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THE SUBTLE DANCE

Preface

Part I. The subtle side of reality

1. What is reality?
2. Science
3. Consciousness
4. Subtle energy
5. Water and stones
6. Synchronicities
7. More than five senses
8. Free from dogma

Part II. The heavy side of reality

1. Society's narrative
2. World history in short
2. The global crisis
3. Ego and dark entities

Part III.

currently serialised on www.leoforesta.com

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Preface

If you're tempted to push the reasoning intellect to the sideline and trust the spiritual, but don't quite dare do it yet, this book is for you. It will help you get rid of old blinkers and come out of the straightjacket Authority imposes on your mind.

The intellect is a good tool, but only for limited purposes and only to deal with the material world. The latter is no more than the shallow end of reality. Believing it is all that exists is a huge delusion. Existence is far broader and more subtle than what we see. The invisible behind the screen of our physical world interacts constantly with our lives. If we remove the filters imposed on us by contemporary Western culture we realise that we're able to perceive messages from the invisible.

You are probably well aware of the silent Presence within yourself and have already noticed some of the discreet hints it keeps sending you. But you may still hesitate to give Presence your full unrestricted trust. No wonder. Authority does all it can to divert your attention away from Presence's gentle guidance. Authority wants to control our lives, and keep us blind to the vastness of reality and confined to a mental box of fear, competition, narrow thoughts and chaotic emotions.

Authority is not new in human history. Over the millennia we see rulers, domination, and slavery. And also dogma, propaganda, indoctrination, beliefs, fanaticism. Look at society today: as dogmatic (about science, medicine, economics, social norms...) as in the times of the holy Inquisition.

But you and I can choose to stop believing Authority and complying with its rules and prescriptions. These have led most individuals to confusion and vacuity, and dragged society into considerable disharmony. You can free yourself from the mess by opening up to Presence and learning to respond to its subtle suggestions. It's a personal endeavour, relying exclusively on direct practical experience.

Once familiar with the way Presence operates and beginning to get the knack of how to respond to its guidance, your whole relationship with life changes for ever. You become attentive and focused. You leave behind bitterness and recriminations, you tune down fear and the whining and boasting of the silly ego. Every episode of your life, even the smallest and superficially most insignificant becomes a step in an amazing dance. A subtle dance with an attentive partner.

The spontaneously intuitive and "connected" will find it relatively easy to step into the dance with Presence. But for those of us whose rationalist upbringing has left their mind in awe of the reasoning intellect and its futile speculations, the move is a serious challenge. This is why I felt the need to write this book, and why it may be useful to you.

Part I shows that reality is beyond the grasp of the reasoning intellect, unable as it is to deal with the most basic questions of existence. We need intuition. Intuition connects the mind to the universal field of consciousness and enables insights into the subtle side of existence.

Part II considers the situation of mankind in the apparent reality of our world. How did we collectively get into the present mess? What are the dynamics behind global events seen from a holistic energy based perspective?

Part III is practical. Beyond metaphysical conjectures, what matters in the end is how to run our life in the day to day. Are we allowing fear, sour feelings and desires of our confused ego to steer our thoughts and actions? Are we allowing Authority to impress us with its dogmas and propaganda? To do better than that we need to learn the ways of the invisible. How to feel Presence and not confuse it with ego. How to be sure an initiative we are about to take is really aligned with universal harmony, irrespective of what rational considerations might suggest. How to create positive relationships with people, even those who appear difficult and unattractive. How to stimulate the silent cooperation of events, of objects, even machines...Yes even inanimate things respond to our thoughts and attitudes. In very subtle ways.

Part I: The subtle side of reality

1. What is reality?

Like millions of other baby boomers in the post war era I was bred on a simple story: material reality is all there is, and science is well on its way to explaining every aspect of it.

At the time that proposition sounded highly credible. After the hardships of the war a lot of people were benefiting from a new kind of prosperity. One that not only ensured there was enough food on the table, but also brought hitherto unseen comfort and convenience to large segments of the middle and working classes in developed countries. Washing machines, vacuum cleaners, plastic wrappings, frozen food, record players, transistor radios, television...you name it. All these home treasures that previous generations couldn't even have imagined were made possible by technical progress derived from the application of science. Material prosperity was not only an enjoyable novelty; it was becoming the corner stone of human happiness, the ultimate objective of civilised society.

There was still, of course, the different tune of religion. But the religious establishment no longer disputed the pre-eminence of science for matters of "this world". Religion's modern narrative was that it dealt with something different, bearing no relation to physical reality. God and his crew were elsewhere, entering the scene only when it was time to decide on eternal reward or punishment. An educated civilised person could adopt the materialist vision alone, or the materialist vision plus the beliefs and moral code of religion as an added option. Both choices were acceptable, and were a personal matter.

As for bizarre phenomena such as clairvoyance, precognition, miraculous healing, and the like, these were not considered serious by normal people, whether atheists or religious. Only eccentrics would devote any attention to such things.

And basically, that was that.

However, everything was to be called into question within a few decades. By the end of the 20th century advances of science and technology were absolutely impressive. But people weren't becoming happier as they should have according to the narrative of progress. Society was not getting more harmonious. On the contrary it was more aggressive and chaotic. Words hitherto practically unknown like stress, congestion and pollution sprang up in every day conversation. The idea that advanced societies' way of life had become totally unsustainable was widely accepted. With the obvious contradiction that economic growth was more than ever regarded as society's absolute priority.

In short, it suddenly looked as if humanity was stumbling into a dangerous trap. This was an unexpected turn of events which triggered confusion and doubts. Was material progress so good after all? Was it really the finality of our lives? Should we trust science without second thoughts? Alternative ideas questioning the bases of society's mainstream world view started to circulate, initially amongst a very tiny minority, and then a little more widely as we moved into the 21st century.

Ancient traditions like Tao, Hinduism, shamanism and druidism were being looked at afresh. And a fascinating convergence between such teachings of a distant past and theories of advanced physics – such as quantum mechanics - were brought into light by a new breed of contemporary metaphysicians. Quantum mechanics date back to the early part of the 20th century, but it took several decades before its consequences for our vision of reality started to become obvious.

In a nutshell, according to modern theories of advanced physics, what happens at the sub-atomic level is a ballet of pure energy and information with no clear traces of firm matter. What we experience at our scale of observation is only a visible manifestation of these infinitesimal flows of energy and information. A bit like a video played on a computer screen which has no other real existence than as digital data on a file. In other words it would appear that we live in a vacuum filled with pulsating energy and information which produce images and other perceptions picked up and processed by the software of our mind¹.

More amazing still is that theories of advanced physics refer to “clusters of probabilities” of events - such as the presence of an elementary particle at a given place and time - as opposed to clearly determined events. And they suggest that potential events depend on the “observer”. As if all of this wasn’t incredible enough, some theories question the irreversibility of time, and even the very notion of time itself.

These views of a universe² without firm material existence, arising of elusive flows of energy and information, with potentialities partly dependant on the observer, where time may be no more than a perception, are of course completely at odds with the crude mechanistic representation of visible reality dominant in the Western world.

But they turn out to be quite consistent with the teachings of ancient traditions and with concepts behind non conventional practices in healing, agriculture and other areas. This uncanny rapprochement of old and new, scientific and intuitive has given rise to a large movement of alternative thinking. Free minded people now dare take an active interest in a whole swathe of observations and ideas considered off limits not so long ago. Water memory, near death experiences, remote viewing, distance healing, telepathy, interspecies communication. These and other subjects are at last treated seriously.

However, the establishment remains ostensibly closed to virtually all aspects of alternative thinking. And mainstream scientists, far from being encouraged to explore unconventional areas, are firmly invited to concentrate on theories and models supporting the development of technologies in accordance with the objectives of industry. In other words, to stick to useful concrete stuff, which in the minds of their pay-masters means money making stuff.

Because money drives everything. Business is now what matters in human society. It may be chaotic, increasingly corrupt and divisive, and cause grave collateral damages. But the establishment is solidly behind it. As for ordinary folks, competitive pressures ensure that they keep running like rats with little time for stepping back and looking critically at the big issues of where the world is going, or pondering on the nature of reality. And when not working or playing the social game, ordinary people are diverted from the temptation of serious thinking by a deluge of trivial distractions.

All of this is currently getting more intense than ever before. Over the last few years a number of trends have reached new thresholds, and the mix of financial, social, technological, health and environmental pressures on the vast majority of the population have become close to unbearable. At the same time natural eco-systems worldwide show clear signs of accelerating collapse. In short, whatever way you look the seams are cracking.

How come that mankind which seemed on a path of general progress half a century ago got itself and the planet into such a complete mess? Why are most people so stressed, anxious, and aggressive as soon a vague threat to their perceived interests arises?

¹ Let us leave aside for the moment the question of what “our mind” might be

² And possibly several universes

Conventional psycho-socio-economic and political analyses fall far short of providing coherent explanations, let alone credible solutions.

In the alternative fringe one sees the global crisis as much more than the failing of a particular system. The issue is humanity's collective world view and mindset. It is how we think of ourselves in relation to existence, in relation to other humans and other creatures, and how our thoughts, conscious and unconscious, command what we do. And the key to collective mindset is mind control by the global elite. The latter consists of top establishment figures in banking, multinationals, government, academia, religion and the press. Most of these people are probably mere puppets, themselves subject to mind control and ultimately slaves like the rest of the population.

But then who or what is behind the mind control process? Who or what exercises final control? How long has this been going on?

You might be tempted to think such considerations fly too high above your head to be in any way relevant in your every day life. But don't be mistaken. They are absolutely relevant to every aspect of your life. Including your health, relationships, intimate wishes and fears. Mind control isn't just any general issue out there, no concern of yours. It is right into your deep being. It drags your energy, it saps your confidence and self esteem and maintains you in a state of egocentric confusion and bewilderment.

The world crisis presently reaching a peak reveals the extent of mind control gripping our lives. In that respect the crisis is good news. It opens our eyes and our heart. We can now seriously search for the way to escape mind control, get free and move into a completely different step of dance with existence. It is not as difficult as you might expect. But it requires the courage to question everything you have taken for granted so far in your life. Attitudes shaped within your family. What you learned through formal education. All beliefs and dogmas in science, religion, the law and mainstream culture that have been literally downloaded in your mind.

To start with, do you have any clear idea of what your "mind" is, and what "reality" is, and what "knowledge" is in relation to reality? The forces of mind control didn't encourage you to question these obviously fundamental things, did they? But this book will. It is going to take you on an exploratory ride through the subtle side of life. Without any preconceived idea. By means of neutral observations and logical deductions, and mainly with the help of intuition. Along the way it will soon become evident that intuition is far more powerful than the intellect so overrated in Western culture.

2. Science

Science plays a central role in today's society and most educated people are totally convinced it is the only reliable approach to reality. Few, however, ever seriously question what science and reality are. And nobody encourages them to do it. But let's do just that. To start with we have to remark that our only access to reality is through the activity of our mind. Anything that doesn't imprint a mark on our mind simply doesn't exist *for us*.

Some metaphysicians go further and suggest that there is no such thing as reality by itself outside of any conscious mind. This may sound rather mad, but it is congruent with theories of fundamental physics stating that clouds of probabilities of potential events at sub-atomic level become actual events only when an "observer" comes into play to consciously consider them. Like beauty, reality might be in the eye of the beholder. But then, who or what is the beholder? Let's leave this question aside for the time being.

Our mind processes a continuous stream of thoughts, pictures, emotions and other impressions. What we call knowledge are elements in the stream of our conscious thoughts that our mind believes to be related to reality. Science is part of knowledge. A part which is organised, structured and shared with other people. It consists in theories and models that are supposed to represent and explain natural processes.

The question of whether such representations of reality can ever be regarded as "correct" or "true" raises a fundamental challenge to human logic. And the challenge begins with the validity of human logic itself. For instance, according to our logic the universe must be either finite or infinite. But if the universe was finite, what would we find on the other side once we had reached the edge? Emptiness, vacuum? How far would such emptiness stretch? You can bang your head on a wall: the idea of a finite universe is simply inconceivable. So we have to accept the idea of an infinite universe, and that idea is also inconceivable.

Not only do we have to concede that the universe must be infinite, but in view of all the connections observed in the various aspects of life we also have to admit that it must be one big continuum with unlimited interactions rather than a collection of separate bits and pieces as we usually visualise in ordinary thinking. As if facing infinite continuity wasn't daunting enough, the teasing issue of finite versus infinite applies to time as well as to space. According to the big bang theory our universe is supposed to have started some fourteen billion years ago. But what was there before? Pure nothingness? Or perhaps just a tiny ball of energy getting ready to blow up and expand for ever? You are getting dizzy? Me too. Our minds boggle because we try to apply our logic to things that are clearly beyond its reach.

Rather than getting lost in such huge paradoxes, most scientists work with theories and models focused on circumscribed domains. All scientific theories and models are in fact extremely simplified representations of small separate pieces of reality which deliberately ignore many relevant factors deemed less essential. Simplification is unavoidable. Without it our reasoning intellect would be unable to come to anything. In other words, because of the limitations of the human intellect, scientific representations of reality must be systematically shrunken to fit the capabilities of the most agile brains.

The latter may look very smart by comparison with other fellow humans, but their capacities are still weak in the face of infinite continuity and its unlimited complexities. The hallmark of the human intellect is that it works on one item at the time, linearly, and step by step. Sharp intellects may go much faster through steps than less gifted ones, but still operate step by step, and on only one subject at the time.

Because of the need for extreme simplification, only a limited range of phenomena and processes lend themselves to satisfactory theories and models with a good predictive power.

To give a sense of why this is so, let us consider the example of how Newtonian mechanics – a very simple theory in the realm of science - is able to handle two processes: a metal ball dropped from the second floor of the Eiffel tower and a little ball thrown on a roulette wheel at Monte Carlo.

When you drop a metal ball from the Eiffel tower, you can predict fairly accurately the time it will take for the ball to reach the ground by using a very simple equation of Newtonian mechanics. If you repeat the experiment a number of times, the durations of fall actually measured will all be close to the theoretical one computed with the equation. Small variations will be due to secondary factors ignored in the equation, such as air resistance, itself subject to climatic conditions....etc. So here we have a scientific model with a good predictive power, but the process analysed is extremely simple.

In the case of the roulette in Monte Carlo, things are much more complicated. Firstly the way the ball is thrown can vary in force, direction and timing relative to the revolutions of the roulette wheel. The speed of the latter can vary, and the precise geometry of the casings can be slightly different for each number. There are so many parameters influencing the trajectory of the ball and its eventual landing on a specific number that nobody has been able to create a model to predict on what number the ball will stop.

If we now consider natural phenomena, many are vastly more complicated than the two previous examples, and involve very large numbers of factors, often with almost unimaginably complex interactions. For them modelling is simply impossible and theorising is highly speculative. Which means that *all scientific theories and models put together cover only very limited patches of nature's realm*. Science is a patchwork with very large holes.

This doesn't mean that scientific theories and models have no value, but it does imply that they should be regarded as rather crude tools to be used with prudence and modesty for limited purposes. We may think of science as a small electric torch: you can use it to send a circle of light on the spot where you are going to put your foot, but the whole landscape around you remains in the dark.

Now, is this how science is envisaged in our society? Not at all. On the contrary, science is put on a pedestal. It has supplanted religion as the core of society's belief system. Its affirmations are widely taken for absolute truth. Official science has turned dogmatic. Why has it turned dogmatic? Basically because dogmatism suits those who hold the power in society. Their aim is to keep the masses under control. And the most effective way to control people is to control their minds. Which is achieved through implanting beliefs and ideas that look sufficiently impressive to discourage doubt and questioning. It's an old technique, already used in the *ancient regime* where religion was the key instrument. Nowadays science is the main tool.

The prestige of science is considerable due to the technological achievements of Western civilisation in the last 150 years or so. Many people are genuinely convinced that these achievements completely validate official science. If science based technology can create portable telephones, fly aeroplanes or induce procreation, science must be correct and a direct reflection of true reality. But spectacular as they may be in our eyes the successes of mainstream science and technology only concern limited domains. And through their large scale use invariably create a slipstream of serious collateral damage.

Proponents of mainstream science and technology seek to force changes in natural processes rather than gently influence them. Because they regard nature as basically imperfect, unfriendly to man, and therefore needing corrections and improvements. Take the vital domain of agriculture for instance, and consider the sharp contrast between the technical modalities of mainstream so-called science-based intensive agriculture and the general approach of bio-dynamic agriculture.

Intensive agriculture relies on heavy machinery and artificial fertilisers and pesticides produced by the chemical industry. Its first step is to plough the soil, i.e. to cut it open and turn it over. This is nothing short of a brutal attack on the innumerable insects, worms, micro plants and living creatures of all kinds forming a rich and balanced eco system in the layers of soil immediately under the surface. The attack is justified by the theory that undesirable plants potentially competing with the future crop have to be rooted out. But such a theory is crude and superficial. It simply ignores myriads of factors and pushes simplification to an absurd extreme. After the mechanical attack comes chemical warfare against the soil and its millions of tiny dwellers³. The aim is to turn the soil in a simple substrate carrying crop seeds, chemical fertilisers, water and pesticides; in other words to turn the soil in a production site and turn the whole activity of growing a crop into a manufacturing process.

Bio-dynamic agriculture on the other hand tries to respect the soil and the various forms of life within. It's a delicate business. Each type of soil, each orientation, each plot of land is different, and working with it to grow a particular crop is an art, not a standardised industrial process. It requires patience, attention, a lot of trial and error and local knowledge, and acceptance that return can never be fully controlled.

When it was first introduced over the years before and after World War II intensive agriculture looked like the very symbol of progress, apparently making the life of farmers easier and the whole sector more productive and reliable. Subsequently it took a few decades for the full extent of collateral damage to emerge. Not only does intensive agriculture poison underground water and leaves significant traces of harmful chemicals in its produce consumed by humans, but it also changes the nature of the land, making it harder and less capable of absorbing rain water fast enough, which greatly contributes to flooding and erosion, and to drying up and desertification. As the rich ecosystems of soils are destroyed, the land becomes poorer and less productive, with a weaker capacity to regenerate. It is abundantly clear that intensive agriculture creates a combination of unintended consequences so severe as to arguably outweigh its intended benefits. Nevertheless, the chemical and heavy machinery sectors claim that the balance is still in favour of intensive agriculture and the so-called life science sector claims that its genetically modified organisms may help tip the balance even more in favour of intensive methods.

What lies at the heart of the controversy between proponents of intensive agriculture and proponents of bio-dynamic methods is more than just different theories. Leaving aside the obvious issue of vested interests, the controversy stems from irreconcilable basic assumptions about nature, life, eco-systems, and subtle energy, in fact from diametrically opposed visions of the world.

³ It's no coincidence that manufacturing facilities for the production of chemical weapons to kill humans are very similar to plants for the production of fertilisers and pesticides.

And the same opposing world views surface in the debate between mainstream medicine and alternative medicine. On the one hand, the materialist vision of “reality”. What you see is all there is. A material world, a vast system of mechanical, chemical, electromagnetic and biological processes, admittedly very complex, but ultimately reducible to fixed laws and lending itself to improvements through technological interventions. On the other hand, an emerging, tentative, prudent approach of “reality” which draws on advanced science, observation of a vast body of as yet unexplained phenomena, and traditional teachings with commonalities transcending cultures. A subtle realm where humans are to find their path as much if not more through intuition as through reasoning.

There are more than enough converging bits of evidence to establish that the materialist vision is totally inconsistent and incoherent. But discrediting the materialist vision means destroying faith in “progress”, in the assumed capacity of the human intellect to eventually elucidate all mysteries of nature. It’s easy to say with hindsight that such faith was misplaced and rested on flawed logic. The fact is that it has been a big hope for several generations. Seeing that big hope fade away leaves much anxiety in society, because the new emerging alternative vision is subtle, still tentative, and therefore appearing less immediately reassuring to the many people who yearn for something crude and simple to believe in.

Materialist thinking is crude and simple all right, and it is actively promoted by the ruling elite. The latter uses all possible means to uphold its credibility, and in that effort science, or at least *a narrow version of science*, is a key weapon.

While honest science implies objectivity, curiosity and open mindedness, narrow science controlled by the establishment is closed, dogmatic and regimented. Whenever facts or arguments threaten to create doubt and resistance to technical initiatives by big business, their lobbyists and pawns in government, academic institutions and the media resort to what *they* call science to discredit or ignore challenging ideas and dissenting voices.

Think of the many subjects of simmering controversies: vaccination, genetically modified organisms, electromagnetic pollution, geo-engineering, fracking, nuclear programmes, etc., etc. “Scientific” arguments are routinely brandished by experts intervening in debates, sometimes to reassure, and sometimes to kindle fear. Anecdotal evidence and formal studies unfavourable to big interests are left largely unreported, at least through mainstream media and institutions. And when threats to their interests look too close for comfort, some people in the system are quite prepared to fabricate evidence. In doing so, they make sure that fabricated evidence looks like fitting in the general parameters of official science.

At this point we need to highlight that official science rests on a set of implicit rules and assumptions which most scientists readily accept without ever having had the time or opportunity to probe their logical bases.

To start with there is the accepted idea that a phenomenon will be deemed “real” or “true” in scientific terms only if it can be observed on a repeated basis in controlled circumstances, such as in a laboratory where successive experiments yield consistent results. But let’s take a step back and ask a simple question: why on earth should all natural phenomena necessarily be repeatable, let alone lending themselves to laboratory experimentation? Experiments conducted in laboratories are always very simple compared to what happens outside the lab, and always require the neutralisation of many factors potentially impacting the phenomenon under study. Like theories and models, they cover only a very limited range of natural processes.

If we probe deeper, there is no fundamental reason to assume that physical laws must necessarily be the same for ever and in whatever circumstances. Yet this assumption is logically implied by the idea that all natural processes should be strictly repeatable. The assumption of repeatability of natural phenomena implicit in official science is a gross reduction of the potentialities of “reality” without any logical basis. Its practical consequences are very serious: whole swathes of observations are contemptuously dismissed as being inconsistent with “accepted science” simply because of the difficulty to repeat them in controlled environments.

A second major assumption implicit in official science is that events in nature are the result of impersonal laws without any sort of intention involved. Historically this assumption was adopted as a reaction against dogmatic religion which pretended to see God’s intention everywhere and claimed to interpret everything accordingly. But leaving religion aside, the assumption that events are all devoid of any intention has no logical foundation. In fact not only is there no reason to dismiss the possibility that some form of intention exists but as we shall see later there are many observations, in particular of events called synchronicities, which strongly support the idea of intent in the course of existence.

Another fundamental restriction in the scope of official science is the narrow range of scales taken into consideration for theorising and modelling. The ordinary representation of the material world as a vast clockwork controlled by the laws of Newtonian mechanics, electromagnetism or chemistry is centred on our human scale of observation, as opposed to the very small scale of sub-atomic physics, where current theories offer an entirely different picture, and the very large scale of astrophysics where relativity and more recent theories also offer completely different perspectives.

As already mentioned earlier, theories pertaining to the sub atomic level depict a realm of energy and information, from which a perception of material world can arise. And at the other end of the scale line, recent advances in astro-physics suggest the possibility that matter as we “know” it represents only a small fraction of the total mass in the universe. The consequence is that some unknown “black matter” must exist to account for the rest. Given these ideas of advanced physics at both ends of the scale spectrum it is clear that “ordinary” science offers an extremely restricted view of nature.

But even sub-atomic physics is restricted to the still not so small scales of elementary particles. To give a sense of what we are talking about, the size of an atom is of the order of say 10^{-10} meter (i.e. 10 zeros and a 1 after the decimal point). The scale of presently identified elementary particles is say 10^{-12} m. The question then is what happens at a scale of say 10^{-2500} or $10^{-one\ million}$ m? If you could take out a little cube of $10^{-one\ million}$ m by $10^{-one\ million}$ m what would you find in it? Science has absolutely no idea and isn’t developing the smallest embryo of a theory about it. And yet there might be interesting stuff in that tiny cube, such as information, or some form of subtle energy.

At the other end of the scale line, what would happen if an hypothetical observer reached a point say $10^{one\ billion}$ of quadrillions of trillions km away from our little planet, i.e. well beyond all observable galaxies? Science just hasn’t got a clue. It is as if our maths were restricted to a tiny portion of the x axis. They wouldn’t go any near the zero and would stay a very long way short of the ∞ . That wouldn’t be real maths, would it? Yet this is exactly what official science does.

Why? Because ultimately official science is only concerned with bits of potential technology relevant at our visible scale on our tiny planet, and is not really interested in shedding any light on the invisible picture which is both too big and too small for us to perceive easily.

Narrow ranges of dimensions considered in scientific models are not just about space; they are also about time, and therefore also about frequencies. For instance scientists and engineers routinely use various ranges of frequencies for electro-magnetic radiations. But they would hardly ever consider extra low frequencies such as, say, one pulsation per month. Technical guys will just laugh at this. Of course they would because for their technologies this is irrelevant and absurd. But how does the universe look at it? I would venture to say that the universe has a very different appreciation of scales and durations than us, and a one pulsation per month EM frequency might very well carry a piece of information that we would never be able to pick up.

Another assumption is quite essential: the ordinary mechanistic representation of the material world shows natural phenomena as separate processes. In other words it assumes reality can be meaningfully split into many pieces that can all be studied with pretty much unrelated theories and models. This crude simplification is linked to the limitations of the human intellect. We have no other option but segmenting reality into separate domains, but we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that our demarcations are artificial and subject to adjustment at the slightest indication that they need to be reconsidered.

However, in practice many scientists appear quite content to restrict their thoughts to the little silo of their own discipline, and genuine efforts to lay bridges across academic boundaries are few and far between. This is not so surprising when we realise that mental rigidity and intellectual parochialism are in fact encouraged, because they suit the purposes of Authority. Remember that Authority seeks control over the minds. And what better way to control the minds than keeping everybody, including bright scientists, with their noses right down on their separate little patch, so that nobody has the breadth of vision to contest the whole belief system, and attendant organisation of society.

While it could be a free and spiritually elevating endeavour, science in its present shape is a toy in the hands of a corrupt establishment. Some of its implicit basic rules have no logical justification whatsoever. It deliberately ignores fundamental questions such as those revolving around consciousness and individuality. It is fragmented, reductionist and narrow minded.

Seeing through the deficiencies of official science and, more generally, debunking the conventional system of thought imposed on society by the ruling elite is the first step towards freeing our minds.

But freedom can be frightening, and many will ask themselves what good it is to become freer. Is it for its own sake, out of pride, or does it bring tangible benefits? The following chapters in this book will give a hint of the extraordinary perspectives that greater freedom of mind opens up for all of us individually and collectively.

3. Subtle energy

We use the word energy all the time. But are we talking about? In ordinary science and technology it's about quantifiable things like how many miles your car can go on a gallon of petrol, or the amount of gas you need to keep your house warm all day in winter. Conventional nutritionists try to do something similar with their precise calculations of calories in your diet. But we are no machines. Irrespective of the quantities we eat, there are mornings when we get up full of beans and others when we just feel pretty depressed and with no "energy" at all.

What has advanced physics to say about energy? When they try to figure out the bases of our material world, physicists envisage elementary particles inside atoms as clusters of energy, and matter as made up of energy flows perceived by an observer. But that doesn't tell us what energy is. Besides, is there energy outside atoms, or in the vacuum between elementary particles, or in the vacuum of outer space? Astrophysicists say our planet continually receives cosmic radiations which actually affect our lives. Yet no "mass carrying matter" is involved in this, only very high frequency electro magnetic radiations. But what exactly are electrical and magnetic fields, and how do they combine to form radiations without matter being involved?

Is there such a thing as pure vacuum? Does it mean nothingness? How could anything like energy, and - through energy- tangible matter, arise out of nothingness? It is clear that conventional science goes round in circles when it tries to deal with such essential questions. This is not surprising since science is only a patchwork of theories and models which don't really explain things. When physicists envisage phenomena at sub-atomic level they can't observe anything directly. All they do is to create mathematical models based on various abstract concepts and assumptions and compare the results of their calculations with quantities measured in laboratory equipments.

Ancient traditions approached the essentials of existence, life, matter and energy through a radically different mode of thinking. The Chinese Tao is largely centred on the idea of subtle energy called "Qi" or "Chi", which flows everywhere and forms the basis of life. The "Qi" has to flow harmoniously in the body of a person or animal or plant for the living creature to be in good health. It has to flow harmoniously in a house or garden for the people living there to be well. Indian traditional medicine has the similar concept of "Prana", and Japanese and Korean traditions have the "Ki". Western esoteric traditions had relatively similar notions of "vital force" and "ether". The latter was seen as filling all space. There was no such thing as pure vacuum, nothingness. Contemporary alternative medicines, whether derived from Asian or esoteric Western traditions, are largely "energy based", where energy means subtle energy rather than energy in the sense of conventional thermodynamics and mechanics.

When it fell in the trap of narrow materialist thinking, Western science rejected the notions of ether and subtle energy because they were too vague and couldn't be measured through accepted protocols. But today a growing number of scientists accept the existence of subtle energy and are keen to find bridges between mainstream science and the concept of subtle energy. Needless to say, they are not encouraged to do so by the academic establishment.

Despite institutional hurdles experiments have been conducted to try and demonstrate the existence of subtle energy following standard protocols of conventional science. One of the modalities is through the measurement of biological responses to acupuncture. This practice of Chinese medicine is based on meridians and points. Acupuncture meridians are the channels through which the "Chi" flows, influencing functions of the body's organs and systems. And acupuncture points are specific areas along the meridians where the energy can be stimulated.

Using a mainstream technique called magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) a group of American scientists observed activation of the visual cortex as a result of stimulating an acupuncture point located in the small toe known in oriental medicine to be related to vision. The response in the visual cortex was similar to when light was flashed in the eyes of the subject.

Researchers were able to establish that the signal from the acupuncture point was coming to the brain over 200 times faster than the signal from light flashed in the eyes. According to Western physiology there are no nervous or other physical connections between the toe and the visual cortex. Therefore, some other form of connexion must be involved.

A number of different studies were carried out to measure physical manifestations of the practice of “Qi Kong” or to monitor the effects on various physical processes of the “Qi” emitted by a healer. These studies have delivered significant results just like the research on acupuncture referred to above. Evidence from scientific studies about the manifestations of subtle energy is abundant and well documented. And numerous observations by alternative therapists and people practising disciplines such as Qi Kong or Tai Chi (who can routinely feel the subtle energy) are equally convincing. Taking all studies and observations together it is very hard to deny the existence of the subtle energy.

The big question remains of what might be the *nature* of that subtle energy. Available measurements strongly indicate that it isn't electro-magnetism, as one would have been tempted to assume. There are undoubtedly close interactions between them but they are not exactly the same thing. According to some it could be linked to the “black energy” and “black matter” whose existence have been hypothesised by astrophysicists in the 1990's following the discovery of unexplained discrepancies between the theory of relativity and observed intergalactic movements.

But recognising the *existence* of subtle energy, even though its nature is as yet unexplained in mainstream scientific terms, is already a completely rational assumption given all the facts before us. And it is a very useful assumption, because it offers a good insight into the logic of a number of traditional and alternative practices which are clearly very effective. These practices include various methods of natural healing, such as acupuncture and shiatsu, martial arts and disciplines of general well being like Qi Kong and Tai chi, techniques for cultivation, like bio-dynamic agriculture, techniques for improving the harmony of houses and buildings, like Feng Shui.

While these techniques work directly with the subtle energy, others use it too but in a way that may appear to us less direct. Litho-therapy, for instance, uses the capacity of stones and crystals to focus subtle energy. In the case of homeopathy, substances are diluted in water to prepare remedies. Dilutions can be so extreme that in some instances there is hardly any molecule of the active substance left at all in the remedy given to the patient⁴. But what matters is the “signature” left in the structure of water⁵ that has been in contact with the active substance. It could be that this signature is essentially a pure “information” phenomenon, but when the piece of information is brought into the body of the patient it has an effect on the flows and distribution of vital force within that body.

In fact *the distinction between energy and information is artificial*. It is a product of our narrow reasoning intellect which needs it to be able to analyse phenomena in its usual linear step by step mode. But reality appears to be a continuum without boundaries, and it may be a much better representation to think of information, energy and matter not as separate things but as flows so intimately interacting as to be merged into one another.

⁴ Human or animal

⁵ More on this from a different angle in the following chapter

If we posit that subtle energy is very close to the fundamental information field of the universe a whole raft of phenomena regarded as unexplainable according to official science begin to make real sense and logical links between them become manifest. But let's not go too fast and before trying to draw grand conclusions, let us stick for a while to a conventional step by step approach to deploy our analysis further.

At this stage it is worth taking a look at a very controversial theory not (yet?) accepted by mainstream science: biological transmutation. One of the basic laws of conventional chemistry is that atoms can be combined into different molecules but can never be changed into different atoms. An atom of, say, carbon can become part of a molecule of carbon dioxide, or of methane or of many other substances, but it always remains an atom of carbon, and cannot be changed in, say, an atom of calcium. Only in nuclear reactions occurring under very special conditions can an atom of a radioactive element be changed into an atom of another element. This is the accepted assumption of mainstream science, widely believed to be definitive.

But it appears that a number of observations in the natural world are not consistent with the official dogma. For instance, it has been noted that egg shells contain a lot of calcium even when the chickens laying the eggs haven't received food containing calcium in any significant quantities. Where does the calcium in the eggs come from?

A few daring scientists have suggested that certain biological processes might involve changes to the nucleus of certain atoms, thereby changing the atom of one element into an atom of another element. They called this phenomenon "*biological transmutation*". Transmutation is the word used for the old alchemists' dream of changing lead into gold.

The idea of biological transmutation is that the living world is capable of performing transmutation into elements that are needed for the development of life. This is undoubtedly a daring hypothesis, but it is in no way absurd. Furthermore it is not inconsistent with the whole of mainstream science. As a matter of fact, it could be regarded as an adjustment to, or you might say a refinement of the basic assumptions of chemistry. The latter could be reformulated to state that atoms of one element cannot be changed into atoms of another element, except in special conditions of nuclear physics or (and this would be the new adjustment) in special conditions arising in certain biological processes.

From the point of view of straightforward logic, there is nothing shocking in introducing such an adjustment. As already emphasised earlier, science consists in theories and models which can never be regarded as the truth, but only as useful tools for limited purposes. But official science has the unfortunate tendency to freeze into dogma. And once a dogma is established, it becomes extremely difficult to challenge. We know that this tendency is covertly encouraged by people who have a vested interest in establishing and maintaining dogmas to prevent the conduct of free research and the emergence of alternative theories and models.

In any case, if for the sake of exploratory reasoning we posit that biological transmutation is a useful theory providing coherent explanations of a range of observable phenomena, a possible whole new vision of the development of living organisms opens up. For instance, the idea so common in mainstream medicine and dietetics that the important minerals required by the body have to be provided in the right quantities through food possibly supplemented by pills might have to be fundamentally reconsidered. It could be that a properly functioning body is capable of creating the required elements from a diet containing other elements. That is if the body (and mind) has enough vital energy to accomplish biological transmutation.

Linking subtle energy and biological transmutation provides a potentially very powerful theory for use not only in human and animal dietetics and medicine but also in agriculture. How come, for instance, that fields left uncultivated for a while are able to regenerate? Where do the nutrients and vital elements present again in the soil after a period of rest come from when no products were spread on the field? If you admit that the field receives subtle energy in various forms from the cosmos and from the earth itself and that such energy can be used in a process of transmutation of the few elements that are still present into various others that are needed, you get a sense of why a soil that had become completely impoverished and incapable of sustaining a crop can become alive and productive again. Anyway, so much for biological transmutation.

Now back to subtle energy. Not only does subtle energy account for the working of a number of alternative techniques in medicine, agriculture and geo-biology, it is also illuminating when applied to human behaviour and attitudes. Conflicts can be seen as efforts to steal vital energy from one another, and addictions as attempts to gain vital energy from particular substances, food, activities or thoughts.

The underlying idea is that the subtle energy we need to live and thrive comes naturally from Source (i.e. the universal field of information and energy behind everything), *provided we are properly connected*. When we are disconnected from Source – which is very common in our society dominated by materialism and limiting dogmas - we lack subtle energy. We are not consciously aware of this lack, and we feel unwell not knowing why. By the way, it is interesting to note that acupuncture – which works directly on subtle energy in the body - is quite effective in bringing relief to depressive subjects. In any case, because of our perceived lack we embark unconsciously on a search for energy to fill our need. As a result, our relationships with other people, and more generally with different aspects of our life, are strongly influenced by a constant preoccupation to gain vital energy.

Our ego is the linchpin of this process. When you try to push yourself forward, or to gain the upper hand over somebody, or conversely when you attempt to attract pity or sympathy, what you are effectively doing is stealing energy from others. If you shout at your dog and treat it as your inferior, you are stealing vital energy from the poor creature in an attempt to make up for the lack that you feel deep inside not knowing exactly why. When you turn to alcohol or pornography, you are in fact trying to get a stimulus of what you vaguely hope to be vital energy, not knowing what you're up to. You feel drained, weak, profoundly dissatisfied because of a fundamental misalignment of your entire body-mind-soul system.

None of us in present society is ideally connected and aligned with trust and unconditional love. We are all to a certain extent misled by our ego. Our relationship with the world, with our own body is largely impacted by this fundamentally imperfect alignment. And by the silent work of entities sneaking into us and taking a grip on our mind. Traditional societies have long been wary of possession by entities called spirits, demons and many other names. These are not to be dismissed as primitive superstitions. There is something in them which we need to include into our holistic vision. In that vision we assume everything stems from a field of energy and information permeated by perfect unconditional love: the Source. But then, we have to admit that not everything that exists is perfect and loving. Which means that, for whatever reasons beyond our comprehension, there must be bits of information software floating about that are not in alignment with Source. These misaligned bits of software you can call demons, or evil spirits or more kindly suffering lost souls. Or they could just be clusters of thoughts and information rather than “beings” with almost human characters as Western tradition usually pictures creatures of the invisible realm.

According to the vast body of experience accumulated by traditional healers and open minded therapists lost souls attached to living humans are a real issue. And it would seem that fragile people, i.e. people with low energy due to poor connection to Source are prone to “catching” a lost soul which can drag them further down with all sorts of psychological and physical consequences. The impacts of so-called evil spirits or lost souls are not confined to individual suffering. In fact they compound to produce collective disharmony through a process of resonance. We may not have been used to take demons and ghosts seriously, but the fact is that the spirit possession model accounts very neatly indeed for a lot of what is happening in our individual lives and in world events.

To sum up, putting together different observations and elements from traditional knowledge, what have we got before us so far? First and foremost a fundamental field of information and energy permeated by unconditional love: the Source. Entities either perfectly aligned or not perfectly aligned with the Source. Subtle energy supporting the existence of creatures in the material world and in non visible realms. Interference of entities into the lives of creatures. And interactions between all these things in a continuum of infinite subtlety.

Let’s see where this tentative worldview takes us and what practical tips we can derive from it to make our lives more fluid and more satisfying in spite of all the apparent drama in our world.

4. Water and stones

Water and stones are essential parts of material reality on our planet. They are not usually considered “alive”, but as is becoming obvious from the previous chapters there is far more to reality than meets the eye.

While conventional science says that water is essential for life, only recent advances at the frontier of science have revealed that water seems to possess characteristics which one would expect from living organisms but not from a supposedly simple chemical substance. We've all learned that water is H₂O. The slightly more scientifically educated may be aware of the complication of hydrogen isotopes and “heavy water”. But by and large, most people view water as pretty simple and neutral. For instance we tend to think that the quality of a sample of water is exclusively a matter of its degree of purity and of the substances within it. We talk of polluted water when unhealthy products are present in significant quantities. And we consider the degree of pollution to be simply related to their amounts. Conversely, we believe the quality to be good when substances present are considered favourable or harmless.

But now visualize water from a clear mountain stream. If you have ever drunk such water, you know what a wonderful experience it is. There is evidently something more about that water than just being reasonably free of pollutants and possibly containing traces of “good” products. That water does more than quenching your thirst; it brings you a fresh, invigorating, joyful flow of life.

From the point of view of physical chemistry water possesses very unusual properties. For instance only water shrinks when it melts. In its liquid state water behaves differently at low and high temperatures and its density increases when temperature rises. Its surface in contact with the air is denser than the bulk. We could go on and on. There are around seventy such known “anomalies” of water and it appears that no single scientific model can explain them all.

A number of complex models are under study for application in different circumstances. They all try to figure out what happens within an H₂O molecule and between molecules. In particular they consider the bonds involving hydrogen atoms. It appears that these bonds are not evenly distributed and that molecules tend to form clusters. Furthermore hydrogen atoms migrate very rapidly amongst clusters. At that “nano” scale of observation, everything is changing continually within a fraction of second. If we move up the scale by a factor of millions and look at snow flakes, we see beautiful structures, and we notice that they are all different, that each flake is unique. A reasonable assumption is that these unique shapes of snowflakes are linked to conditions at the nano scale of clusters of molecules. But how? This is beyond the grasp provided by current theoretical models.

When water samples taken from different environments, such as a river, a mountain torrent, the sea, a sewage, etc., are frozen, and the ice obtained is observed under the microscope, very different structures are revealed. If the source was in a preserved natural environment, the structure tends to be pleasant and harmonious, whereas if the source was, say, a sewage, the structure of ice tends to be deformed and ugly. And here too it would seem reasonable to assume that the different structures are linked to conditions at nano scale. Each water sample leads to a unique ice structure, in the same way that each snowflake is unique. But there is something even more fascinating. When the water sample is brought in contact with a substance or receives an electromagnetic radiation, the structure of ice changes noticeably. And when the sample is considerably diluted with water from the same source to the point that there remains hardly any molecule of the added substance, the ice displays a structure

that is practically the same as before dilution. Similarly, when electromagnetic radiation is discontinued, the ice obtained still shows the same structure.

Some call this phenomenon the memory of water. But many in the scientific establishment reject the idea of water memory and the subject happens to be very controversial. You might candidly wonder why. The reason is that the concept of water memory provides a possible explanation for the working of homeopathy. This form of treatment involves very extreme dilutions of an active substance, so extreme that the substance can't possibly have any effect according to conventional science. But, if the memory trace left is significant in its structural impact, it becomes quite conceivable that the remedy may work on the patient even though quantities of the active substance are quasi nil. The controversy is particularly vehement due to the vested interests involved. On the one hand, "Big Pharma" with its allopathic drugs, and on the other hand homeopaths with their completely different approach. As there are also a few significant medium sized companies specialising in the preparation of base homeopathic treatments, it is not unfair to say that vested interests are found in both camps, though in very different proportions. In any case, honest science is always the victim of controversies fuelled by vested interests.

Even more controversial are claims that the structure of ice observed under the microscope can be influenced not only by physical factors such as contact with a substance or irradiation, but also by messages written on the container in which the water sample was kept. If words such as "I love you" had been written on the container the ice would have a nice, harmonious structure, whereas the structure would be ugly and tortured if words such as "I hate you" had been written. And the same would be observed whatever the language used in the messages. This is of course totally unacceptable to hard line materialists, for reasons that go far beyond the defence of specific vested interests as in the case of water memory and its link to homeopathy. The suggestion that mere written words might have an effect on physical matter hits directly at the core of materialist thinking.

Let's bear in mind though that there are other strong indications of linkage between thoughts and the physical world. For instance it is now well established in mainstream medicine that a patient's positive or negative thoughts produce significantly different outcomes in the evolution of his physical health. The phenomenon is called the placebo effect, or nocebo effect when it's negative. However, that effect takes place within the complex human organism where mind and living matter are both involved, whereas water within a container with words written on is supposed to be completely lifeless.

In a holistic vision where everything stems from Source, where energy, information and matter are intimately merged, water might not be lifeless at all. In fact in such a vision there is no sharp distinction between life and non life, because there are no firm boundaries, because everything forms a vast, infinite continuum.

Once again, we have to remember that science, however brilliant in our eyes, is only a set of extremely simplistic theories and models which amount to very little when contrasted to reality with its infinite facets and unimaginable subtlety. Given that water plays a central role in the development of life, it is not illogical or so far fetched to assume that it could in itself possess characteristics such as memory and response to emotions. If serious observations tend to support this assumption, and if adopting the assumption leads to fairly coherent explanations of a number of phenomena, why not consider the theory useful, and use it?

Anyway let's leave water at this stage and turn now our attention to stones. These are seen in mainstream Western culture as the very opposite of life and emotions. We speak about somebody having "a heart of stone" or remaining "stone faced". And yet in many traditions

stones have been used since time immemorial not only for appearance and decoration but also for well being and symbolic power. Besides, there is a form of alternative therapy fast growing in popularity which is entirely based on stones and crystals.

So here too there must be something subtle going on that dry conventional science doesn't quite grasp. Many alternative folks will be tempted to think "well, who cares if official science doesn't get it, as long as our heart knows". But we are on a journey that passes over bridges between science and intuitive knowledge.

From the point of view of physical chemistry stones and crystals have more stable structures than water, at least in its liquid and gaseous forms. But it doesn't mean that all is quiet further down at the subatomic scale. Science has no idea of what is really happening at that sort of scale, as all it can offer are just mathematical models which do not in fact provide an explanation but only a set of relationships between parameters. And parameters need to refer to assumed "objects" such as elementary particles or photons of energy. If one digs deeper to reach a scale below that of elementary particles, science is completely at a loss, as there are no more detectable objects or factors to be translated into parameters of mathematical equations. As we approach the infinitely small the intellect simply ceases to be any use.

So we are left with no rational option but to tune down the pure intellect and allow intuition and subjective emotions to take over. If in that frame of mind we move back towards larger scales where direct observation is possible, we can see that many stones are utterly fascinating and beautiful. And the science of crystallography which analyses the regular structures formed by molecules within crystals reveals the geometric harmony of these structures. There may not be life as we usually understand it in stones and crystals, but there is definitely a pleasing display of proportions and colours, i.e. frequencies, which doesn't leave the soul indifferent. In exploring the heart of earthly matter it's a good idea to let science partner with metaphysics and art. This may frustrate and enrage cold materialists but should delight everybody else.

5. Synchronicities

One of the beliefs implanted in our minds by society's dominant culture is that "imponderable" events occur at random in the course of existence. While official science purports to explain relations between causes and effects, it is accepted that many things happen just by "chance" at a given time for no particular reason. Diseases and accidents are seen as strikes of bad luck, and winning a large prize in a lottery as a strike of good luck. And none of this bad or good luck is regarded as having any meaning or expressing any intent.

Yet, if you observe things carefully you will notice those strange coincidences that do seem to have meaning. Like when you think about someone you haven't talked to for months or years and minutes later he or she calls you on the phone. Such an occurrence in my own life really opened my eyes to a new aspect of reality. It was a "chance" meeting in the metro. This may sound like the most boring uninteresting private event of no consequence, but it totally changed my outlook on existence. I have an elderly sister living out of town. She takes the metro less than a half a dozen times a year. The day we met I hadn't myself been on the metro for the last three weeks. That day, around quarter to twelve in the morning I was standing in a packed carriage of the busiest metro line and all of a sudden, to my utter astonishment, I heard my sister's voice calling me. She was sitting less than three meters away and somehow had recognised me among the crowd of people standing next to her and largely blocking her view. We were so happy to meet, we went to a restaurant, had a lovely lunch and talked together in a way we hadn't done in years.

Although I vaguely remembered having experienced a couple of similar events before, I'd always shrugged them off as slightly bizarre and not worthy of much attention. But this time, I was really intrigued. And I set out to work out a reasoned estimate of the probability of our "chance" meeting, taking into consideration the number of times each of us used the metro, the day in the week, the hour, the number of possible routes we were each likely to follow, the frequency of trains, the number of carriages, etc. I came up with a conservative estimate of less than one in several millions, meaning that our meeting shouldn't really have taken place at all. And *yet it did* and it *was full of meaning* for both of us.

Afterwards I began to notice synchronicities and realised that they were happening all the time. Some were just little events of minor importance, as if the universe was giving a wink or waving gently from a distance. Others were more significant, clearly sending a message concerning a matter that was of some importance. I did some research on synchronicities and it soon became obvious that the frequency and significance of synchronicities is so well documented that no one can deny the phenomenon. They are discreet, often unpretentious and yet very clear indications of subtle intent to intervene in our lives.

And what is particularly interesting to note is that while they make mincemeat of the mathematical laws of probabilities, in most cases no law of ordinary physics is infringed. For example, my sister hadn't crossed any brick walls or flown in the sky to land next to me in the metro. But something had led her and me quite naturally to meet there at a specific time against all odds. A discreet miracle you might say.

And the same is true when a book falls from a shelf, and when you pick it up, a sentence on the open page strikes you as being precisely relevant for you at the time. The probability of that particular sentence showing up out of dozens of books, each with tens of thousands of words, is so minuscule, and yet it is that sentence that you were meant to read. People paying attention have all encountered scores of such events.

As a matter of fact, once you begin to be very attentive, not only do you realise that synchronicities occur all the time, but you also notice that all events of life provide hints of a mysterious intent. For example, when you think of how you came to meet your partner, how successive steps in your life starting from school led you to your present career path or brought you where you now live, you see a chain of events, which, with hindsight, looks like fitting a pattern with a clear intent behind.

In daily life you can observe how an invisible force seems to nudge, push, discourage or forbid. Someone you wanted to see whose agenda was fully booked becomes available due a cancellation, and this leads to an opportunity you had given up on. A totally unexpected traffic jam prevents you from attending a business meeting, and this saves you from being caught in a conflict with colleagues. Flu keeps you at home for a week and you can't embark on a project which in fact wasn't such a good idea.

All this points to the fact that nothing happens just by chance or coincidence. Chance simply doesn't exist. It is a delusional concept of the mind caught in the materialist mode of thinking. Well documented books have been written on synchronicities, but they won't have much impact on you unless and until you have experienced a few yourself, and taken the trouble to examine their circumstances, and become fully aware of just how unlikely they were, to the point of being virtually impossible.

And again and again you will have to face this extraordinary fact: they were quasi impossible, they shouldn't have happened, and yet they did! And not only did they happen against all odds, but they invariably had a significance for their protagonists, as if someone or something had wanted them to follow a particular route. If we are totally honest and rigorously rational, what possible explanation can we envisage for such events? Forget chance and coincidence, it just doesn't stack up with the maths. Annoying and irritating as it may be to hard materialists, there is no other logical explanation than intent. Invisible intent, higher intent, deeper intent, divine intent...choose whatever adjective you want, the key thing is that something beyond the superficial ordinary is clearly at work, which cannot be denied given the facts observed.

Because of synchronicities, a rational mind can accept the idea of invisible intent, and we may even say that an honest rational mind has to surrender to the glaring evidence of subtle intent. This fits well into a holistic model. If we are all interrelated through a universal field of energy and information, it is not surprising that the paths of two different individuals should cross at a significant moment for both of them.

However reality might be even more subtle. Theories of fundamental physics envisage potentialities (clusters of probabilities) turning into actual occurrences depending on the observer. In a similar vein of speculation, synchronicities might be potentialities materialising into events of our lives according to our observation and our own deep seated unconscious intention. The latter linked to our own higher self, itself trying to align to Source. But who knows? Once again we have to recognise the limits of what the reasoning intellect is able to comprehend, and in the end accept observations for what they are. In any case, whether we actually notice a synchronicity when it occurs depends on the quality of our perceptions and our ability to decode them. So let us now in the next chapter take a good look at our channels of perception.

6. More than five senses

The activity of our mind is continually fuelled by fresh information. But how does the mind manage to obtain information? We could visualise the mind as a kind of personal computer with data and software stored on a disk and flows of new data pouring through the well known five senses, and through more subtle channels. The five senses operate like systems of captors catching bits of information from the “outside”, processing them and sending messages to brain cells. For instance, the retinas of our eyes receive information in the form of electromagnetic radiations; the information is processed by neurones within the eyes themselves, along the visual cord and finally within the brain. Similar patterns apply for hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.

But not all lights, or sounds, or fragrances, can potentially be picked up by our ordinary five senses, far from it. For instance, only a very limited spectrum of electromagnetic radiations can be decoded by the visual system, the so-called “visible range” of frequencies. Radiations with higher or lower frequencies go through our bodies without being detected, though not necessarily without effects. Similarly our hearing system can only detect mechanical vibrations of a particular range. We can’t detect ultra sounds, whereas dogs can, nor can we hear the very low frequencies, which elephants routinely use in their own communication. The same kinds of limitations apply to the detection of molecules by our neuro-physiological system dealing with smell and taste, and to the sensing of mechanical contact through touch. As a matter of fact, we humans are walking largely blind and deaf through an extraordinary rich ocean of information, of which only small parts are accessible to our ordinary senses.

On the other hand we seem capable of accessing information in other ways than through the ordinary five senses. When we walk into a room and get a bizarre feeling which can be heavy and disturbing or on the contrary light and pleasant. Or when the telephone rings and we know for sure who it is before picking up or seeing the number calling.

In the mid 1980’s, at a time when I was still firmly caught in the materialist belief system, I had the opportunity to have someone read the lines of my hand. To my utter amazement the person read in my hand as if my mind had been laid open on the table, bringing up very personal stuff right back from childhood. He did the same with other people in the room, who were equally amazed. This happened in London during an alumni dinner of my business school. The psychic was an MBA, banker, member of the Conservative party. Not the type of person you expected to read in the hand. I had never met him before. We weren’t contemporaries at the business school. I asked him how he proceeded to interpret the lines. “I don’t really know, he replied, I just pick up things”.

Now, years later, after a fair amount of research on supra-normal phenomena and with some personal experience of non conventional techniques, I am beginning to grasp what he meant. Looking at lines in the hand, or holding a pendulum, or picking up Tarot cards are just modalities facilitating extra sensory perception. They help the mind get into a state where it is able to pick up information in unusual ways (at least unusual in our present culture) and to transfer it from the unconscious to the conscious. Take the example of the pendulum. You ask yourself a question and use a pendulum to help you to the answer. When your unconscious mind receives the answer, this causes your hand to move slightly and make your pendulum turn clockwise or counter-clockwise depending on whether the answer is “yes” or “no” (and in accordance with your “inner convention” for positive and negative). Similarly when you pick up a card from a pack your hand is guided towards the one card that carries most meaning for you at that time, and if a connected person is next to you, he or she can use his or her extra sensory perception to help you interpret the message in your context.

In line with our cultural habit of always trying to separate and classify, we can discern different phenomena involving extra sensory perception: clairvoyance, often technically referred to as remote viewing, clairaudience or remote hearing, precognition, telepathy, etc. In each case it looks as if the mind has access to information that it couldn't possibly have obtained through ordinary channels. In the representation of the mind as a sort of personal computer the five "ordinary" senses appear like interfaces between the mind and the "outside". But the idea of a frontier between inside and outside the mind is very simplistic. As indicated in the second chapter the very notion of boundaries is one of the simplifying assumptions underpinning narrow science. Science has no coherent model for what the mind is (as opposed to just the brain), nor for consciousness, nor for what reality is. What we call reality in everyday speech is only images, sound effects and other impressions produced and experienced within our mind. That is what we experience. From that experience materialist thinking goes on to make various limiting assumptions; it assumes a mechanistic universe with separate creatures each following its distinct trajectory in space and time. In the narrow vision derived from its limiting assumptions and arbitrary postulates, material thinking cannot conceive of phenomena that seem to abolish boundaries, distances and the barrier of time.

Some people calling themselves "sceptics" maintain that such phenomena simply don't exist. The posture of total denial is well known to psychologists who have established that human beings have great difficulties perceiving, let alone accepting, anything that does not concur with their belief system. But while sceptics deny en bloc the possibility of all apparently unexplainable events, a discipline called "parapsychology" has emerged over the last hundred and thirty years or so to study a number of so-called paranormal phenomena. The declared aim of the discipline was to consider strange phenomena with the same "objectivity" that nineteenth century and early twentieth century scientists prided themselves to exercise when studying any facet of the natural world, even the most unusual.

In the early period, researchers in parapsychology gathered evidence by studying psychics or individuals practising the "divinatory arts" and by collecting reports on unusual events. They also organised experiments involving mainly "gifted subjects" and more rarely ordinary individuals. A number of studies and books published in the first decades of the twentieth century reveal the impressive amount of evidence gathered at the time.

The term parapsychology only began to be used in the 1930's and gained wide acceptance mainly after the war. It indicates an explicit connection with psychology, because to be fully accepted, the new discipline had to comply with the methods of conventional science.

Superficially this seems fine, but it hides the fact that a mentality shift of great consequence had occurred in the sphere of science and research since the early part of the twentieth century. While many scientists of the olden days were free curious minds keen to discover and understand, scientists of the more recent era - say from the second half of the twentieth century - are first and foremost professionals of a scientific and academic community whose organisation and financing depend on governments and big business.

The work of modern scientists has to follow the agenda of powerful masters, and be in line with their worldview. Under that tutelage, conventional science has developed fairly rigid methods and protocols designed to keep research within certain general lines. For disciplines in fairly mechanical domains of science, having to comply with modern methods and protocols might not immediately appear to be too much of a problem. But it is a huge problem for a discipline dealing with phenomena whose very existence call the materialist worldview in question. Nevertheless, from the late 1950's many researchers in parapsychology, anxious to be accepted by the wider scientific community, imposed upon themselves the requirement

that the phenomena they were studying had to be strictly repeatable under controlled conditions, otherwise they couldn't even be considered as taking place at all.

This self imposition had the potentially favourable consequence of creating a large mass of data concerning specific types of paranormal phenomena. However the specific types studied in this strictly formatted manner were not necessarily the most significant or the most useful.

In any case most parapsychology research carried out in various establishments throughout the world, including specialised departments of renowned universities, met with scepticism.

Endless discussions on methodology protocols and statistical significance of results obtained led parapsychology into a stalemate. In spite of their strenuous efforts, academic researchers in parapsychology have not, to this day, managed to be fully if at all accepted by the wider scientific community. When their claims of statistical significance of large scale studies cannot be rejected on the basis of faulty protocols, they are confronted to the (true) observation that small deviations from chance occurrence may be real, but are not much use for any application.

And yet, be in no doubt whatsoever: a number of the phenomena that are supposed to be investigated by parapsychology are very real, frequent and of major significance. So what went wrong with parapsychology as a serious discipline? In short, its proponents got themselves in a trap when they focused their efforts on trying to apply methodologies that are not fully suitable to the object of their research. For example, they would make ordinary people with no particular gift try and guess which of, say, six cards carrying distinctive drawings, is being turned over out of their view, and they would repeat this hundreds or thousands of times. If statistics of the experiment showed that guesses had been correct significantly more often than one out of six times on average they would point to a "statistically significant" indication of "remote viewing" by the subjects tested. But then they wouldn't quite know what to do with such results.

By contrast, if we go back to the work produced in the early decades of the discipline, researchers weren't confining themselves to endlessly repeat very restricted experiments in order to produce masses of data analysed statistically. Such repetitive large scale protocols shed comparatively little light because psychic phenomena concern essentially specific individuals with specific intentions in specific circumstances. We are dealing with the subtlety of consciousness, not with standard characteristics of robots. In that sense, parapsychology cannot be a hard science. Parapsychology is a subtle discipline requiring a mix of rigorous logic, intuition, observation and clever analysis, rather than statistical number crunching.

While academics in the discipline are pretty stuck, more and more people with a free mind build their own corpus of observations on supra-normal phenomena and are able to exchange on them through various forms of networking.

To give a feel of what non academic activity can produce here is a well known case of a practising clairvoyant who organises training classes. Interestingly she starts by encouraging her students to develop their capacity to describe events from their distant past, such as early childhood. At the beginning their descriptions tend to be rather poor and dull, but with practice they all manage to piece together more much vivid and detailed reconstructions of past events in their lives. Only after they have attained a certain fluency in using long range memory, does she present them with objects such as photos of people they don't know and ask them to produce information on these unknown people. Again the quality of the material they come up with is weak at the start but improves noticeably with practice. And what is truly

fascinating is that when different subjects work on the same object, their contributions tend to be very complementary, combining to offer an impressively accurate profile of unknown people, animals, objects, or places that they were asked to report on through remote viewing

Perhaps the key conclusion of such training, confirming what had been shown by many other observations, is that “psi” capabilities are not restricted to a few exceptional subjects; they are natural faculties that all humans possess to some degree. As with other faculties, some subjects seem more gifted than others, but everybody can improve with motivation and practice. The main obstacle to practice of course is that Western culture doesn’t accept the reality of these phenomena, because they are incompatible with its reductionist worldview. So most people are positively discouraged to take an interest, and if they do they fear to be criticised and ridiculed.

Assuming we free ourselves from this intellectual cage of materialist thinking, how could we explain supra-natural perceptions? Let’s be careful here not to fall into an alternative form of “we know all” arrogance, having rejected mainstream dogmatism. Our starting point must be humility; we know so very little. That said, there are reasons to posit that reality is infinite, even though we cannot logically figure out what infinite truly means. Although it’s beyond our logic and capacity to comprehend, that infinite continuum must imply a sort of fundamental field (for want of a better word) of energy and information, and probably consciousness and intent. We’re out of our depth, but we can tentatively assume that everything must be related to that fundamental field. And that must include the human mind. Why is it that information from the fundamental field should reach the mind directly in some cases and only indirectly via the physical senses in other cases?

At this stage it is useful to combine various insights gained so far and take a new look at a tentative holistic vision emerging from them.

7. Free from dogma

Spiritually advanced individuals don't need an elaborate vision of existence. They are not obsessed with rationalising everything. They take the flow of life as it comes, experience intuitive guidance and have full trust in the universe.

Many of us, however, are caught in the net of conformist thinking invariably presented as rational, but in fact revolving around highly questionable theories.

If we step back and consider things from scratch, we have to admit that we "know" precious little. All we can say for sure is that something we can call "I" is partly conscious. Conscious of being. Conscious of experiencing sensations, emotions and thoughts. Conscious of the apparent existence of other creatures. And that... is about all we can say for sure. That is the "base line" of what "we know". Anything beyond that base line is pure conjecture. Just hypotheses and beliefs. In other words is anybody's guess.

Is it wise to accept as gospel society's official guesses? Philosophy, science, religion; all rest on assumptions. And very narrow limitative assumptions at that. When you probe into them without any preconceived idea, they turn out to be surprisingly devoid of solid logical justification. And most people are completely unaware of these assumptions and of the extraordinary narrowing of perspective that they imply. In previous chapters we drew attention to the postulates implicit in official science, such as repeatability of phenomena, meaningful demarcations between domains, human scale of observation and absence of conscious intention. We questioned their logic and showed how they were used by rulers with an agenda of mind control to prevent potentially powerful ideas from being properly considered and researched.

In part two we shall take a fresh look at world history through to the present crisis and expose judgemental premises widely propagated in society: human primacy, individualism, competition, struggle for life, survival of the fittest.... None of these ideas can be justified. Yet all of them have been forced onto people's minds as godly truths for generations. But if you leave these false hypotheses aside and consider humanity's situation, you can see as clear as day light that attitudes and actions consistent with the dominant world view are no help at all. And not only are they no help and offer no solution, in fact they are the problem.

That is why we have to free ourselves from the dominant world view. If we take on board observations of the subtle side of existence a completely different perspective opens up. "All there is" appears as an infinite oneness endowed with energy, information and consciousness, with unlimited interactions, with no boundaries or separations. A continuum of infinite potentialities steeped in absolute love and harmony.

Do such assumptions "feel" right? If they do, that doesn't "prove" anything, but it's a signal that something within us, deep in our unconscious, profoundly likes these premises. That is not quite good enough, however. We need to test the coherence of such a tentative holistic world view.

From the widespread evidence of synchronicities we can be pretty confident that intent exists in the big all there is. But we don't know who or what manifests intent: just our own higher self, the whole consciousness field or some godlike being?

Going back to the base line, in everyday life we tend to experience our "I" as separate from everything else. Can that be squared with the idea of oneness without boundaries and separations? This apparent paradox is worth serious consideration. Let's begin by realising

that our physical body isn't as closed and separate as one usually imagines. We can all observe that our nails and hair retain roughly the same appearance even though they are actually renewed every so often. We know that dead skin is regularly replaced by new skin. In fact almost all types of cells within the body die and are replaced by new ones. And the human body contains many more cells belonging to guest microorganisms like bacteria and germs than cells that are actually part of the body. In other words, more than half of us, physically, is not "us" but a crowd of other creatures forming an eco-system within us. These creatures constantly exchange complex information between them and with our own body. Like our own cells they emit and receive electromagnetic fields and respond to chemical markers. The orchestration of the ballet of all cells - ours and our partners' – is nothing short of miraculous. And the ballet is danced at a lower scale too. Atoms within living cells get replaced by other atoms of the same element, and the rates of replacement vary according to the elements and the types of cell. And things are even more in flux further down the scale ladder, in the realm of elementary particles. These, according to physics, are continually moving in a way that is beyond ordinary comprehension.

From all of this, one thing is clear: "I" can in any case not be regarded as a stable solid material entity. It looks more as if some piece of smart software ensures that ever changing elementary particles, atoms and cells keep reorganising themselves into something that is "I". That smart software enables a complex eco-system of germs, enzymes, bacteria and human cells to live and thrive together through astoundingly clever exchanges of information involving electromagnetic signals and chemical flows. And the electro-magnetic fields involved are not only those produced by cells within our body but also those generated by planet earth or coming from the cosmos. So "I" is not closed and isolated, but is a totally *open system*, continually involved in myriads of interactions with the rest of the universe.

Let's now consider the idea of absolute love and harmony in all there is. Why should we believe in absolute love? Partly because people who have been on the edge of death say that they could sense the power of love. Partly also because mystics who experienced transcendence reported being overwhelmed by total love. And mainly because it makes us feel warm and less fearful. A feeling that can't be in our mind for no reason.

But we have to face the thorny issue of evil and suffering. The obvious existence of a dark side spoils the rosy picture of love and harmony. Or does it? Some traditions offer metaphors of light and darkness being inseparable. You wouldn't see light if there was no darkness. And you wouldn't recognise love, benevolence and joy if you hadn't experienced nastiness and suffering. It is difficult and probably pointless to try and justify the dark side of existence. The fact is that it is all around (at least in human society) and we have to find some way to deal with it without losing faith in pure love and harmony. There is a dark side, we don't know why, but it can be transcended.

We call it dark, and yet we don't have to cast moral judgements, like most religious traditions do. There may well be dark entities floating in the big field of consciousness but we don't need to label them "bad", and regard them as enemy to be beaten off and rejected. Why not regard them as simply "misguided", temporarily misaligned with Source, but still part of oneness, like everything else, and therefore worthy of love and compassion like any other creature or entity.

This idea isn't a piece of gratuitous metaphysics. It is actually implicit in the very practical work of therapists applying spirit release on people suffering from unexplained serious mental or physical conditions. These practitioners operate differently from exorcists appointed by religious authorities who endeavour to get rid of entities in a confrontational mode. Spirit release therapists seek to free their patients from entities attached to them but they do it by

encouraging the entities to move on towards the light, by giving them recognition, compassion and love. And the fact is they get effective results increasingly acknowledged by conventional psychotherapists. So the assumption of absolute love and harmony is actually consistent with experiential evidence.

Looking at existence from various angles it is clear that a holistic world view diametrically opposed to materialism is congruent with serious theories in different disciplines and consistent with a vast body of observations. But huge questions are left open that science cannot begin to answer. At some point we not only have to leave science, but give up linear step by step reasoning altogether to embrace pure holistic intuition. Given all the experiential evidence available such a move is totally rational.

Yet most of the scientific establishment refuse point blank to go down that path. Why? Frankly, how can pundits of official “rational thinking” maintain the charade of no intent in the universe, of things structuring themselves into plants, animals and humans through blind evolution guided by chance and soulless “laws” magically emerging from nowhere and remaining constant in all circumstances? How can official medicine sustain the fiction of the human body as a machine, a biological robot to be maintained against mechanical wear and tear and kept in hygienic conditions away from germs? How can intensive agriculture persist in treating soils and animals as mere mechanical and chemical throughput of crude industrial processes? There is so much clear evidence of the complete inadequacy of mainstream materialist thinking that the question arises of how that system of thought can still be embraced without shame and embarrassment by intelligent people in all positions right through to the top.

These people go about their lives trapped in the belief system society imposes on their minds. At times they may call intuition some emotional thought triggered by their ego, but such impulse has nothing to do with genuine connection to Source. Anyone who tries to run his life relying only on the dry reasoning intellect is lost. The contradictions and confusion of our visible world are simply insurmountable. What do you do when you're lost? You turn to someone hoping he will show you the right way. And you *follow*. You follow because you think you have no choice.

Most people believe they have no choice. They live in confusion and fear. Mainly fear of death, i.e. of the end of their elusive personality and ego. They see harshness and dangers everywhere. When leaders promise some measure of protection they give them their total allegiance. And they stop thinking by themselves, save for trivialities. In their eyes the system must be right, because it is so strong. And their little “I” feels so weak. The system impresses by its power and appearance of knowledge. Institutions dispensing official knowledge are impressive. And their experts - scientists, doctors, psychologists, economists, lawyers, financiers...- are all intimidating.

If only more folks realised that most experts are probably intimidated themselves, but have learned not to let it appear too obvious. That is the social game which keeps the system in charge. At its summit you find characters whose mindset is totally geared to competition and very adept at disguising their fears. In their eyes any consideration of what makes sense, what is harmonious, what is kind, what is true, counts for very little. Various studies have suggested that a significant percentage of people at the top of the social and economic pyramid are psychopaths, i.e. individuals entirely focused on their own ego, with no empathy whatsoever for others or for anything alive. A possible metaphysical reason why psychopaths are found at the top of virtually every powerful organisation is that misguided entities have done a thorough job of infiltrating human minds and manipulating egos.

A number of people working in organisations where psychopaths occupy top positions tend to become what you might call secondary psychopaths. They weren't natural psychopaths, but having to survive in an environment where psychopaths thrive, they become like them. They convince themselves that one has to cheat, conceal and manipulate in the competition game, and feel they simply have no option but to do it. Now and again we all display some psychopathic characteristics, because our egos are continually bounced, bruised and hardened by the competitive society. The result is that the pervasive vision of life as a hard struggle for survival appears corroborated by most people's attitudes. And if you don't go along with that vision and the sort of rash egotistic behaviour it implies you tend to be regarded as naïve and not to be trusted. With such social dynamics in full swing everywhere, opportunities for serenity and empathy are limited, and there is little room for connecting to Source.

Nevertheless, a significant undercurrent of awareness is growing today despite the conditioning and indoctrination forced on everyone by the system. And more and more people can see it and may be tempted to join the undercurrent. But a barrier of fear tends to stop many of them. Their minds are slaves of a system of thought. Deep down they may know that, and they probably know that the dominant system of thought is fundamentally absurd, but that doesn't give them quite enough courage to set themselves free.

That is about where we are collectively. A minority is very aware, capable of intuitive connection at times, and increasingly aligning their thoughts and actions with a vision of holistic consciousness. A wider group is the process of waking up, but the system is still too strong for them and still holds them in its grip. And the majority remains for the time being under the spell of the world's rulers and of their way of thinking manipulated by invisible entities.

In this book we are going as far as we can with the rational argument exposing the flaws of materialist thinking and suggesting the merits of a holistic vision. But in the end rational argument is not what determines our beliefs, attachments and loyalties. Deep emotions, desires, fears, most of them hidden in the subconscious; that is what really moves or freezes the mind. But where do the memories of such emotions come from, where are they stored, how does our mind-body-soul system manage to retrieve them, often without our conscious knowing?

There is no clear cut answer to any of these questions. They touch on the very essence of the "I". On the way the clever piece of software works that holds "I" together as an individual.

In the holistic vision we feel no anxiety to know the precise mechanics of "I". It's an open system interconnected with all there is. It is eternal, if that means anything given that the concept of time is probably a product of our narrow intellect.

To round off our exploration of the holistic world view we can take another look at this idea from fundamental physics that potentialities at sub-atomic level turn into actual occurrences only when an "observer" comes into play. At our level synchronicities, which we can all experience, are events with low and sometimes extremely low probabilities that nevertheless do occur and bring meaning to protagonists. And the so often observed law of attraction holds that events are prompted by thoughts and emotions of people concerned. Isn't the connection with "potentialities" and "observer" at sub-atomic level rather uncanny?

In part II that follows we are going to use our fresh freedom of mind to take a critical look at history through to the current situation and examine the hidden mechanisms underlying humanity's frantic race through the global crisis.

Part II: The heavy side of reality

1. Society's narrative

Reality may be infinitely vast and wonderfully subtle, but most of the time it looks as if our personal life is confined to a tiny box and spoiled by all kinds of material constraints. This is a distressing paradox. The key to transcending it lies in changing our perceptions, which implies getting rid of a heavy baggage of emotions, judgements and beliefs that affect them.

Much of that baggage comes from our parents, school, friends and society generally. There is a kind of ubiquitous narrative sustained by society which tends to impress us, to intimidate us, to make us feel small, weak and fundamentally on our own. We must stop being intimidated, and realise that the narrative is made up. Let's bear in mind that all visible events are determined by subtle energy flows, by what goes on in the fundamental information field behind everything.

The current crisis on the planet, with its acute ecological dimension, with its conflicts, its social disharmony, its financial corruption, and all the rest of it, is just the manifestation of energy based phenomena not directly perceived by our ordinary senses. If we try to muddle through the present environment using only conventional knowledge and so-called rational reasoning we are bound to find the journey painful and doomed to failure, because the tight knot of challenges and contradictions is just mind boggling.

We need to develop a capacity to see through appearances, to debunk the dominant narrative, to distance ourselves from its noxious waves of fear, hatred, distrust and coldness. A good way to start is to whizz through the recent history of mankind to see how the present crisis came about.

2. World history in short

Some 10,000 years ago most humans ceased to be hunter gatherers to become farmers and craftsmen. In other words, “homo sapiens” started to transform nature for its supposed “benefit”. The human impact on nature increased first very gradually over several millennia before taking off spectacularly in the last couple of centuries.

We are going to concentrate on that recent period, the so-called industrial age. Technical progress seems to have followed a curve similar to that of global demographics. World population is thought to have been around 200 million at the start of the Christian era; it reached one billion in 1830, two in 1930, two and half in 1950, and from then on literally exploded to reach 7 billion by 2012. And it continues to grow. Demographics and large scale use of highly impacting technologies developed considerably more in the last 60 years - less than a lifetime - than over millennia of human presence on the planet.

In the early part of the 19th century the demographic take off coincided with the industrial revolution and with the emergence of a purely materialist worldview. Population started to rise much faster in Europe than in other parts of the world, except North America, where the increase was largely due to immigration from Europe. Figures speak for themselves: between 1800 and 1900 the population rose in Europe from around 200 million to over 400 million, in North America from less than 10 to over 80 million⁶[1], in Asia from a little over 600 to about 950 million and in Africa from over 100 to a little above 130 million.

Why did population rise so spectacularly in Europe at that time, while it remained little changed in Africa? It is also puzzling to note the apparent relative stability of population numbers in native tribes with no or limited contact with civilisation. It doesn't seem that many in depth explanations have been proposed for this. Yet population growth, stability or decline is a key factor in human condition. It is directly related to how society treats women, views sexuality, child birth and breast feeding. Have there been natural methods of contraception that European civilisation has forgotten?

Anyhow, the 19th century saw a big colonial expansion involving the British, the French and others, and increasing population was clearly regarded positively by European rulers. It provided the army with more soldiers, the church with more followers, and the nation with more manpower for the colonies. After the Napoleonic wars, Europe was more or less at peace during large parts of the 19th century, and most military activities were carried out overseas. Europeans, and later North Americans, dominated the world and did their utmost to impose their vision of life on others.

But that vision was itself changing fast. In fact there never was one vision, but several overlapping and partly conflicting ones. In the 19th century old ideas often associated with religion were challenged by the advances of “objective” science. As newly discovered laws of mechanics, thermo-dynamics and chemistry explained more and more phenomena and as technologies appeared ever more impressive, a worldview rooted in pure materialism came to be seen as totally rational. Atheism became a respectable position for educated people. But while materialist atheists thought there were freeing themselves from the crushing weight of irrational religious beliefs, they generally failed to realise that they were falling into a new

⁶ Population figures related to America are to be viewed with particular caution as they may tend to conceal the extent of extermination of native Americans.

belief trap. The belief that science is gradually uncovering absolute “truth” and that our ordinary human logic of linear cause and effect sequences is the only logic at work in the universe.

Meanwhile, though challenged, religion was far from dead, and even progressive atheists saw value in keeping it well alive, be it for no other purpose than as a useful instrument to ensure that the poor remained disciplined and obedient. This fitted with the rapid social changes induced by industrialisation and by the expansion of international trade and colonialism.

The last years of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th saw a kind of economic globalisation, less systematic and absolute than what we experience today, but nevertheless sufficiently powerful and unprecedented to shake previously held visions of life.

What the new science-based materialism did not change, on the contrary, was the idea that man is the most important creature on earth where it has a special role to play. Animals, plants, oceans, rivers, forests, are just parts of a décor for the human adventure, providing mankind with limitless resources. This was the long-held view of the dominant stream of Christianity: men were to multiply and conquer the earth, freely using its fruits while glorifying the creator. On the central place of man, materialism profoundly agrees with religion. Both sides also converge in their view of life as being fundamentally a struggle. A hard struggle to resist temptations and gain one’s entry pass to heaven, and more immediately for sheer survival and whenever possible achieving a degree of comfort and convenience. In any case a struggle implying competition with the rest of nature and between humans. Such a vision inevitably breeds fear, mistrust, and open antagonism towards anybody appearing as different, foreign, outside your clan, tribe or nation. To survive you have to control your environment and your relations with people around you. You have to fight enemies; you have to be strong and fit into a strong group.

Another central idea shared by materialism and religion, not unrelated to the previous two, is their view of women. Basically considered irrational and unstable creatures, sensual witches supposedly connected to the earth and cosmic forces. Males couldn’t possibly tolerate such nonsense, could they? It will appear later that today’s feminism is equally wary of women’s basic links with natural energies. But let’s stay with our story.

Against the background of rapid change and evolving ideas, European elites, whether inclined towards religion or towards materialism realised that they had a lot of interests in common, such as keeping peasantry and the new urban low classes reasonably under control, and developing a psychological and moral underpinning for the colonialist expansion. Their sense of superiority was almost absolute. When they were cynics they felt quite comfortable with the idea of exploiting weaker people and nature, within their own country or in the colonies. When they had a moral sense, rooted or not in religion, they considered it their duty to bring civilisation - i.e. their own set of beliefs – to the uneducated and “savages”. We may observe that the mix of arrogance, bullying and self righteousness displayed by Europeans in those days is still largely present today, albeit with some nuances. For “Europeans” then, today you could read “the West”. Propaganda in the West about the need to wage “war on terror”, stabilise Afghanistan, support democracy in Syria or Ukraine, etc., etc., shows an uncanny similarity with the tone of language used in colonial time.

However, it would be wrong to assign all harshness only to European Judeo-Christian civilisation. China, India, and Japan, for example, despite their admirable ancient spiritual traditions open to wholeness and subtle energy, have also developed cast systems, unfair treatment of girls and women, and the apology of force. In a way, the near ubiquity of harshness reinforces the conviction of many that there is something inevitable, “natural” in

the competitive violence characterising human condition. Not only the human condition, but life generally: look at the animal world, say the “realists”, and you see predators eating weaker creatures, you see dominant males taking all the females...etc. It's survival of the strongest all round. That is life, always has been, always will be - so they say.

Despite the appalling impact of hard capitalism on many aspects of social life, the period of first globalisation around 1900 is also a time of remarkable refinement and creativity. Commodities and convenience brought by technical progress reach Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, St Petersburg, San Francisco, Istanbul, Tokyo and Shanghai. Imagine the luxury of large aristocratic or bourgeois town houses with electricity, Champagne flowing and smart ladies dressed to kill. The visible world at the turn of the 20th century is what the French called “*la belle époque*” (the nice time).

For reasons hard to figure out rationally, *la belle époque* ended very badly indeed. Why did European nations throw themselves into the total madness of the first world war? My own father fought in that war. He was severely wounded, taken prisoner in Northern Prussia (now Poland) together with a few French and Belgians, a number of British and thousands of Russians from the Tsar's army. Yes, a baby boomer with grand children born in the 21st century had a father who spent a terrible winter of captivity with soldiers of the Tsar and veterans from the Boer war. A reminder of how short our span of history can be.

The first World War combined the near medieval technology of the bayonet with heavy artillery, machine guns, shrapnel's, tanks, planes and submarines. Tens of thousands casualties each day over weeks, often to move the front line less than half a kilometre. A crazy orgy of violence and inconceivable suffering. For what? It seems nobody really knew. But it didn't matter. They had to go on, be brave for their country. There had been quite a few pacifists before the war but when events precipitated after the assassination in Sarajevo they were swept away by a tidal wave of bellicosity. However, for some reason a myth took on at the time: “the war to end all wars”. A lot of chaps went into the war convinced it was going to be the very last one. Let's just win this war, and all people would become reasonable and civilised. Peace would be for ever.

Given the relative prominence of pacifist ideas before the war, this was perhaps less naïve than it may sound today. Is it because it was seen as pure duty, but the extreme violence of the 1st World War was by and large confined to the military. Civilians were not too often taken as targets, as they would be in later conflicts where mass incineration of urban areas through bombing would be considered fair tactics.

When the conflict ended in 1918, millions of young men had lost their lives and millions of others bore the marks of their injuries. The war led to revolution in Russia, to the dismemberment of the Austrian and Ottoman empires, and to misery, humiliation and hyperinflation in Germany. But while life was difficult in many parts of Europe, business boomed in the USA. The country was becoming the first economic power in the world. American companies started to produce a whole raft of new things on a very large scale. And a new phenomenon appeared: mass marketing of consumer goods.

Ideas put forward by the new discipline of psychoanalysis led to applications in commerce. If humans were steered chiefly by unconscious emotions rather than by reason, it should be possible to appeal to their unconscious desires, aspirations, as well as fears and dislikes to attract them to certain products. Fashion and social attitudes could be influenced using techniques derived from psychoanalysis. Cigarettes manufacturers for example were able to break the taboo against women smoking through a public relations campaign inspired by the theme that women saw the cigarette as a sign of male power reminiscent of a penis.

The “roaring twenties” were in sharp contrast to the grey tragedy of the war: chain produced cars, radio, cinema, short skirts, swinging music. And a booming stock market where ordinary folks started to gamble enticed by the general excitement and the development of debt money. Individual and collective behaviour was now under the increasing influence of media, advertising and public relations. Some people high in corporations and government were open to experimenting with the latest ideas of psychology and psychoanalysis to improve their grip on the masses.

Meanwhile in Germany methods of propaganda not far from new business communication techniques were used with great effect in the rise to power of the Nazi party. A little insignificant man with his comical moustache and hair style seized control of the minds of millions in one of the most advanced societies on the planet, a nation rich of top intellectuals with a brilliant cultural heritage. The Nazis developed manipulation of the masses to new levels of effectiveness. And by the way, where did they get their money from when Germany was sinking in debt? The fact, so little talked about, must be that the new Nazi government was generously financed by American and British banks, often in Jewish hands. Where else could they have got the money from? Their country was ruined. But in a matter of a few years that same ruined country was able to create the most formidable war machine the world had seen, and a new conflict broke out two decades after the first one. Two (comparatively) medium sized nations, Germany and Japan, took on the British Empire, the USA and the Soviet Union.

A lot has been written in conventional history about WWII. But huge questions are left unanswered. How come that the advancing German army failed to prevent hundreds of thousands of British troops to escape from Dunkirk? Why were the Germans so poorly prepared for the winter in their campaign in Russia? What are the true facts and figures concerning the Holocaust? No doubt this terrible tragedy happened, but the figure of six millions victims has never been seriously corroborated. Does it matter? Yes, even with laudable intentions, propaganda remains a dangerous poison. Another thing, it is strange, isn't it, that key technical breakthroughs achieved by Germans – like the V2 rocket and jet airplanes – all came too late to change the course of history. Why did the American authorities refuse to negotiate with Japanese authorities who were prepared to surrender, which would have saved two atomic bombs? Anyway, there are so many more recent issues requiring clarification that we can leave this chunk of history in the shade of its mysteries.

In the post war era things really accelerated towards the present state of affairs. Consider the shape of that unprecedented evolution: 1946 – less than two and a half billion people on the planet, 80% of them living off the land from traditional agriculture in semi autarchy; 2014 – over seven billion people, 50% in urban areas, largely cut off from the land and completely dependent on a global integrated economic system.

How did it happen? No sooner had Germany and Japan been defeated that local conflicts, mostly related to decolonisation, erupted everywhere and the cold war began between the “free world” and communist powers. Despite the indescribable horrors of the two major wars that had followed one another within a generation, force was still largely accepted as the inevitable final means of settling differences, and military bravery still admired as the ultimate male virtue. But things were nuanced. Alongside a mentality revolving around force, another mentality inclining towards appeasement was at work in collective consciousness. And the idea that all individuals had a right to a degree of well being began to have traction. Well being was seen firstly in terms of satisfaction of basic material needs, and in terms of access to civilisation and education. What was meant by the latter was access to a glimpse of the worldview, habits and way of thinking of the elite, who, needless to say, felt pretty sure of possessing values most in line with *the* truth.

This general mood led, among other things, to the establishment of fairly extended social systems in Western Europe, North America and, under different arrangements, in the USSR and other communist countries. Whatever the regime, it was considered normal that a civilised state should see to it that all its citizens would eventually benefit from education, medical services, and old age pensions. At the same time, a more basic objective held precedence over everything else: providing enough food for everybody.

On the face of it these various objectives looked entirely commendable, and many teachers, doctors, agronomists, and others did their best to contribute to their realisation. They did so in the mindset of the time: triumphant materialism; the world is what we see, science is the way to understand and control it, only mankind really matters, life is essentially a struggle but thanks to “progress” we can limit its harshness through technology and social engineering. There were of course different brands of progress: socialist progress, free enterprise progress, social democratic progress. But differences concerned essentially the means, and much less the objectives. In every “civilised” country, educated professionals set out to develop the various facets of progress: large scale industry, road and air transportation, intensive agriculture, modern medicine, baby milk substitutes, ready prepared food, television networks.

Soon the first casualty of the tidal wave of contemporary progress turned out to be the whole of nature: in the countryside, in the wild, in oceans, seas and rivers. Let's focus first on the countryside. For millennia peasants and farmers had regarded their land, the plants they grew, insects buzzing in the fields, grazing animals, wild trees and all creatures crawling in the soil as living characters in an extraordinary symphony. Its modulations followed the phases of the moon, the seasons and the ever changing weather. But when the professionals of agriculture's “green revolution” took matters into their hands, deep relations with the natural world dating from time immemorial were simply ignored without second thoughts, and agriculture became an industry, a big industry. With its processes analysed and managed like production processes in manufacturing. Here you have inputs: seeds, chemicals, water. Over there you have a site where production takes place: the field. And you have operating procedures: ploughing, spreading products, etc. And you have an overall objective: highest possible production in return for your costs. Forget about the moon, forget about the myriads of living creatures, and forget about the sacred relation with mother earth. Stick to a cold approach free of sensitivities and old superstitions.

For a while, this approach seemed to work. That is, seemed to bring more production for less human effort. The approach gained acceptance, and as it did, every aspect of the process was looked at with a view to rationalisation: fewer different seeds, less labour, larger plots And a new factor entered the equation: the financial interest of powerful suppliers. Suppliers of tractors and machinery, suppliers of chemical fertilisers, weed killers and pesticides, suppliers of animal feed, animal drugs and vaccines. And suppliers of credit, in other words bankers.

The world of peasants pretty much disappeared in a matter of two or three decades, replaced by a new world of industrialists of the agro-business. This drastic transformation started first in North America just before the war, Europe followed from the 50's onwards and then the rest of the world.

Some consequences of intensive agriculture are well known: water pollution by large quantities of chemicals used in fields, food contamination by traces of pollutants in wheat, corn, vegetables, milk, and meat. But another set of consequences often escapes attention: the tremendous drop in the numbers of creatures normally present in soils, like worms, insects, micro-organisms. The quasi disappearance of these armies of active tiny creatures fundamentally changed the nature of soils. Instead of being soft, rich with a nice smell of

humus, allowing rain water easy passage, soils turned hard like old cement. When that happens, water can't go through and flooding becomes frequent. When the sun shines again, pools evaporate and what remains is dry and crackling. In fact the land dies. In countries with a moderate climate, agriculture can be maintained with large inputs of fertilisers. But in very hot countries the land eventually turns into desert.

In the summer of 2012 I spent a few days in Normandy, a well known region of France which used to be full of small orchards and lush pastures boarded by trees and hedges. Rich, splendid countryside if ever there was one. But now it seems that many orchards have been replaced by fields, small plots have been merged together, hedges and trees cut out and hollows filled up to create bigger spaces for intensive monocultures. When you walk along, not only has the former charm of many places gone, but it feels different. Another kind of vibrations. A lack of subtle energy. If we think about it, that was to be expected. Not so many years ago, soils were hosts to a rich variety of creatures and plants crawling and growing on different terrains differently exposed to wind and sun. All was in good balance and harmony. Now soils are mere substrates in a production process. Fields are like combinations of concrete slabs and machinery bolted on them: inert, lifeless, and indifferent. No wonder subtle vibrations are weak.

While small creatures living in the soils have been largely decimated by a combination of savage ploughing and chemical spreading, the lot of bigger country animals is hardly more enviable. The vast majority of them now spend their lives in places that are effectively concentration camps. How else could we describe a noisy hall with tens of thousands of chickens, each allotted a surface equivalent of an A4 sheet (new norm from the European Commission). And the story is similar for cows, pigs, salmon and others. The cruel conditions we inflict on the animals we eat is not only a disgrace, it also contributes to make us ill. When we eat them, we ingest the memories of fear and suffering encoded in every cell of their poor flesh. But most people don't think about this when they choose a piece of meat in its cellophane wrapping from the cold section of their supermarket. Their relationship with reality is entirely formatted by the materialist mode of thinking. Crude ideas and references have been implanted in their minds from their earliest childhood. They think and act more or less like everyone around them does. And of course, like the system constantly suggests through its various media of communication. If there is a good promotion on chicken wings this week in your local supermarket, you have to be almost a social outcast to be able to visualise the noisy hall with twenty thousand birds in total stress.

Those who uphold the "life is a hard struggle, always has been, always will be" theory will no doubt point to the fact that cruelty towards animals is not new. Correct. But what is different now is the systematic, industrialised character of what is done to animals. And not only to animals, to humans too, and to oceans, and rivers, and skies, and old cities. Attacks from different angles amounting to a general onslaught against all aspects of nature and of human expressions of beauty.

Why did this general onslaught come about? After the war, in the 1950's and 1960's, things seemed to start relatively well, at least with good intentions, undoubtedly sincere for many people. But then "progress" got into a sort of whirlpool of business interests, conflicting beliefs, corporatism of experts, advertising, communication, lobbying... which became so intricate that most individuals find themselves powerless and completely lost facing it all. A key factor is that constant and ever harder economic pressure tends to mute most people's ability to think and feel.

Economic pressure had been strong since the start of the industrial revolution, but it really changed gear around 1980 with the advent of financially driven globalisation and, a few years

later, with the triumph of capitalism over communism. For a few decades the Soviet block had looked like a formidable competitor to capitalism. However, in the 1970's communist regimes visibly failed to deliver. And while communism was losing its lustre, social democracy partially inspired by socialist ideals was encountering its own difficulties. Intransigent trade unions made life complicated for business managers. The latter faced costly social programmes, new rules to protect consumers, ensure more safety or limit certain environmental impacts, and government meddling in the setting of sales prices. All these factors were seen by theoreticians of free capitalism as impediments to the proper functioning of markets. They pointed to the fact that business leaders were torn between conflicting constraints without having a clear objective to guide their decisions. Businesses lacked focus. Quite a few big companies at the time were conglomerates with all kinds of activities and unclear strategies. In a way they were not so different from state concerns in socialist economies. To cut right through this lack of clarity and focus, capitalist thinkers came up with the concept of "maximisation of shareholder value". The job of a company leader was to pursue *one* single overall objective: ensure constant growth of the value obtained by shareholders through dividends and increasing share prices. Any decision facing management was to be analysed with a view to its likely consequences on shareholder value. Any other consideration – employee satisfaction, quality of products...- was important only insofar as it underpinned the overall objective of maximising shareholder value.

There, at last, was clarity. Decisions could be made regarding borrowing, investments, dividend payments. Financial requirements regarding new projects could be set based on a logic accepted by all. Some older managers had a bit of difficulty grappling with the new stuff, but to younger managers, often more familiar with financial concepts learned in business schools, the objective of maximisation of shareholder value appeared illuminating. At the same time – in the mid 1980's- new tools like PC's and spreadsheets greatly facilitated a wider implementation of key financial concepts such as free cash flows and internal rate of return. A competent analyst on his own could compute the theoretical market value of a "business unit" within a large company. The portfolio of activities in a corporation could be more easily assessed and more easily managed. An activity in which the company was too small could be sold off and the proceeds used to expand elsewhere.

But for all these new possibilities to become fully effective, business had to be largely free from obstacles raised by unions or government agencies. Legislation had to become "business friendly". A new mood started to permeate the circles of government, academia, business and finance. Free trade was encouraged world wide and business across national borders became much easier, particularly for large international companies. These were able to extract better terms for themselves through different geographical areas, and workforces began to feel the impact of foreign competition on their bargaining position. At the same time, millions of women joined the labour market, including in sectors and types of jobs hitherto the sole province of men. This too played directly in the hands of employers⁷. All these factors were compounded by rapid technological progress. So from the mid-1980's onwards, employers got the upper hand over labour, and new managers operating according to the maximisation of shareholder value dogma became ever more efficient in their efforts to extract maximum productivity from their workers.

⁷ Massive participation in the labour market turned out to create a cruel trap for a lot of women. But commenting further on this phenomenon would require serious elaboration on its wide societal and personal ramifications

When the Soviet block disintegrated in 1990-91, there appeared to be no longer any alternative to capitalism. Western free marketers had won the ideological contest. Only intellectual dinosaurs would call into question the wisdom of managing businesses and the world economy on the basis of maximisation of shareholder value. Globalisation went into overdrive. Multinationals, banks and financial investors had a great time. Whenever the economy showed signs of weakening, or markets were doubtful, in came central banks with easier money and lower interest rates. Wages and salaries of most employees outside the exclusive class of senior executives came under pressure due to globalisation, but cheap and easy credit enabled them to acquire a home, buy a car and other goods despite their stagnating incomes. As for everybody's primary need: food, intensive agriculture and large scale distribution provided abundant cheap assortments. Most folks found this entirely satisfactory, as they were largely unaware of the dramatic consequences of low quality industrialised food on their own health and on the state of the planet.

As all this was going on, some people began to realise that the global economic system, while producing massive amounts of goods that people were prepared to buy, was also predatory and destructive. Unease about the side effects of economic growth came to the fore and a major conference on the environment was organised in Rio in 1992. This summit produced a lot of words about sustainable development and provided green activists with ammunition to criticise big business. Multinationals responded with the concept of *corporate social responsibility*, which consists in giving the impression to care about social and environmental issues. The main advantage for a company to do so is that it helps maintaining its "licence to operate" without serious problems with the authorities, activists or public opinion. Ten years after Rio a new Earth Summit was organised in Johannesburg. This time, instead of being on the defensive, big business was present and proactive, to such an extent that the then UN General Secretary declared that business was "part of the solution".

After Johannesburg multinationals took over most of the conversation on sustainable development. Related issues of transparency and business ethics were added to the pot, and "sustainability" became a sort of catch-all communication and corporate image tool. The woolly concept of "sustainability" contrasted with the neat and sharp objective of "maximising shareholder value". The latter, needless to say, remained the only true preoccupation of management. While many people took an openly cynical view of the whole sustainability exercise, a number of prominent individuals in business and government played the game. And the game soon turned into organised confusion and hypocrisy, despite the sincerity of a few idealists. Double standards, bias, oxymoron's, misinformation, diversions are all too obvious in sustainability speech.

Creating and nurturing confusion in the minds of the public isn't restricted to fields related to sustainability. It concerns every facet of contemporary life. Since the turn of this century, lies and manipulation have been conducted on a grand scale with unprecedented sophistication by governments, companies, banks, and various other institutions. A remarkable feature of manipulation is that the liars often lie to themselves as well as to others, and it's hard to know who really believes what. General confusion reigns in the minds. It takes a lot of determination to patiently debunk the flow of misinformation emanating from different quarters.

In that respect the tragedy of 9/11 is a particularly significant case. This event was immediately followed by military action and strong turbulences in the world economy and financial markets. All this happened quickly while ordinary Americans and others in the Western world had been emotionally shocked by the attack. Most people's ability to assess information put forward by official media was initially numbed by the sheer suddenness of developments. But as the US administration supported by the British and other allies

displayed a suspicious haste in using the event as convenient excuse for dramatic decisions regarding the “war on terror”, more and more neutral observers began to take a closer look at facts.

Technical experts openly questioned that the towers had fallen only as a result of fire caused by the impact of the planes. They noticed that the falls had happened in a matter of seconds and quite vertically, just like in planned demolitions. They also noted that the same had happened to a small tower (WTC 7) which had not received a direct hit and was only affected by a fire caused by burning debris from the Twin Towers. And they realised that the remains of metal structure from the small tower in question had been almost immediately removed from site and melted. A number of perturbing elements pointed in the direction of a planned demolition involving long preparatory work requiring full access to the buildings. This couldn't possibly have been carried out without the knowledge if not full cooperation of parts of the US government. Official propaganda tried to dismiss these allegations as fantasies dreamed up by “conspiracy theorists”. But doubts lingered and amplified. Ordinary folks were now faced with two diametrically opposing stories: the official version of America being attacked by Islamic terrorists, or the “inside job”. The latter probably instigated by neo con extremists in cahoots with Zionists.

Any reference to Zionists touches a raw nerve. Relations between the Christian majority in the Western world and Jewish communities have a long painful history which makes it difficult to conduct a serene analysis of current developments involving the state of Israel, its leverage on American politics, and the influence of some Jews (or more specifically Zionists⁸) in global banking and finance. Given that context it has taken a few years for the “inside job” hypothesis to gain real traction. Largely also because most people lack the time and determination to pay sustained attention to such issues seemingly miles away from their day to day lives. Nevertheless doubts about the integrity of authorities in Western democracies are now widespread and deep.

The motives behind various events in the aftermath of 9/11 appear very suspicious. The attack on Iraq was justified by arguments which turned out to be based on blatant lies. Official versions regarding different episodes of the “war on terror”, such as the bombs in Madrid and London, are fraught with inconsistencies. The bizarre raid of US commandos in Pakistan to eliminate the man supposed to have masterminded 9/11 raises very serious questions. Not to mention the intervention in Libya shortly after that country's regime had been welcomed back in the “international community” and various other developments in and around the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

But there is a lot more at issue here. The fundamental distrust of growing segments of the population in the integrity of the elite ruling them extends to a number of different fields with no apparent connections. At least not immediately apparent, but pretty clear once you start putting the whole jigsaw together. Why do the elite put so much energy in pushing mass vaccination and the use of allopathic drugs while trying to slow the development of alternative therapies? Why do they encourage the spread of genetically modified organisms while creating regulations restricting the free use of natural seeds? Why do they prevent media reporting of important meetings where crucial topics are discussed in secret while they encourage mass reporting of political theatricals, sports and other distractions? Why is so little public information provided about geo-engineering while the climate change issue is regularly dangled in front of the public? And we could go on and on.

⁸ It is essential to distinguish between Jewishness and Judaism on the one hand and Zionism on the other. The former have existed for millennia whereas the latter is about 130 year old, but has managed to seize control over many Jewish communities

The breath of controversial issues in present society is simply staggering. Behind them all rages a fundamental conflict between radically opposed mindsets: the hard competitive materialist mentality disconnected from nature and spirituality, and the holistic mindset open to the subtle realm. Powerful vested interests do their utmost to have competitive “values” relentlessly drip fed into the minds of the masses.

To free ourselves from such mind control is the key to a meaningful life in what might appear to be a totally mad scenario. Before discussing effective strategies to get free, let us complete our review by turning to the most recent developments.

3. The global crisis

The multi-facet crisis we face today has been in the offing for decades but only started to really shake most peoples' imagination when the weaknesses of the financial system were revealed to all in 2008. Then the very heart of materialist society was hit. To grasp what happened then and is currently unfolding we need a quick sharp look at the development and key modalities of finance.

Finance revolves around the twin concepts of money and debt, which govern relationships between individuals not prepared to deal with each other on the natural basis of free gift or barter. When a mum or dad prepares a meal, or unblocks the sink or replaces a bulb, they do it for free. Within a family such services are provided free. And the same has been true within traditional communities for thousands of years. When a stranger turned up, rules of hospitality ensured he was offered shelter, food and sometimes even sexual favours, all for free. At some point in history dealings with strangers took a different turn. For someone outside the group to obtain a product or service, he had to pay, i.e. immediately give something in return. And the something had to have a "value" equivalent to whatever he received. Once the idea of value was implanted, a need appeared for a yardstick to compare and exchange values easily: money. It could be stones, goats, gold, anything tacitly accepted by all.

Once goods and services were no longer free, the need arose for those who momentarily couldn't pay to be lent the means of payment against a promise of reimbursement at a later date. For a long time, debt and money were two separate concepts. However, at a point in time nearer to us they got very closely associated. Merchants who kept other peoples' gold in their vaults realised that the paper receipts they issued were themselves widely used as money. This was a new form of money: "fiat money" that people trusted as reliable substitute for "real money", namely gold or other precious exchangeable commodities. And gold merchants also realised that people holding receipts only rarely asked for redemption in gold. Therefore it was possible to lend by simply writing new receipts supposedly representing real money, which in fact *did not exist*. Banking was born. Let's be aware that lending something that doesn't exist opens the door to stealing subtle energy from one another. By lending money at an interest without actually taking anything out of their vaults, gold merchants started to make big profits. Of course they couldn't push the game too far. They had to limit the issuance of receipts to a level such that they could always redeem in gold the few receipts presented to them for withdrawal.

Today gold no longer plays any role in money⁹. But the banking game is hotter than ever. When you borrow to buy a car, your bank simply creates an accounting entry in its computer system: debit loan granted to you, credit your bank account. With your account being credited you can pay the seller of your car. His account gets credited while yours is debited. If his account is in the same bank as yours, your bank only has to create a purely internal entry. If the seller is with another bank, the transaction has to go through an interbank clearing process. This clearing involves the various commercial banks participating in the country's monetary system. Their accounts with the central bank are credited or debited daily on the basis of the net flow from all transactions involving customers of different banks. If over a period money tends to flow out of a particular bank, the account of that bank with the central bank diminishes alarmingly, in a way similar to the situation of a gold merchant whose reserves dwindled because more people than expected presented receipts for redemption in "real money".

⁹ In 1971 the American authorities took the US dollar out of the Gold Standard. The US dollar and all other currencies became free floating abstractions disconnected from any physical commodity

But nowadays, there is no more “real money” in the system. So what happens then? To prevent the bank in trouble to fail like a gold merchant running out of gold, the central bank steps in and grants a loan to the commercial bank. It does this by creating an accounting entry in its own computer system: debit loan to the commercial bank, credit the current account of the said commercial bank. As long as the central bank extends credit to a commercial bank, the latter is assured of survival, unlike the gold merchant running out of physical gold. In effect the central bank has the power to create as much artificial gold in the shape of pure fiat money as it deems necessary. That power is a unique privilege.

Who confers that unique privilege to the central bank? Officially the State. Given the importance of such power for the whole of society and the fact that such power comes from the State, you would assume that the central bank was publicly owned and effectively part of government. But no, in many important cases it isn't. The US central bank, aka “Federal Reserve”, is owned by private shareholders, and so are a number of European central banks, some of them co-owners of the European Central Bank. Furthermore, executives of central banks are mostly individuals who spend large parts of their careers in the world of banking and finance. So the people they grant credit to by creating new fiat money are their good pals. All of them belong to a charmed circle of relations - if not always friends - in commercial banking, central bank and government treasury. Oh, you're beginning to smell rats? Quite right you are. A system clouded in opaque intimidating jargon, endowed with considerable power, and operated by a select few in close relationships with the people they are supposed to control, is bound to become corrupt.

In the global economy every large business is in theory¹⁰ managed with the sole objective of maximising shareholder value. To achieve this, businesses not only try to sell ever more and squeeze their costs to increase profits, they also borrow in order to limit their equity basis. That way profits after interest on loans are high in relation to the amount that shareholders maintain in the company. Return on shareholders' funds is thereby maximised. The trick is all the more advantageous when interest rates are low. In the banking business borrowing money enables to enlarge loan portfolios or financial market positions, which can increase potential gains considerably. It is also more risky. But who cares when the general atmosphere is euphoria?

From the summer of 2007 euphoria gave way to serious worries. Lenders became prudent and suspicious. Interest rates shot up as heavily indebted players desperately tried to renew their loans. When a really big name hit the wall in September 2008 widespread lack of trust nearly froze the system. Banks wouldn't lend to each other even at very high rates. To prevent a chain reaction of bank failures, central banks and governments stepped in, extending ultra cheap loans and providing guarantees to all banks in difficulty. Immediate panic was brought under control and interbank lending was rekindled. But the naïve unlimited confidence in the system that had sustained economic growth and the explosion of financial activity over many years was gone.

Companies and households started to “deleverage”: spend less and repay some of their debts or at least avoid taking on new ones. But, while households and companies were by now more attentive to limit their spending and debts, governments had been forced to do the opposite to support economic activity. This caused markets to focus their attention on the

¹⁰ In practice the interests of senior management regularly prevail over those of shareholders if they aren't the same people

creditworthiness of national treasuries, hitherto not really put into question. While troubled debtor countries within the euro-zone are in a particularly tight spot, other nations also face pay back time after years of unrealistic economic growth fuelled by cheap credit. The world economy holds water only because all major central banks are creating more money than ever before. They do this through ultra cheap loans to banks or through purchasing sovereign bonds from the financial markets (a procedure called “quantitative easing”).

There is a broad consensus among the elite that this has to be done in order to maintain the buoyancy of world finance, prevent bank failures, help governments and support demand in the economy. But the consensus is much more hesitant regarding what governments, as opposed to central banks, should do with public finances. A majority of decision makers regard austerity as absolutely necessary to prevent public debt from getting to even higher levels, but some economists and politicians maintain that severe austerity simply stifles the economy. And for everyone’s confusion, both assertions are founded. It was excessive debts of many economic actors - including governments - that led the system into a major crisis. Therefore reducing public spending to contain government debts is unavoidable. The problem is that severe austerity applied *simultaneously* in most developed countries squeezes world demand for goods and services. In sum, the whole system is torn between incompatible constraints. And despite all the talk, and manipulated statistics, about the “recovery”, the system remains in deep crisis.

But the elite keep thriving through the mess. Because they are directly or indirectly associated with multinationals which benefit from globalisation at the expense of employees and suppliers. Because they are often involved in sectors surfing on societal trends that are disastrous for most people and nature but lucrative for a few: degrading health and higher medical costs, ever lower quality of mass produced food, growing impact of large retail, various forms of institutionalised violence - war¹¹, security systems, law enforcement, private prisons, ..etc. And also because they are often close to the loop of new money created by central banks. And as such are well placed to gain from movements in financial and property markets.

How large, and how privileged is the elite? Let do some quick maths. A widely accepted rule of thumb is the 20/80 rule. This rule says that the top 20% of the population has around 80% of the wealth or income. The rule applies to the whole curve: in other words, the top 20% of 20%, i.e. 4% of the total has 80% of 80%, i.e. 64% of the total. And it goes on: the top 20% of the 4%, i.e. 0.8% has 80% of 64%, i.e. 51.2%. Yes, less than 1% of the population have more than half the wealth. And the lower half of the population have less than 1%. If you carry on with the simple maths you realise that a tiny tiny fraction of one percent has a sizeable portion of the total, far more than the lower half of the population. So don’t be surprised when you hear in the news that less than 100 billionaires have more wealth than 3 or 4 billion people.

The situation is obviously dire for the poorer half, which is not new. But is also becoming very tricky for many folks who used to think of themselves as middle class, even relatively comfortable middle class. Globalisation has made these people almost totally dependent on an integrated economic clockwork supported by the large scale deployment of hard technologies. When this monstrous machine starts stuttering it is not easy to change one’s life style and turn to more humane, smaller scale, local operations. Many families are completely cut off from the land and from nature. Not only do they have no access to land, but they lack elementary know how for growing anything, since producing food is now the job of the few working in industrial agriculture. Besides, they often lack even basic cooking skills – i.e. a

¹¹ ironically named “defence”

little above being able to stick a ready made dish into the microwave. And this is true for women as well as men. Many middle class households live in suburban areas where congestion and high fuel costs create ever greater impediments to mobility and cause considerable stress. Mass retail sites difficult to access by means other than the car have long replaced most independent local shops in all developed countries and the phenomenon is on its way in poorer countries. Health care in developed countries has become extremely technical and insensitive to people's personal lives. Besides, its cost is increasing all the time. Given all these trends, middle class folks who until recently were the backbone of developed societies find themselves in a completely new situation with unclear prospects and considerable immediate pressures, frustrations and sources of anguish.

Nevertheless, most of them still appear reluctant to even consider a fundamentally different way of life. The majority remains solidly materialistic, bent on pathetic competition, steered by fear and the vagaries of ego. Caught in that mentality, most people are prepared to accept anything that contributes to keeping the system going: destroying forests, poisoning soils, replacing natural plants by GM varieties, fracking, encouraging junk food, etc. They are prepared to accept even what affects them directly, in their own bodies and minds: absorbing unhealthy food and drink, receiving large doses of high frequency electromagnetic emissions, swallowing medicines with significant side effects, and so forth. In spite of every stress, fear and disillusion, their basic loyalty is still with the system, with mainstream medicine, industrial agriculture, large retail and mass entertainment. Even war mongering by their leaders is accepted. To many people total submission to the will of the elite is unavoidable. No alternative exists, they think. So why try and resist?

But recent revelations in several countries have opened a can of even more troubling darkness. While on going destruction of the planet's eco systems is now almost accepted as routine fact of life, substantial evidence is coming to the surface not only of irresponsibility and corruption in high spheres of society, but also of wide criminal perversion, raping and paedophilia with a satanic flavour. And weird symbols related to the latter filter through society in advertising, video clips, films, comic strips. You can see them in clothing, tattoos, cars, company logos, and architecture. And to the sensitive mind this perversion of society is intimately linked to our beautiful planet being disfigured. Both are manifestations of distorted flows of subtle energy and misaligned entities in the invisible layers of reality.

However most people still don't grasp what is going on. They may be perturbed by things being revealed or suspected, but they still cling to the idea that they live in a society driven by desirable technical progress. Few realise that a new form of tyranny is taking hold everywhere, even in countries once regarded as free democracies. A rather spongy version of fascism without a dictator, a multi-faceted tyranny: financial, technological, medical, political, with devious criminal aspects and bits of old ideologies used as pure theatricals. It's not too clear what the full motivations of the shadowy characters behind this new tyranny really are. Money is obviously high among them. So is arrogance. Perhaps also a manic desire to do better than nature, to be "cleverer than God". Conspiracy theorists offer various hypotheses, such as the objective of drastically reducing world population or establishing Zionist supremacy. A puzzling aspect of the whole business is how members of the conspiring elite propose to protect themselves from the consequences of what they set in train. Most probably they are themselves so confused and blinded by the belief system they try to impose on the masses.

In any case a multi-headed new tyranny appears to be moving its pawns everywhere amid considerable confusion. Superficially it looks as if the ruling elite and the vast army of its submissive servants have all the cards in their hands. All of this, however, is only the shallow end of reality, the visible portion. But what is behind it? What are the unseen dynamics of what may look a terrifying dystopia about to morph into reality?

Ego and dark entities

When you consider the chain of events which led to the present mess on our planet you wonder how and why it happened. Could it just have been a series of haphazard circumstances? Mindless evolution through pure chance without conscious intention? The probabilities of each single event are so ridiculously low that the whole scenario is simply impossible. And yet it happened. If we look at things only on the visible level the whole story eludes us. Somehow we have to come to terms with the inescapable evidence that what we see are visible manifestations of something happening at a different level of reality.

From our insights into the subtle realm we can think of “all there is” as an infinite field of energy, information, and consciousness steeped in unlimited non judgemental love. Such a vision is quite consistent with the harmony we see everywhere in nature. But it isn’t particularly easy to reconcile with the human history of violence and meanness. What is it in the whole scheme that turns human beings into such difficult, negative self harming creatures? We don’t know, but we can try prudent assumptions. Such as to imagine that in the subtle layers of reality distinct energy entities follow their own agenda not in alignment with universal love.

Many religious or esoteric traditions have offered images and stories of entities in the subtle realm interfering with creatures of our world. These entities – spirits, angels, demons.. - could be benign or malign. Some could have been incarnated as humans and others not, and some could be creatures from other planets or even other universes. More prosaically, subtle entities might just be clouds of thoughts and emotions potentially affecting our souls, minds and bodies. Metaphysical technicalities are not essential. What matters in the end is that subtle entities of one shape or another do interfere with us. And they do it largely through interacting with our own ego.

The ego is the mortal part of us¹². The one that sees itself separate from the rest of the universe and uses the reasoning intellect to try and deal with material things. There are very different facets to ego. It can appear arrogant and bullying or take on the clothes of humility and generosity. It can express itself though a whinny little voice or through noisy boasting. In whatever shape or role it turns up the ego is preoccupied with the “outside”: other peoples’ attitudes and judgements, society’s expectations, assumed dangers from the environment. It tends to see the outside as mainly hostile and is therefore steeped in fear and insecurity. The latter prevents the mind from reaching a relaxed confidence in the universe conducive to intuitive guidance. And disconnection from intuitive guidance attracts malign entities through resonance. Let’s explain that: each type of thought or emotion has its own “frequency”, like each sound or each colour. Thoughts and emotions of a negative streak such as fear, hatred, guilt, pessimism and so forth have low frequencies. And they resonate with subtle entities in the low frequency range. Think also of the universe as a vast computer network and each of us as a terminal. Any software can be downloaded on your terminal, including viruses, destructive programmes. Call the latter misguided entities. These keep trying to sneak into the human body-mind-soul system to feed from its energy. When they have managed to sneak into your system these entities create havoc. Not just in your conscious thoughts, but also in your emotions, in your unconscious attitudes, in the cellular memory of your body tissues. They make you un-well, fearful and aggressive. Think of when you were in a state of violent, uncontrollable rage, shouting, perhaps throwing stuff and hitting. Haven’t you thought afterwards, or even during the episode, “I wasn’t myself”? And indeed you weren’t yourself; your system was controlled by some entity or entities. When your energy is being sucked away by entities attached to you, your ego unconsciously starts looking out for things to meet its

¹² Whereas the soul, or spirit or Higher Self is the eternal part of us connected to the subtle realm

lack; it can be objects, money, relationships, alcohol, drugs, attention-seeking illnesses...whatever. This is happening to every human to some degree.

We can't pretend that all this is the full and only truth. But it is a very useful model to shift one's attitudes and relationships with fellow human beings, other creatures, oneself and life in general. The purpose of such a shift is to attract more positive events. This will be explained in detail in part III. At this stage we are simply going to be pragmatic and use this fairly simple metaphysical model to get a sense of what might be behind the movement of history through to the present apparent dead end. Not for the sake of satisfying our intellectual ego but as a foundation for positive, free and lucid mindset and action.

We have outlined how the ego can easily get entangled with entities that suck energy away from an individual and keep him disconnected from Source. And we have noted that this happens to virtually everybody to some degree. With this in mind, let us now consider the ruling elite who are driving society and the planet to utter chaos. Clearly these guys' egos are entangled with viciously corrupt entities. And it appears obvious that many generations of rulers and mighty folks throughout history have been similarly "possessed". Most of them were probably unaware of being effectively controlled by entities. There is no need to hate them retrospectively. Even the little man with a moustache who led the Nazis was in fact just a poor soul completely trapped by entities. As for today's members of the elite, a lot of them probably suffer quite badly themselves even when living in visible comfort and "benefiting" from the trappings of power and success. If asked, they would probably deny their suffering, and pretend they are proud and happy to have made it to the top. Why then did ex prime ministers and presidents turn senile relatively shortly after leaving power? Why did super successful entrepreneurs die from cancer at a relatively young age? Not that they had lacked material comfort or intellectual stimulation. Is it perhaps that they experienced unbearable tensions, and losing their minds or bodies was their escape?

Infestation of the mind and runaway egos are not limited to people at the top. They can be found at all levels of society. And someone fairly highly positioned might actually be less infected than a low rank tyrant or sadist. In any case it is pointless to judge anybody, and not only pointless but totally unhelpful to hate or resent anyone. Negativity is cumulative. Resenting someone who has harmed you doesn't wipe out the harm, it compounds it. That may be difficult to accept because we have been raised with this idea of justice and retribution. When pardon is granted, it is often conceded with a sort of condescending magnanimity perched on the moral high ground. But the whole moral business is a colossal distraction. Trying endlessly to know what is moral or immoral is pure waste of time and energy. It's part of the deception trap. Low frequency thoughts always resonate with entities in the same frequency range. The only thing that can shift your life, and all lives, towards harmony and wellbeing is love, absolute unconditional love. Without judgement. Without preferences. Love of all. If you start segregating and think "oh I hate that bastard because he's done such and such" you fall in the trap. The trap of non love based on judgements. In part III of the book we will look at a very simple but powerful technique for cleansing our mind and body software of unhelpful judgements.

We are beginning to get a sense of why human beings so often appear to be difficult, negative self harming creatures. It's not, as self proclaimed "hard realists" maintain, that mankind is fundamentally bad, and that all we can do is to put in place organisations and moral codes to try and control the effects of human evil. This has been done for generations. And the result is clearly disastrous, suggesting that the underlying model is not appropriate. We use an entirely different model. We recognise that humans have a link to absolute perfection and kindness through their higher self, but that their ego often falls prey to entities which divert energy and cause disharmonious behaviour. In many cases, this simple metaphysical model provides

clearer explanations of human behaviour than complicated theories from conventional psychology.

However we have to go a step further and stretch our model to account for collective dynamics beyond individual behaviour. How could the mere interplay of different ego's entangled by entities have led to the Inquisition, to the slave trade, to millions of young men complying with orders sending them to the trenches in WWI, to the incredible horrors of WWII, to more than 2000 tests of nuclear weapons carried out after the second world war, to several thousands of nuclear weapons being deployed now ready to use at a moment's notice, to systematic destruction of soils and eco-systems, to crazy uses of hard technologies in life sciences and medicine, etc. etc. In each situation, at every point in history including now, leaders, underlings and foot soldiers contribute to the chain. For example, there must be someone paid to take the dust off nuclear missiles. Well, perhaps not. But there were and are millions of people paid to execute operational tasks in all these sectors. Salesmen, technicians, accountants, receptionists, soldiers, doctors, nurses,.. They contribute to the smooth operation of systems with incredibly powerful effects on people and nature. Are they aware of these effects? Does it bother them? Perhaps to some extent. But then they need a job, an income. They have a social position, commitments, a mortgage to serve.

When you consider a doctor or a nurse in the medical system, they can still kid themselves that they are doing more good than harm. In some cases that is true. But what about when they are injecting multiple vaccination cocktails into babies or encouraging teenage girls and young women to be vaccinated for cervical cancer, knowing how controversial these procedures are? And the people in the military industries, in pesticides, or GMO's. Are they blind and deaf? And those in the media and entertainment sectors which propagate utter rubbish, or in the education system which disseminates a narrow vision of science and knowledge split into disconnected silos to serve the interests of the establishment. Many things are interlinked in the global society, and most people are directly or indirectly serving organisations that are far from clean and innocent. This may be more brutally evident nowadays than in the past. But in fact it is not new. In a number of authoritarian regimes, pretty much everybody had to serve the system or be in real trouble. In feudal societies dominated by aristocracies and religious elites there was not much room for visible dissent. There is like a red line of tyranny running from ancient times thousands of years before the Christian era right through to our ultra sophisticated global system. What is it that keeps it going?

Some conspiracy theorists claim that entities have deliberately targeted humans over very long periods to harvest their vital energy. Specifically their energy emitted at low frequencies, associated with fear, violence, or hatred. This is why leaders under their control are given the job of driving the masses to disharmony and conflict. And why these same leaders always foster patriarchal regimes hard on women¹³ and nature, and impose dogmatic visions stifling intuitive connection with the subtle realm. That may seem a far fetched story, but we have to admit that it accounts rather well for a lot of what is going on. So we can use it as a model to help think through the best way to respond to the situation, which at the end of the day is the only thing that matters. If we accept the premise that entities interfering with us, whatever their nature, are after low vibration energy, we have an important clue to determine which types of response may work and which are bound to yield poor results. Do you remember these massive popular anti war demonstrations a decade ago? They did not prevent the US and UK

¹³ Even when they talk of gender equality, which is code name for turning women into robotic male equivalents

governments from attacking Iraq. And more generally, have you noticed how disappointing are the effects of most activism? Why should that be so? Because in their desire to fight what they regard as evil, well meaning activists often unwittingly generate substantial low vibration energy in resonance with the issues they are trying to address. And this low vibration energy actually feeds the entities behind the problem. It isn't defeatist mentality to recognise the phenomenon. On the contrary, being totally lucid paves the way for an effective response.

Leaving invisible entities aside for a minute, we can observe that most things going on in society involve groups, communities and organisations such as companies, churches, hospitals, schools, etc. Each group or organisation has its own dynamics, its own members and supporters, and its own opponents. And it picks up energy from all of them, whether friend or foe. The different groups and organisations are in constant competition to attract energy from individuals. You and I are for ever solicited to give off attention and energy. When you think of yourself as British, or Catholic, or middle class, or employee of company X, or feminist, or paying too much tax, you are in effect giving a form of loyalty or opposition, and therefore energy, to a group, organisation or informal cause. The latter, whatever its nature, is feeding off you. This happens at a subtle level, and you are probably unaware of the extent to which it creates a drag on your energy and places limiting beliefs in your mind. Whether there are invisible entities lurching behind the groups harvesting our energy is less important than the dynamics at work.

Having energy effectively sucked away from us happens in one to one relations as much as when groups or organisations are involved. We all know individuals who are real energy vampires. They may be bullies or whiners, but are in any case true manipulators.

And to probe even closer, we often waste energy without anybody but ourselves and our own demons involved. Say you have a low self esteem and even a sense of shame in you for an unclear reason – perhaps your great great granny was abused in her teens, or you were a slave in a previous incarnation, who knows. In any case, the low self esteem deep in your system destroys your vital energy.

To sum up, referring to invisible entities, whatever they are, is admittedly very speculative. However what matters is not so much to know “the truth”, which we obviously can't, but to have a reasonably coherent model to help us find a way to deal with existence more effectively than through materialist-cum-dogmatic subservience. The latter brings only misery to individuals and contributes to the general mess. But we can choose another dance with reality. And this is the subject of part III which follows.