercy painted by the Novgorod School. Previously the reproduction had hung above the bed where Renate's mother lay dying during the turbulent year 2000. Now I was to have it-wrote Renate in the accompanying letter-so that I could feel the gentleness of the Black Virgin, as opposed to what I had been saying, during the previous few months while often feeling ill, that I was enduring a phase of change ruled by the *merciless* Black Goddess.

I had been persistently sick, but not seriously enough to cancel my workshops that were scheduled to follow one after another, month after month in different countries. It was quite a challenge for me to stand in front of large groups and teach the knowledge of life while feeling sick. Rather than excuse myself, I would explain that a phase of extended creativity, such as I have experienced as an earth healer and artist during the past few years, would sooner or later be followed by a phase of change. To put it in other language, a language that reaches the level of the soul, the creative phase must inevitably be succeeded by the phase of the Black Goddess.

The language that I use to express myself is the language of the Goddess. This language was known to innumerable cultures before the Bronze Ages when we began our obsession with the male gods. It is a cyclic language that honors the three distinct phases of any life process, be they personal, artistic, or socioeconomic. During the first, *white*, phase, under the rule of the Virgin Goddess, one is encouraged to search for inspirations and visions, and to forge plans. I call this the phase of Wholeness. Only by experiencing the touch of the universal whole can we embody the full potential of the inspiration.

The second phase follows when the seeds sown during the white phase of the Virgin start to germinate, and the creative impulses expand to manifest the abundance of life. Works are created, relationships established, mountains moved ...

Traditionally, the second phase of the Goddess, her *red* phase, is called the phase of the Mother. On the one hand one can accept such a label, because being a mother means giving birth to children. It is a primeval creative symbol. On the other hand, such a label may cause us to forget an important characteristic of the creative phase of the Goddess: this is the aspect of partnership. Only through creative interaction between yin and yang, between feminine and masculine, between the Goddess and God aspects of life, can creation evolve. Because of this, I prefer to use the expression 'the Creative Phase of the Goddess'.

The Threefold Goddess Principle

<i>Symbolic</i>		<i>Three Phases of the</i>
<i>Color</i>	<i>Traditional Name</i>	<i>Goddess and their Meaning</i>

White	Virgin Goddess	The Phase of Wholeness: Experiencing the holistic essence of a being or a phenomenon
Red	Mother Goddess	The Creative Phase: Based on the creative interaction between the opposite poles
Black	Black Goddess	The Phase of Transformation: Moving from death or decay towards resurrection

Looking at the icon of the Black Virgin from the Novgorod school more closely, I realized that she is indeed holding a seed of the future in her hands: it is the Christ Child. She is holding him firmly to her chest with both her hands. But the child too has snuggled himself close to the Virgin, and is clutching at her robe with both of his hands. Cheek to cheek they touch each other, and they seem to be one.

In that moment I realized that the mouths of both Virgin and Christ Child are slightly open. And something more: they are so close to each other that their lips nearly touch. Suddenly, I felt that there must be a stream of breath flowing from mouth to mouth. I moved my hand into that sensitive area of the painting so that my fingers could test the quality of the exchange that I intuited. And they did indeed feel a solid stream of energy flowing from mouth to mouth. Even though I was using a reproduction of the painting to test the stream, the resonance with the icon's original message was so strong that, regardless of its condition, my fingers could follow a mingling of water and fire ether moving back and forth between the two mouths.

While I was wondering what all of this might mean, another inspiration hit me. I felt the urge to open my mouth slightly and form a double arch with my lips. This made a channel, through which I found myself breathing very slowly and consciously. While breathing in, I realized that I am drawing in an extremely sweet presence and distributing it throughout my inner space. And while breathing out, I felt myself to be the Christ Child, renewing his relationship with the Mother.

The Virgin Goddess holding the Christ Child in her lap-usually called Madonna, *Mater Domini*, the Mother of God-is one of the most inspiring images ever created by our western culture. With its roots in the image of dark-skinned Isis, the ancient Egyptian Goddess holding her Son Horus in her lap, it is imprinted into the collective memory of humanity, reaching far beyond the boundaries of the Christian world.

I believe that what gives the image of the Madonna its immense power is an inner knowing that people share subconsciously. It is the knowing that there is stored within each human being an as yet unknown, sacred dimension that gives each one of us the right to experience ourselves as the Christ Child, sitting in the lap of the Virgin.

This kind of thought may be familiar to you. But did you ever truly consider what is meant by our 'sitting in the lap of the Virgin'? It simply means that the landscape and environment that we perceive all around us, and *any--any-event* that affects our life or weaves itself into its web, represents the lap of the Goddess. It is into the lap of the Virgin that we were laid, like an embryo into a womb, to evolve and expand on our divine essence.



Russian Black Virgin icon 16th Century.

Unfortunately, instead of remembering the archetype that is hidden behind the billions of images of the Madonna displayed on walls, windscreens and altars, people prefer to persist in their belief that the Virgin is holding another child in her hands, and not them! No matter how noble that child may appear in the paintings and sculptures, perhaps crowned with jewels or adorned with a bright aura, we should remember that the biblical reports all convey that the Christ Child was born in a poor stable, the son of a carpenter. This is a clear sign that tells us that this Child finds its reference point within the true essence of any human being, and not only in its relationship to a Chosen one which latter belief has been forced on our culture during the later centuries of the Christian dispensation.¹

One may say that this is a question of belief. Yet I would say that archetypal

images do not need a belief system to be recognized as true. They simply are. They are the food of life. Instead of quarreling over their true meaning, one should muster up one's courage and experience their essence. Shall we try? May I ask you to put the book aside for a moment; and then to be here now and close your eyes. But before you close them, in order to facilitate the experience, let me give you some instructions on how to implement the exercise that I have been inspired to share with you.

Breath exchange between the Virgin and yourself

Imagine that you are sitting within the emotional field of the Virgin:

- *The landscape that you can see through the window (or perhaps you see the night sky clothed with stars or clouds), together with all the features of your room, indeed all that is around you, represent the body of the Virgin Goddess. Do not cling to the forms, but to the essence of whatever is around you.*
- *Open your mouth slightly so that by making a circle of your lips you form a channel.*
- *Start to breathe consciously through that channel, letting your breath flow extremely slowly and silently.*
- *Imagine that while breathing out, your breath is being spread throughout the universe.*
- *Imagine that while breathing in, you are taking in the quality of the Virgin's presence which is all around you.*
- *Then slowly breathe out again ...*

Continue doing this for a while, and listen carefully how it feels to be the Christ Child sitting in the lap of the Goddess.

Welcome back to the book! I would much enjoy sharing our mutual experience of the exercise, but the fact is that it is much easier for me to tell you my story than it is for you to tell me yours. So please listen to what I experienced three weeks later when, with a group of students, I visited the sanctuary of the Black Virgin in Altbötting, Bavaria.

¹ I have elaborated on this precise point in my book *Christ Power and the Earth Goddess*, Findhorn Press 1999.

Nowadays, the sanctuary is perhaps the most frequented place of pilgrimage in all of Germany. People come in crowds to venerate the Black Virgin holding the Christ Child in her lap. It is a medieval wooden sculpture no more than 12 inches high, positioned in a niche within a small rounded Romanesque rotunda painted completely in black. The original chapel was later complemented by an unpretentious church surrounded by a vestibule where innumerable thanksgiving tablets are displayed, donated by those who have experienced miraculous healing after invoking the help of the Virgin of Altbötting.

Legend tells that during the early Middle Ages a child drowned in the nearby river. It was some time before the victim could be found and brought lifeless from the water. But the mother was brave and had faith. Pressing the child to her breast, she ran to the chapel of the Black Virgin to ask for her help. Instantly the child was miraculously restored to life.

When I entered the sanctuary I went directly to the black space comprising the round chapel where the image of the Virgin resides, nowadays overlaid with silver and jewels. In effect, I acted just as had the mother with the dead child. With great reverence

I knelt down in the middle of the chapel, and in a gesture of prayer raised my hands up to the level of my heart. A long silence followed.

Then I curved my lips to form a channel, and imagining and firmly believing that I am within the Virgin-the Goddess being as vast as the cosmos-I started to exchange my breath with her breath. Suddenly I found myself within an enormous eye full of grace. It was watching me at the same time that I was watching it. Its gaze was composed of purest water and filled with a noble kind of compassion.

I felt the inspiration to bend my hands forward and open them as one opens a book, but without moving them away from my heart. In the next moment I noticed that, in slow motion, within the universal eye of the Virgin a crystal clear tear was forming. When it reached its full size, it dropped. For an instant I was overwhelmed with the power of its beauty and didn't know how to react. Then I realized that, in anticipation, my hands had already taken the form of a channel. In that same moment the tear dropped into the channel of my hands and began to glide towards my heart. I opened my heart even wider so as to receive it properly, but to my surprise it did not enter my inner space but instead slid along the surface of my body into the earth.

Obviously, the blessing was not meant for me personally. Not that I was disappointed, but obviously I had been taught a lesson about the true role of the Virgin's compassion. The message that I felt within the Goddess' tear as it slid down to the ground spoke of her mercy, embracing the dirty stream of destructive, or even malicious and cruel, deeds and emotions set in motion by human beings worldwide. I realized that humanity would have instantly collapsed under the weight of its self-destructive behavior if that burden had not been continually diluted by the field of mercy spreading constantly from the heart of the Virgin Goddess.

When I stepped out of the chapel and viewed it from a distance, I saw a cylindrical wall composed of etheric light, around which were moving innumerable elemental beings and nature spirits, all working hard to strengthen its stability. Watching their busy endeavor for a while with my inner eye, I realized that the material with which they are constantly rebuilding the giant pillar of white light is distilled from the emotional power of devotion and its attendant feelings, which the pilgrims release as they walk ceremonially around the chapel or pray in its sanctuary.

When I asked my inner voice why the beings of nature should invest so much energy in supporting the cylindrical space, I received the knowledge that this giant 'pillar' is in fact a channel. It is through this 'pillar' that the power of blessing and mercy released by the pilgrims through their ongoing adoration of the Virgin is channeled into the energy field of humanity. Its purpose is to constantly neutralize the self-destructive tendencies and actions erupting at each moment within those parts of humanity's body that have become chaotic. This is how we still survive on Earth-even if we are not conscious of the gift that makes our survival possible.

A few weeks later, inspired by the busy actions of the elemental beings at Altötting, I realized that each one of us could help spread the merciful blessing of the Goddess worldwide. We can personally become a channel through which powers and qualities can be released that are capable of dissolving the forces pulling humanity, and nature with it, into the abyss of death. Such action on our part would provide welcome support for the selfhealing process initiated three years ago by the soul of the Earth. By this I mean the so-called Earth Changes that are currently affecting our planet in an unprecedented way. As I explained in my last book, *Earth Changes, Human Destiny*, the fundamental frequency of the earth body has been changed: its power-fields have been reinforced and the emotional field has been cleansed. The consciousness of the earth has transcended the limitations that were previously holding it locked within the physical body of earth and it has spread far out into the universe. A new Earth is in the process of birth².

The first opportunity to use the healing channel surfaced as I was leaving the

birthday party held in honor of my granddaughter Tara, a beautiful young lady of 11 years. In spite of the cheerful atmosphere, I felt a dull cramp that was slowly and overpoweringly invading my chest and heart space. I tried to ignore it, thinking that this was not the proper time to work on my inner problems.

Afterwards, I awoke in the middle of the night and realized that the cramp was still there. Now I was ready to concede that I was dealing with a message expressed through the language of my body. I felt that I had better listen and avoid the need for the Goddess to invent some more severe way to deliver her message. Life always finds a way to say what it has to say. We can of course persistently ignore its messages. But by going that route, we run the risk of being overthrown at an unexpected moment by some 'trumpet blast'.

What I am talking about here is the hologrammic language in which the Goddess talks to birds, rivers, forests, and to human beings too. It is composed of innumerable impulses that pop up amidst our everyday life situations, calling for our attention and the subsequent action or correction of the ongoing processes. It is a flexible language that can make use of most unusual ways of expressing itself. Its messages can be articulated through the medium of dreams, bodily reactions, sudden inspirations, as well as the banal situations that life brings with it, such as mishaps, bright moments of joy, illnesses of all kinds, or signs that often pass unnoticed. To become sensitive to one's life and independent of the often misplaced advice of others, one should become alert, listening and learning what the spirit of life poetically I call it the Goddess-is personally telling you. You need to remember that she may talk to you at any moment and that she uses a most elaborate language composed of everyday life. This is her hologrammic language, and it is easy to overlook or ignore her message.

2 For more precise details, see my book *Earth Changes, Human Destiny: Coping and Attuning with the Help of the Revelation of St. John*, Findhorn Press, 2000.

While I was lying awake in the middle of the night-it was not easy to digest the abundant food from the birthday party-I remembered how in the past I had often ignored the messages that tried to express themselves through my bodily reactions, and how painful had been the consequences. So I succeeded in convincing myself that I should stop ignoring the cramp and look for the cause of whatever was holding my breath as if closed in a rigid cage.

I started to breathe consciously while I looked inwardly to perceive the context of my bodily reactions. Quite suddenly, I noticed a transparent being approaching me from behind. To be approached from the back usually means that one is confronting the spirit of an ancestor, a soul from the world of the deceased or-as in the present case-one of the past-life aspects of a human being presently alive. As the spirit came closer, I noticed that, instead of a human head, it was bearing the repulsive head of a wolf. At the same time my intuition identified it with one of the men who had attended that evening's birthday party. Suffering from the pain of severe spinal problems, he had had to use crutches to move around.

Thus far I had recognized three elements that, if put together, could yield the intended message: the crippled man that I had met the day before, the wolf-masked head from a past life memory, and the cramp that was interfering with my breathing. To come to a deeper knowing of a situation's meaning, I often use a method that was taught me while working with nature and exploring natural environments. In my imagination I let different elements of a place or a landscape merge one into the other, while I myself work on perceiving the forthcoming synthesis. I become one with it so that I can 'see' the issue from the inside. In this way I often get insights whose complexity surprises me.

In the present case, I put together the above-mentioned three elements derived from the hologrammic language of the moment. Instantly, there appeared the image of a big pyramidshaped fire whose flames spiraled higher and higher. I understood that a real

fire was not intended, but rather a fiery state of upsurging emotions, in which the two of us—the man with the filthy wolf's mask and myself—were competing for greater power and dominance in our clan or kingdom. It was disgusting to view it from the perspective of the present day.

Then a sudden knowing surfaced—I cannot explain from where—in effect a kind of intuition. I knew that in his striving for power my opponent was using the instruments of black magic. But I seemed to be versed in psychic protection. As a result his projections recoiled on him, so that he could never more be rid of the repulsive animal head that he had tried to project on me. The health problems with which he was struggling in this life seemed to originate in the, now invisible, distortion of his head.

What to do in such a situation? First of all, I sincerely forgave him and asked for the blessing of universal forgiveness. Yet I felt that such engagement on my part was too passive. It remained on the spiritual level and my decision was not sufficiently grounded in the emotional dimension of the heart. Then I remembered the tear of mercy from the eye of the Black Virgin. As I had in the chapel at Altötting, I exchanged a few breaths between myself as the Christ Child and the all-embracing presence of the Virgin. Next, I opened a V-shaped channel with my hands in front of my heart chakra. In the very next moment, the crystal clear sphere of the Virgin's tear dropped into my hands. It was so full of the fluid quality of grace that I feared that it would overflow. Instead, I carefully directed the channel towards the imagined presence of the person involved, and by twitching my hands a bit I caused the tear to roll in the direction of my former enemy. I could perceive him as totally bathed in its cleansing and liberating vibration. What a relief!

It was mid-December 2000 when severe clashes were occurring between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The previous day, a call had arrived from the Global Peace Work Institute in Tamera, Portugal, to support the search for a possible resolution to the conflict. How could one single person, sitting at home more than a thousand miles away, be of effective help? Now I knew. I performed the same procedure as I had during the previous night's struggle with the past-life memory and asked for the tear of mercy. But this time I directed it towards the land of conflict. I was surprised how thirsty the land was there, sucking up the channeled grace.

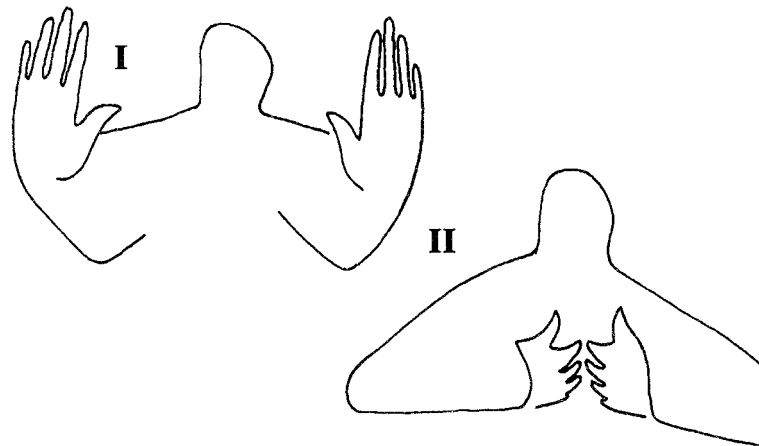
I would be happy for you to pluck up your courage and go into the experience for yourself. The business of explaining and convincing on the mental level would use up too much of this book's precious space. Opening up to the immediate experience could also give the Virgin the opportunity to answer your call in the most appropriate way for you personally. Besides, to be honest, I know that to write a book truly dedicated to the Goddess means that I must leave behind the masculine tool of overpowering intelligence and find a kind of expression that is in harmony with her way of being. And her way of being is equivalent to the way of experience.

If this makes you feel stressed or nervous, and unready to glide fully into the experience, I propose that you take a few deep breaths and relax. Without moving from your chair, you can do a hologrammic exercise to center yourself in the peace of the present moment.

Hologrammic exercise to experience the present moment

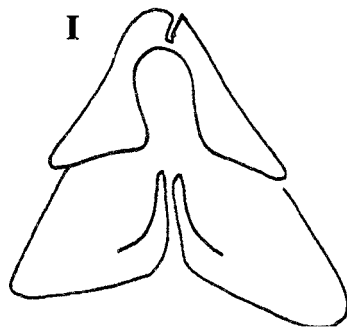
Stretch your hands out in front of you and hold the palms open and upright in line with your shoulders. This is a symbol of the duality of past and future, which is the space in which we usually live. Then start to move your hands towards you. As you bring them close to your chest, turn them around so that finally the tips of the middle fingers touch each other. The triangle thus formed should point towards the center of your heart chakra. Hold it like this for a moment. Then continue the movement by turning the hands downwards and apart again. In this way you will find yourself once again in the position of duality where you started. Hold it like this for a moment. Then repeat the gesture a few times till you feel centered and ready to move into the exercise of

experiencing the Tear of Mercy.



The Tear of

- Start by the Tear nature situation



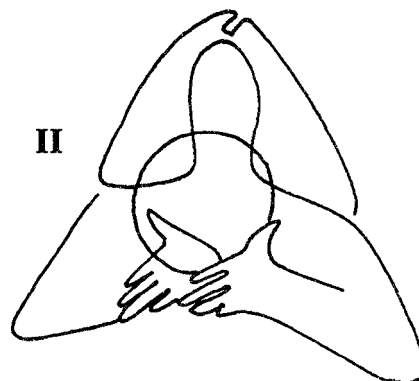
Mercy exercise

deciding where you would like to direct of Mercy. Is it towards a person in distress, beings in a place suffering from ecological destruction, or perhaps the political of a country in turmoil.

- Hold your of prayer. feelings.

hands in front of your chest in the position Also hold your goal in your mind and Next, exchange a few breaths with the

- Virgin who is present all around you-we did just such an exercise together not long ago.
- Open your hands as a book opens. By doing this, a channel has been formed, and now ask the Virgin to shed a tear into this channel.
- See and feel the tear bounce for a while in the channel of your hands. Twitch the channel a bit, so that in your imagination you direct the tear to glide to its preconceived goal. Keep a firm heart connection with the chosen person or place to accompany the gift of grace on its way there. Continue for a while present there through the vibration of your opened heart.
- Choose another goal for your service to the Virgin and do the whole procedure again.
- Give thanks.



to be

I hope you do not feel that I am intruding on your private space if now and then I invite your collaboration. Feel free each time to accept or simply skip it. My proposals

for your cooperation originate in an inspiration that I should create this book as an instrument through which the impulses of the Divine Feminine can work in the here and now: You should know that the Virgin does not appreciate our dealing with her as a distant image attached to any historical tradition whatever. She wants us to be open to her presence now within the actual organism of life.

Also, I believe that the time is now ripe for us to start cocreating with her, be it personally or on the level of society. This in turn could open unprecedented potentials for personal growth and planetary transformation. But neither of the traditional ways which we are accustomed to use, neither the emotional practice of devotion nor the mental instruments of different spiritual practices, are sufficient to get the co-creative process moving. I believe that only the freedom of the loving heart coupled with the creative imagination can bridge the worlds that seem to divide us, and make possible a new phase in the relationship between human beings and the Sacred Feminine.

This is why I have started to write this book right now. A few months ago during my yearly retreat to the Adriatic island, I pondered where my creativity might take me during the coming year. It was then the 4th of September, 2000. My idea was to work on a project best characterized by the sentence: "To avoid the threatened ecological break-down, the planet is radically reorganizing itself." I was pleased with the idea of writing some more on the actual geomantic and ecological situation of the Earth, though my feminine self protested.

It took me some time to overcome my stubborn ego. When I was finally ready to listen to the reason for that protest, I felt, far behind my back, a kind of a hilarious yet peaceful movement. It seemed as if something extremely interesting, definitively feminine in quality, wished to express itself. It carried the sense that in my future work I could offer it a form through which it could voice itself, provided I could develop the kind of sensitivity that it demands. Of course my masculine self immediately wanted to know what I was dealing with.

So I was seduced into devoting more and more of my efforts to finding the answer. No way! Despair and disappointment started to take over. Suddenly I realized that out in the sea a group of dolphins was approaching the island, joyfully playing and jumping out of water only to disappear again. I immediately plunged myself into the cosmic atmosphere that dolphins usually carry around them, focusing again on my question. Their presence acted as a mirror in which I could recognize a new, as yet unexperienced aspect of the Goddess. She wants to surface through my consciousness and perhaps find expression through my writing.³

The idea that the feminine aspect of Divinity is not an unchangeable principle was quite familiar, to me, As I mentioned at the very beginning of this Chapter, the presence of the Goddess is a cyclical one, We talked about the natural succession of the white, red and the black phases of the Threefold Goddess, The Phase of Wholeness is followed by the Phase of Creation, and the maternal Phase of Creation by the Phase of Transformation, But this time the inspiration was telling me that even the principle of the Threefold Goddess is not eternal: It may suggest, in any one moment, the old needs to be succeeded by a new epoch of the Goddess.

It was no accident that three months later I discovered a very rare medieval image that depicted the transition from an old epoch of the Goddess to a new one. It is located only a few steps from the sanctuary of the Black Virgin in Altötting, which I mentioned above as the place where I was initiated into the power of mercy. It sometimes sounds incredible, yet the unforeseen potentials of the hologrammic language are packed into each moment of time and each fractal of space. The capacity to store limitless amounts of information within the fabric of the living environment is simply a function of the earth's consciousness. This is why I use the image of a hologram to give a name to the language of life. It means that each situation to which we turn our attention is like a

fractal of the whole and has stored within its wholeness all the information that we need in that moment. What is expected of us is that we recognize the message and find a key to its understanding.

Stirred by the waves of pilgrims visiting the Black Virgin of Altötting, the medieval church authorities decided to build a grand cathedral-like building in the late Gothic style beside the modest sanctuary. Later, in the 17th century, the Gothic images became too dull and austere for the taste of the ruling class. They were made to yield their space to the more superficial dynamics of the baroque, As a result-not just in Altötting but everywhere in Europe-the medieval figures disappeared from the altars. Yet it happens that some of them have been preserved in some outlying corner of the buildings, It seems that people were especially hesitant to destroy the ancient images of the Virgin.

3 On the subject of dolphins collaborating to decode the quality of an ambience, see my book *Healing the Heart a/the Earth*, page 142, Findhorn Press 1998.

Often a substitute space would be found for them, where they could be displayed for people's continued veneration. This may have been how the unique Gothic sculpture of the Virgin with the Christ Child from Altötting was placed beside the western entrance to the grand sanctuary, an entrance that is not used by the public any more. There she stands on a sickle moon whose shape portrays the strangely wrinkled face of an old woman. It would have been easy for me to explain away that crone's face as depicting the being of the moon, if I did not remember a face with exactly the same quality. This was the face shown me by the Earth Mother while I was preparing one of my early workshops on elemental beings in Kinsau, Bavaria, Interestingly, I was invited there by the *Sophia* Foundation, which has its seat in the small village.



Gothic sculpture of the Virgin with the Christ Child standing on the Moon which bears the Earth Mother's face, Altotting, Bavaria.

I was exploring the surroundings of the village looking for places where I could lead the participants to experience different kinds of nature spirits and elemental beings when I discovered that the local environment is a sacred nature temple. Unfortunately, its exceptional qualities have vanished from human awareness long ago.

Along the River Lech, deep down in its canyon, there is the dominion of the elemental beings of water. Further, I found that the consciousness of the air element is focused on one of the surrounding hills. One could imagine it as a circle of fairies moving in dancing rhythm high up in the atmosphere. They are free, yet connected to the top of that hill through a kind of a light pillar, and represent the consciousness of the surrounding landscape.⁴

The center of those beings who ensoul the element of fire is marked by the Basilica of St. Michael, built during the Middle Ages in the nearby town of Altstadt. Luckily the sanctuary has preserved all its architectonic and sculptural beauty, expressed through the language of the Romanesque style. It is not by chance that the builders invoked the presence of St. Michael there, so that his spear may counterbalance the 'dangerous' powers of the fire beings who have been residing in the place since time immemorial. To mark the intent, there is a carving of Michael above the main portal, featuring his famous fight with the fiery dragon.

Finally I found the area dedicated to the beings of the earth element. What once must have been a sacred grove is nowadays incarnated as a simple wood situated on an overhang above the River Lech. The entrance to the wood is guarded by a giant beech tree whose broad network of roots spread visibly along the slope. I felt inspired to enter the kingdom behind its root system with my full consciousness, and there found awaiting me the face of the Earth Mother.

At first I was shocked to meet 'in person' a figure that belongs to the mythic world, and to experience its almost tangible presence. Then a vibration of grace hit me and dissolved all my preconceptions. I gazed into a broad mask-like face composed of tiny clods of earth pulsating in the dark brown color typical of the Black Virgin icons of the Middle Ages.

I felt the impulse to step into the mask-like face and was amazed how vivid the images of the elemental beings became after I started to look upon them through the eyes of the Earth Mother. Afterwards, I began to use the image of the Mother's facemask as a doorway, in order to perceive through its opening the invisible world of elemental beings and nature spirits who-to put it in a symbolic way-are her children.

You can test the method for yourself when you next go for a walk in a forest or visit a place imbued with the intelligence of nature.

To see nature through the face of the Earth Mother

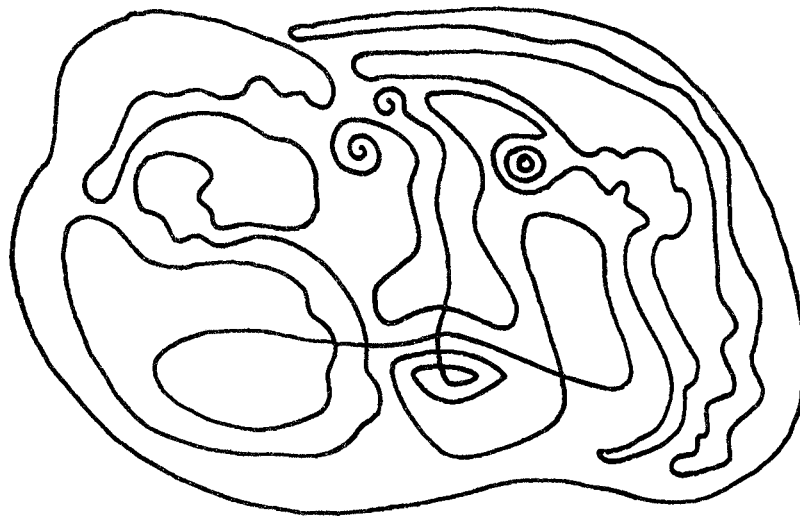
- *Choose a place where you can feel the presence of the powers of nature.*
- *With eyes open, imagine in front of you the broad face of Mother Earth, composed of tiny pieces of wood, chunks of earth, interlacing roots or mosses... Use anything useful that you notice in the ambience of the exercise as material for your*

imagination.

- *Be sure that the image you are building is imbued with your love for the Mother:*
- *Do not let yourself hesitate too much, and build the image swiftly so as not to lose its emotional and magnetic momentum.*

4 For more detailed information on elemental beings, see my book *Nature Spirits & Elemental Beings*, Findhorn Press 1997.

- *Then, in the very next moment, let your consciousness slide into the face of the Mother to become one with it. Forget the image and be free to perceive the qualities, powers or beings that reside beyond the visible face of nature.*
- *When you return to your everyday awareness, give thanks for the insights you have gained.*



The face of the Earth Mother, my vision from Kinsau, Bavaria.

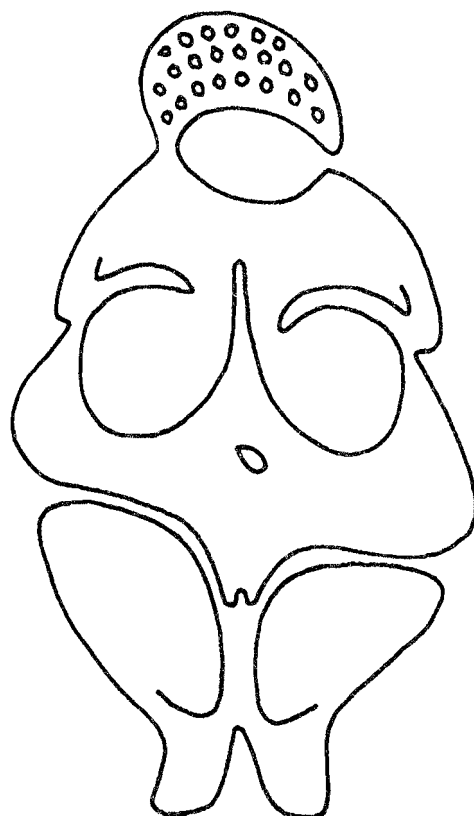
After I had used this method as a communication tool for a year or two, I forgot about it. The face of the Mother became overlaid by other methods of perception that I later discovered and taught. But three months before my visit to the Black Virgin sanctuary at Altötting, it reappeared with enormous strength, almost as a command. It was the end of August, 2000.

At that time I was at work decoding a landscape temple in the environs of a place quite close to Altötting. This place, stewarded by the Earthchildren Montessori School, is called Eberharting. By 'landscape temple', I mean a composition of particular places that together make up the sacred dimension of a given landscape. I will deal with this theme in more depth later. At this time it is only important to mention that, according to the signs I found, the landscape temple of Eberharting has its roots in the Goddess principle as it developed during the Neolithic Age. Its foundations are associated with the figure of the Triple Goddess as briefly sketched at the beginning of this Chapter. This means that the landscape temple is basically composed of three sacred places, of which one is dedicated to the Virgin as the embodiment of Wholeness, another to the maternal principle of Creation and the third to the Black Goddess of Transformation. While doing geomantic research on the three places, I came upon a spot at the side of a creek that gave me a sense that it was calling urgently for my attention. Unfortunately, I decided that I did not have time for the place just then. As I continued to walk past it, I felt that I was gradually becoming lame from the inside of me. The sensation that I was in the process of petrification became so overwhelming that I started to panic. I knew that the only

way to regain my sanity was to be honest with myself and trust my intuition.

I had to admit to myself that I had been called to the place but had not allowed myself to listen to the call. So I returned to the spot by the creek, and the frightening sensation of being gradually turned into stone disappeared. I asked forgiveness for my conscious ignorance, and tuned into the place. In that same instant there appeared the broad, somewhat repulsive, earth-like face of the Mother that I knew from the communication in Kinsau.

Looking at her face which was as beautiful as it was terrible, I was deeply touched by her presence and filled with joy. But I couldn't help myself asking her a most stupid question-stupid because it was not in tune with the sacred character of the moment. I asked her if she could give me some information about the landscape temple that I was about to investigate.



Mother Earth figurine from the Paleolithic Age, called "The Venus of Willendorf" Note the stars on her head and the roots to anchor her in the earth!

Her answer was a strange laughter that made the whole ambience tremble, myself included. In between laughs, she exclaimed: "My daughters!"

I fell to my knees and gave thanks. Now I had an important key in my hand. The Goddess is not a static principle, attached to eternity. As the earth changes and humanity runs through its different phases of development, she too is changing. One could speak of the different generations of the Goddess. What she was as the Mother Earth in the most remote times was later transformed into the Threefold Goddess of the Neolithic era, afterwards becoming the Mother of different religions: the Buddhist Tara or Chinese Quan Yin or Christian Mary. These are her 'daughters and granddaughters'.

Yet her life goes on. I mentioned my sense of a new phase of her presence, a 'new generation' that is right now in the process of preparation. I could sense it mirrored in the play of dolphins out in the sea. Later the inspiration became clearer, and I started to use the expression 'the Daughter of Gaia' to give an appropriate name to the Goddess in her process of rebirth.

Let us now return to the cathedral-like church structure in Altötting and take another look at the figure of the Virgin Mary standing over the old Mother of the Moon. Here we are facing two generations of the Goddess. Below, one sees the mysterious face of the Mother Earth, the Paleolithic Goddess also known as the Venus of Willendorf. Her cycles of fertility and transformation follow the cycles of the moon. It is no accident that the medieval sculpture depicts her within the moon's sickle. Note too that her eyes are closed while those of the Virgin Mary are wide open. She represents that period of human evolution when we followed the rhythms of life's wheel in an instinctive way. The eyes of our conscious freedom, the freedom of choice, were not opened till, as a culture, we experienced the touch of the Christ initiation. Only after that, holding the Christ Child in her hands, can the Virgin gaze with open eyes at the universe.

Looking at the sculpture yet again, we may recognize that a dangerous polarity exists between the two generations of the Goddess. One pole is condensed at the bottom of the figure around the symbol of the moon and the old crone, while the other is situated high up around the head of the Virgin and the solar principle of the divine Child. There are some 20th century images of the Virgin where the tension between the indigenous, earth-connected pole and the Christianized mentality of the head has in fact broken up in hostility. In such cases the face of Mother Earth may appear as a snake, while the Virgin is smashing its head with her right foot. The sense that the ancient Mother Goddess and the young Virgin Mother belong together seems to have been definitely lost; and with it we have lost the sense of the partnership between the two poles of our being, the natureimbued and the spiritual-which are the poles not only of ourselves but of the universe as well.

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About Marko Pogačnik

Slovenian artist Marko Pogačnik has an international reputation in conceptual and land art. Through his work he has developed the skill of Geomancy as a tool for unlocking the hidden wisdom of the Earth. He leads workshops throughout the world in earth Healing and advises communities and businesses in landscape planning.