**The**

****

**of Consciousness**

Rhys Dovey

I think too much. I think about thinking too much too much. My thought process is multilayered and very chaotic. And this is all perfectly okay. Everything that exists in a material form emerges from the womb of an intangible, abstract form; every solar system arises from the cloud of a nebula, every glass or gallon of water is extracted from a flowing river, every poem is epigraphed from the hidden flow of the ocean of creativity. A scattered, often chaotic thought process is symptomatic of either some kind of mental disorder, or of a mind that functions well in the realm of the intangible, what the cognitive scientists would refer to as a “right-brain” hemisphere dominance or “abstract-random” thinking style. Of course, this idea of hemispherical dominance is a purely theoretical abstraction that is a product of the Western mind applied to the realm of scientific analysis, in which any perceived predominance of function is interpreted as the result of dominance by one entity over another…wait…what what was I thinking just now? *Was* I thinking just now? Why can’t I remember what I was thinking when I’m thinking about thinking? I was going somewhere, wasn’t I?

I get bogged down like that a lot. I’ve never been one to talk a lot because of this. For most of my life, I’ve been very closed. I feel at times that my life is like typing a term paper on the computer: something gets going, gets stronger, I like it…then something doesn’t look right. A word is missing, or two words could be rearranged. Then it looks fine the way it was, and the grass continues to look greener from afar. I spend literally hours trying to fine-tune a single paragraph, which I then usually end up just deleting, and start from scratch. It took me a long time to realize that life doesn’t happen unless you (“you”) go beyond the limitations of your mind and just *let it be,* man.

It’s surprising how many of us forget that we have a body. Our society teaches us that consciousness is in the cortex, that all the body exists to support the needs of the cortex, that “lower species” have lesser-developed bodies because of their lesser-developed brains, and that all evolution happened so that consciousness would develop self-awareness solely through cortical rationality. We come to view our bodies as machines that serve the brain.

Since we’re all projections of consciousness, as the spiritualists like to say, and our physical bodies are vessels of consciousness, it makes sense that we see our bodies as machines serving it. But it’s different when we believe that consciousness exists only in the cortex.

It is a physiological fact that the brain, unlike the heart, gastrointestinal tract, and nearly all other organs, cannot *feel.* Surgeons can anesthetize a chunk of your skull, cut it out, and then proceed to poke and prod at your brain to no end without you feeling a thing.

It’s a biological fact that your brain is not your only brain. Approximately two-thirds of the cells composing the heart are brain cells. Every organ has neural cells; the brain and heart have the highest concentrations. Both of these organs interact with one another in an unmediated, two-way dialogue. Neither of the two *instructs* the body what to do, at least not in a naturally balanced state. Crucially, the heart is connected with areas of the brain associated with emotions, sensory experience, and the interpretation of meaning.[[1]](#footnote-1)

So when you get stuck in your head after being indoctrinated to believe that it is the sole source of consciousness, your consciousness alters accordingly to fit the mold crafted by you/your environment/society, like water changing its shape when poured into a different container. A fitting metaphor, given our title.

These are all really cool facts. You might call them “brain-teasers.” For me, things are hard to connect with unless my brain is teased out of its self-imposed isolation by such easily provable references. This is why As Poetry Recycles Neurons has helped me so greatly. The study material in relation to my (however hectic) field work has helped me to awaken what Gaston Bachelard would have me call ‘my non-I.’

For this term paper, I have chosen to conduct a study into the transformational properties of consciousness. Though I originally intended to study local indigenous cultures and their spiritual traditions, I decided instead for the purpose of practicability that I would focus my studies on the Druids, the archetypical magicians of Celtic lore.

The Delicate Empiricism of Craig Holdrege and Goethe has one fundamental guiding principle: make the connection. While it was difficult for me to emulate the format of Holdrege’s essay on the subject, *Doing Goethean Science,* I have come to understand the spiritual depth to which that philosophy dives. There’s a hidden energy current within every observed phenomenon that is not touched on by observation of their purely physical mechanics. One of Holdrege’s axioms is “the whole is always something greater than its parts.” The Druids knew this very well.

I found it extremely challenging to organize this essay into a comprehensive format, as it discusses many topics that, to my view, flow together in a special way of their own accord, and superimposing a set form onto them always seemed to hinder that flow. I’ve tried to remain as organized as possible, but it is important to understand that I am trying to make rational sense out of that which transcends rationality. First, I’d like to detail the reasons why I chose the Druids as a focus of study.

*What I want to see*

*Is poetic consistency*

*And finding my way to a path*

*So I don’t have to do the math*

*Form is good for show and tell*

*And here I hope to do it well.*

**The Druid background**

It is crucial that we understand the importance of ritual, and therefore the importance of Druidry, to this investigation, in relation to expanding consciousness. In literature, I see three axioms of synthesis which must be materialized through the writer for a work to take shape: *content*, *aesthetic*, and *form*. Aesthetic is the intangible essence that is conveyed; the *spirit* of the words. Content is the material within a given work of literature through which aesthetic expresses itself; setting, characters, themes, etc. Form is the overall structure that is built out of this material.

In my view, ritual is to spiritual energy as poetic form is to aesthetic. Though the image of a massive ocean is our predominant metaphor for our study of consciousness, we can also look at it as a forest: untamed; fractal; cycling through birth, death, decay, and nurturing of new life; and organized without organization, by its pure *being there* and by no other means. A very fittingly poetic image, but such a scene would be rather difficult to navigate.

Those of us who are of the heartier, more adventurous type could perhaps take a machete out of our garage (or dark, secluded, backwoods shack) and go hacking our way through the heart of the unknown woods, Robinson-Crusoe-style. Undoubtedly, the first people who developed the capability to transcend “this” plane of reality went about it in such a manner. But it is much easier to follow a smooth, even path instead. Though it may inevitably twist and wind around occasional obstacles, we can navigate with much more precision, and have the luxury of looking farther out, in many directions, without worrying nearly as much about tripping over a stump, getting tangled in the bushes, or being eaten by a sasquatch. Emma Orr, a practicing Druid, wrote a book on ritual, in which she explains the matter thoroughly. “[T]he Druid knows that it is possible to have inspiration ‘on tap’. Instead of waiting, wishing powerlessly, hoping desperately for a break, it is possible to find ways of accessing that flow of clear life energy whensoever we wish. Questing the Grail need not be a blind task, and once tasted, when we know what it is to be filled with the energy of such strong exquisite clarity, our life turns to one focus: to taste it again.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

This is the purpose of having a set form of spiritual practice, whether it’s prayer, meditation, or lighting candles at your altar at Imbolc. Ritual grounds the practitioner in their attempt to access divinity, or higher consciousness, or whatever term suits you. I find this apparent in Orr’s titling of subsections to an end review section to her first chapter, “What is Ritual?”

1. Certainty: Ritual affirms what we believe
2. Congruence: ritual is a tool for harmony
3. Relationship: ritual guides us to relate to spirit
4. Change: ritual is a tool for transformation[[3]](#footnote-3)

Hopefully you see the commonalities. Ritual is a means through which the intangibility of the esoteric can be synthesized and thereby manifested. This is why it was important to establish a connection with a form of ritual, in my case Druidry, in order to forge a path for my work-in-progress journey into consciousness.

I was very disorganized and chaotic in how I went about my studying. I wanted to go deeper into my—or *the*—mind, and like any methodical, pensive philosopher-in-training, I decided that I would do so by seeking out a Native American shaman who would take me on a great peyote vision quest deep in the woods, where I would meet my guardian spirit and, after many mighty trials and tribulations, finally be granted the key to the gate of Ultimate Mystery.

True, most Native spiritual traditions in this area are either extinct or highly contaminated by Western influence, and any authentic group of practitioners that are still around would more than likely be agitated by a white college kid asking about their secret knowledge. But besides that, such a quest would undoubtedly take a lot more than a month. The best I could hope to do was conduct as systematic a study into Druidic methods of transforming consciousness as possible, if possible.

For a while now I’ve been keenly interested in Druidism.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Druids are archetypes for great, wise, ancient wizards and mystics; all our modern stereotypes of witches, wizards, shapeshifting, full-moon howls, and the like all derived from Druidic legends and practices. Druidism was what a plain, ordinary surface-anthropologist would call the “shamanic tradition” of the Celts, the colonized Locals of what is now Great Britain, who at one time were spread all over Europe.

Separately, I’m very strongly Celtic. I have Irish, Scottish, English, and likely some French encoded in my DNA, but I’m predominantly Welsh. According to legend, Wales was at one point the Mecca of Druidism, obviously a very interesting connection. The name “Rhys” is a Welsh name meaning “king,” and my family name “Dovey,” though not recognized by Microsoft Word, is an Anglicization of “Dyfi,” the name of a river in west-central Wales. I have a pretty good feeling that it is also linked to the southwestern province of Dyfed (DUH-ved), the name of which derives from a pre-Roman Celtic tribe of that region, the Demetae, a name that has been very tentatively and variously translated, one possible meaning being “the people from the god/ess Dagda.” The Dagda was the incarnation of the supreme father of the Celtic pantheon, essentially our Zeus, and was worshiped primarily in Ireland and in various other forms throughout the rest of Celtia. So “Rhys Dyfi” might mean something like “King of the People from the God Dagda.” That’s cool.

I figured the Druids were the best choice of study. Just like the Locals of our continent, the Celts were an indigenous culture that was wiped out by conquering, colonizing, converting, “civilizing” Europeans. We’re really all not that different.

**Air**

*“Drop your mind,”*

*says the wind*

*let it whisper,*

*let it in*

*never changing*

*never there*

*in your hand*

*but the air*

*is everywhere*

*where you stand*

*40,000 pounds of voices pushing down on your shoulders*

*invisible voices*

*speaking solemnly*

*in whispers of the past*

*voices leading to a path*

*in the darkness--*

*don't be scared*

*there is no true pollution*

*in the air.*

Since indigenous spiritualities share many similarities around the world, I figured that putting a Druidic emphasis on a larger study of spirituality and consciousness was the best idea. *The Poetics of Reverie* by Gaston Bachelard helped me put my studies in a poetic context, enriching my appreciation for storytelling traditions such as that of the Native Pacific Northwest.

In a sense, my studies have been what Johann Wolfgang von Goethe would call “Delicate Empiricism” with a spiritual emphasis. My attraction to Druidism grew stronger upon learning of Goethe’s method of phenomenological analysis of Nature. In a great many ways, the practice of Druidry *is* spiritual Delicate Empiricism. The main goal of any aspiring Druid is to enter into conversation with Nature to unlock her mysteries, and channel the power of her spirits. Essentially, the Druids were the observers, natural philosophers, teachers, and spiritual guides of their time. The similarities between Druidism and Goethean Science, in my opinion, are too numerous and deep to be coincidence. I might say that Goethe himself was a Druid in spirit, whether he knew it or not.

Druidism was a perfect medium through which to structure my studies. One of my source books quotes the archetypical Druid, Merlyn: “*The true definition of Magic...does not center around spells or incantations, or the mysterious waving of arms…true Magic is* ‘***The art and science of changing states of mind at will***.’”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Regarding our studies as a whole class, in *The Secret Teachings of Plants* by Stephen Harrod Buhner, we learn about the electromagnetic fields produced by every existing (not just living) thing, basically down to the atomic level (or maybe even further): “Living organisms are extremely sensitive to all the different electromagnetic phenomena that exist, and they are able to decode the information embedded in every kind of fractalized wave they encounter. And everything that is has an electromagnetic dimension to its nature.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Similarly, In one of my main sources of Druidic study, a story of the eventual king Arthur is related, in which Merlyn teaches the young Arthur how to properly hone his natural ability to communicate with animals and plants. He learns to see the “Light Shields,” or auras, of others, and that each colour corresponds to a particular emotional state: “*Red for anger, yellow for thought, blue for the spirit and green to grow; white for balance and black for the Crone…”* Arthur goes on to tell us: “And by standing within the energy field of any plant, I could now change my shield to match its own—and communication then became an easy matter.”[[7]](#footnote-7) The connection is perfectly clear.

Now, every spiritual tradition has a belief in what I refer to in this term paper as Divinity, even if they do not believe in gods and goddesses, per se. Some believe in mighty gods that judge you at the end of your turn, others believe in a universe that was never created, but has always been around, where your life is judged from how you use the energies of the world. Some call this “karma.” Regardless of the specificities of worship, every tradition holds this kind of belief. Thus an understanding of a spiritual tradition such as Druidism cannot possibly be complete without an understanding of…

**Divinity**

Every spiritual tradition, as well as most philosophic systems, has some concept of Divinity. Though Western science has hitherto dismissed such beliefs, it seems that many recent scientific discoveries are validating the existence of something “out there.” Without delving too much into the specifics of something about which I currently have very little understanding, I wish to tie some ideas of Quantum Physics in to this investigation. The basic idea is that all “reality” is a hologram of sorts, and the smallest existing particles—photons, protons, electrons, neutrons—are waves and particles at the same time.[[8]](#footnote-8) At the most basic level, nothing is solid, nothing is physical matter as we think we know it. Simplifying the matter, let’s say that everything that’s happening and will happen is determined by how, when and where these quantum waves bend and twist and fractalize and whatnot.

Now, let’s say that these waves are what the spiritualists are talking about when they speak of the “Hand of God” reaching through everything and determining its course. This is my theory of Divinity in a nutshell. Anthropologist Jeremy Narby is the author of, in my opinion, one of the most eye-opening works on indigenous spirituality, *the Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge.* In it, he offers extremely convincing evidence that the Ayahuasqueros of the Amazon River Basin obtain their intimate knowledge of their environment, namely the healing properties of plants, through the environment itself, chiefly by consuming Ayahuasca, a natural brew of several combined plants that contains the organic hallucinogen Dimethyltryptamine (DMT).

Narby also identifies a strong correlation between common themes throughout ancient indigenous mythologies ranging from Mesoamerica to Egypt pertaining to a “cosmic serpent” that created all life on Earth and lives inside all living creatures, and the rather snake-like Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), the biological name for the fundamental life element inherent within all living creatures.

“I was now of the opinion that DNA was at the origin of shamanic knowledge…What techniques did Chuang-Tzu, the Egyptian pharaohs, and the animists of Benin use, to name but a few? Who could say? But they all spoke, in one form or another, of a cosmic serpent—as did the Australians, the Amazonians, and the Aztecs.

By using these different techniques, it therefore seemed possible to induce neurological changes that allow one to pick up information from DNA…an aperiodic crystal that traps and transports electrons with efficiency and that emits photons (in other words, electromagnetic waves)…”[[9]](#footnote-9)

My primary takeaway from this is that the Ancients were able to perceive the molecular structure of both themselves and their environment, and communicate it in an analogous manner (i.e. in a way that could be understood within the context of their respective cultures and the individual mindsets that constituted them) for the purpose of easy, and more importantly, *meaningful* communication.

Now, back to the quantum application. Since the ancients could intuit their own organic base, it’s not too much of a stretch to say that they could also perceive the energies that permeated all existence. Let’s say that a particular quantum waveform materializes in a certain way, triggering a certain course of action in the material world, or *Arbred*, as the Druids call it. That wave would exhibit a certain characteristic trait or set of traits based on its overall nature. Perhaps the old mystics perceived the characteristics of certain waves, and interpreted these characteristics in a more anthropomorphic manner for the sake of analogous communication, just like with DNA/the cosmic serpent. This, I believe, is how the many gods of the world’s religions were manifested. There’s a clever saying I saw on a bumper sticker once, “in the beginning, man created God.” This is obviously pure blasphemy; we all know God was supposed to have created us. My belief is that it actually went both ways. What we call “God” or “the gods” is an entirely human construct, which we use solely because we, within the limitations of our material existence, cannot comprehend “Divinity” in Its true form.

The Druids had a name for these divine energies: *Awen* (ahh-ooo-en). It is represented by three rays extending out of the heavens:



As with any Celtic word containing the suffix “wen,” this word suggests fair grace, the divine feminine. I can hear Gaston Bachelard’s neurons exploding at that notion. The three rays are symbolic of a Druidic observation of the sacred triplicity of many aspects of existence: light/dusk/dark, father/mother/child, etc. Awen is the sacred, divine energy of creativity. As Penny Billington says, it is “the energy that flows between artist and muse.”

Awen differs from a similar principle of Nwyfre (noo-wif-ree). Nwyfre is more like the primal drive of existence, the energy that permeates all living things and gives it life. Awen is the shining charge that acts upon Nwyfre, giving it the shimmering spark of poetic reverie. I noticed while reading *the Secret Teachings of Plants* that like Nwyfre and Awen, the difference between the electrical and magnetic energies interacting among cells and other beings is ambiguous and unclear. I like to think of Nwyfre as the “electro” part of “electromagnetic entrainment,” and Awen as “magnetic.” The differences are hard to spot, but the electrical currents are what keep the basic, most vital energies of life in motion, whereas the magnetic currents keep everything flowing together, in harmony, and enable communication across the cell of the Earth.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**Fire**

*Watch*

*even water cannot wash*

*the things that bring pollution here*

*Soft*

*no more, it must be cleansed*

*all the Forest runs with fear*

*Lost*

*the mother deer and fawn*

*a light this bright won't come till dawn*

*We are dancing*

*we are cleansing*

*we are burning, burning down the land*

*We were passive for too long,*

*and now there comes a sweeping hand*

*We are FLAMES*

*we are MIGHTY*

*do not take our presence lightly*

*We are your passion*

*burning tears*

*taking away your fear, your fear*

*Blast away all but your love*

*pouring, soaring high above*

*Guide us gently, guide us soon*

*or you will be taken too!*

**Duality**

From Divinity, we segway into another important universal spiritual theme: duality. The great French philosopher Gaston Bachelard devoted an entire chapter to the division of the psyche into *animus* and *anima* in his phenomenological analysis of poetic inspiration, *the Poetics of Reverie.* He also devotes considerable attention to the masculine and feminine elements of words.

So at its most basic, sacred duality of existence can be interpreted as masculinity and femininity, simultaneously existing together to create all life. There’s a fitting image for this: the Ouroboros, the serpent/dragon eating its own tail, fertilizing itself, never fully being eaten, swimming around the primordial ***sea*** of creation. Curiously, many images of snakes, and worship of them, were widespread throughout ancient cultures. The Desana of the Columbian Amazon say that the corpus callosum, the crevice in the middle of our brains, was formed “at the beginning of time by the cosmic anaconda.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

There’s a widespread belief in life-creating serpents communicating from both within and without the human mind. The Serpent represents duality: “It makes light of the sexes, and of the opposition of contraries; it is female and male too, a twin to itself…”[[12]](#footnote-12)

DNA is said to be this cosmic serpent. Its structure is two entwined, coiled strands, connected by organic compounds, in the shape of a twisted, snakey ladder. Snakes and Ladders. Haven’t played that in a while.

What’s intriguing is that DNA’s shape results from its immersion in water within a cell’s nucleus. The water in each nucleus is essentially salt water, at the same level of concentration as the world’s oceans. The cosmic serpent, literally swimming in a sea of creation. Now the whole “Sea of Consciousness” thing makes a lot more sense, doesn’t it?

There are many drug and trance-induced paintings made by the ayahuasquerosof South America that clearly show such things as chromosomes, DNA helices, and many other microscopic biological building blocks. Those who live in this jungle environment say they get their knowledge of it from the plants themselves, by talking to them. Interestingly, DNA emits frequencies—“talks”—as well. As before, I’m making a very broad generalization on points made in Narby’s *Cosmic Serpent*, which I highly recommend to everybody to understand the main ideas. Essentially, the paradoxically singularly dual nature of reality is reflected in the physical form of DNA, which is the life force of everything. It is this mythical “creation serpent.” Its prevalence in all life forms strongly ties in to the whole “all is one” theme.

The Druids have a similar belief. Their full philosophy of the nature divinity is pretty complicated: it is “a five-fold monotheistic system…the Triple Goddess in consideration with the Dual God of Light &Dark, adding up to a total of five—but all being a *reflection of the One*…the essential nature of Druidic Religion reduces easily to *one basic duality*.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Confusing at first. How do you make sense of all these self-contradictions of dualistic monotheism and five-fold triple-goddesses? Here’s my take on it: existence itself is a paradox. Everything that exists is one, like a fractal. Everything divides and multiplies into everything else, infinitely. It is this “infinitely” that is the “one,” but there is one problem with just “one.” One thing alone doesn’t do anything. It’s basic Newtonian physics: stuff doesn’t move unless other stuff makes it move. There’s a Druid axiom that we need imbalance in order to have balance. Balance by nature cannot exist alone; *there can only be balance so long as balance itself is balanced by imbalance*. But imbalance itself does not cause balance. Again, a paradox. That’s the point of duality. Without friction, there can be no heat. If everything was all one and literally nothing else, then everything would be completely stagnant. Paradoxes prevent conflicting points from ever being resolved, thus maintaining theoretical duality forever. Basically, don’t worry if the whole “five-fold monotheism” thing doesn’t make sense. It’s not supposed to. Neither is reality.

So it would make sense that people have lost our emotional connection to the world, having been trained from childhood to conform to a world of competition and dominance—public education systems in America have their foundations in early 19th century Prussian military education[[14]](#footnote-14). The Divine Feminine, axiomatically identical in indigenous spiritual beliefs throughout the world, is always viewed as the source of love and connection. The Masculine, unless balanced by these feminine characteristics, seeks action, possession, and dominance.

A major problem in this society is that we view all the natural world as though we were tourists in our own backyard. We are obsessively focused on focusing, i.e. contemporary society is too overly intellectual for its own good. Because of this, we’ve become detached from our world, our consciousness trapped within an unfeeling processor, the brain. The Druid says that all life is seen as the result of a merging of opposites. Whereas the force of masculine is associated with “fact,” “world,” and “visibility,” among others, the feminine force is associated with “fantasy,” “otherworld,” and “invisibility.”[[15]](#footnote-15) With the state of the world the way it has been and is, it’s pretty apparent that ours is an extremely phallocentric society.

Bachelard makes a brilliant connection between spiritual and literary duality in his book. He quotes German philosopher [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CDIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FFriedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling&ei=te44UcWtEtKTqwHe5IDACQ&usg=AFQjCNFtZxPkE1Cg8Wzj58psMiVMFaW9Tw&sig2=ZZEtM8BfGvCYNR3AU6_PKg&bvm=bv.43287494,d.aWM): “In light of the fact that every language designates the objects embodying an *opposition* by differences of gender…aren’t we thus singularly close to expressing spiritual notions by masculine and feminine divinities?”[[16]](#footnote-16) Every word expresses a force of some kind, however subtle. Bachelard: “…as soon as a worldly being has any force, it is very close to classifying itself either as a masculine or feminine force. Every force has a sex; it can even be bisexual. Never will it be neuter…”[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Water**

*Hopefully you'll come to me*

*you're running free*

*weave in and out, you're nurturing*

*and coming back around to feed yourself again*

*The water here is crystal clear*

*it is not sharp, is not a spear*

*it impregnates the land and flows*

*over, up and down a road*

*of its own making always waking*

*up the life it flows and feeds*

*But drowns you when you submerge in*

*Submerge in her again again*

*you lose yourself when you come near*

*the waterfall that sheds a tear*

*for none who brave its heights, a grave*

*for those who tempt the water's might.*

**Confused Duality**

I noticed what at first seemed to be a confusion of duality across cultures. A quick background is necessary here. The Druid, along with the Greek and the Roman, says that all physical matter is a combination of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. I would have liked to have drawn a correlation between these and the four organic compounds composing DNA: adenine, cytosine, guanine and thymine, but this would require further research on molecular biology, for which I currently have little time. At any rate, these four basic elements are expressions of the energetic current of life, the Nwyfre emanating from the underworld, Annwn (an-oon). Every element possesses certain characteristics, and each is categorized into the masculine-feminine split. Fire and air are masculine elements, earth and water are feminine.

However, the Desana of the Columbian Amazon region associate water with the masculine, contrary to Druidic teaching. Curious about this, I thought about it for a while and developed a theory. Bachelard helps shed light on this matter of confused duality. He shares his thoughts on the gender association of qualities; specifically, those of morality. “It seems to me that the masculine and feminine elements in these words accentuated the contrasts, dramatized moral life.” later, he laments the giving of masculine names to rivers in his native France, while his language gives water a feminine element, *l’eau.* Rivers such as the (*le*) Rhine and Rhône, as opposed to the (*la*) Sienne, are “linguistic monsters” that disrespect the femininity of water. [[18]](#footnote-18)

Contrasts of characteristics is the key here. In Europe, namely France and greater Celtia, water is on the whole graceful, peaceful, and nurturing in its nature, and Earth is of course the Great Mother of all life. So it makes perfect sense that both water and earth are feminized in both French (*l’eau, la terre*) and in Druidic beliefs (the Earth Mother, feminine characteristics associated with water).

In South America, however, water is incredibly more forceful. Pounding rain, all seasons of the year; raging rivers; deep, dark rainforests. Water is a charged, driving force in this jungle environment. Unlike in Europe, water in this area of the world exhibits very masculine characteristics.

The forces and associated characteristics of masculinity and femininity are universal constants—not just in humanity, but in all Existence, and they change very little depending on environmental factors, as they are forces that transcend an environmental state. The elements, however, exist in their forms solely in this world, Arbred, and thus are extremely different depending on what forces act upon them. So the characteristics of the elements will change much more dramatically from place to place than will the gender forces.

Regarding the masculinity of the Rhine and Rhône, these are very large rivers dominating their areas. Out of the Rhône flow many smaller tributaries into the Mediterranean through the northwest corner of Italy. Since Europe’s has historically been a very patriarchal society, it would make sense that these rivers were seen as geographical patriarchs of their regions. Though other large rivers such as *la Sienne* are feminized, these rivers, I would imagine, don’t exhibit such forceful characteristics as the Rhine and Rhône—one need only think of a picturesque scene of Paris, with the peaceful Sienne in the foreground and the sunset over the Eiffel Tower in the background to understand this. The Sienne, Loire, Moselle, and Aube—Bachelard says that most French rivers are feminine—what the Druid, or any other spiritualist, would tell us is that these rivers have a *genus loci*—local guardian spirit—that is feminine, and that in environments such as that of Western Europe, water is generally a feminine nurturer. Wind and fire are clearly the more forceful elements there. Of course, in reality, everything is androgynous.

**Earth**

*Kissing*

*Growing*

*This is love*

*This is Earth,*

*a flying dove*

*Greening trees*

*everywhere*

*a violet sunset*

*is her hair*

*This is life*

*solid rock*

*holding me*

*Soothing me*

*She loves and i love her.*

**My development**

The most important point of focus this month has been on songwriting. For a long time now I’ve wanted to develop my capability into something I can actually work with, and it’s been working well for me. A simple meditation technique while picturing myself inside a forest was all it took to write a song called “Welcome to the Forest,” one of those “drop your mind and come to a hidden world” kind of songs. I consider this to be the best thing I’ve written so far.

I’ve been working with David on shamanic techniques of transcending consciousness, beginning with the consumption of very minute doses of the psychedelic herb Salvia (totally legal, apparently). While this hit an unexpected roadblock due to unforeseen events, we did make important steps with something. For many years I’ve felt a very strong personal affinity with the late local rockstar, Kurt Cobain. I’ve always had the conviction that I literally *know* the guy. It angers me that a lot of people say the exact same thing all the time, but never knew the real Kurt. He was a very conflicted person, and is almost impossible to know through outside sources such as his published journals, which most who knew him personally consider to have been forged to at least some degree.

David told me that the connection is something of a spiritual calling for me to write the songs Kurt wanted to but never could. Having known Kurt very well in the early days, he says that he always struggled to write what he wanted to. While under the influence of Salvia, I heard him very faintly and have been seeing his face a lot more lately. I’ve written poems with his voice through my pencil, so to speak—Kurt’s aesthetic, Rhys’ form—and have been paying keen attention to how he sounded when he was playing what he truly wanted.

I’ve come to the conclusion that he had a destiny to be a John Lennon of the downtrodden, blue-collar crowd that was marginalized by the economic boom years of the ‘80’s, but he gave up his responsibility because he felt the weight of the world on his shoulders and thought he was completely alone. He always had his destiny somewhere in the back of his mind, but pretended to ignore it. Because of his traumatic youth, he rejected attention, but still wanted to write music and start a band, a calling he couldn’t ignore. The punk scene for him was the perfect medium: he could get big and still be anonymous; the king of the underground. He failed to take into serious consideration how inflated and greedy the media had become in the years since his youth, when the punk bands that influenced him were popular. He didn’t realize that anyone who got big on a small scene would be taken advantage of immediately, leaving any hope of anonymity far behind them.

When Nirvana’s *Nevermind* toppled Michael Jackson’s *Dangerous* from the Billboard 200 chart in January 1992, there was no turning back. Kurt was bitterly divided on this, and eventually, as we all know, he decided he’d had his fun. C. 5 April 1994, he ended it. Unless he was murdered. Who knows.

Writing Kurt’s music is going to be a challenge, especially when I find it difficult to write some of what I want for myself. But I know he can help me, and I can help him. So I’m going to try as hard as I can to talk to him and see him. He’s been appearing in my dreams lately, and I can see him smiling at me if I close my eyes and concentrate. I’ve made several trips to his hometown, Aberdeen and the Grays Harbor area, to pick up on his aesthetic. You’d have to know the area to get what I’m saying here, but you can definitely hear Aberdeen in his music much of the time. The experience of traveling by bus, even though it’s a short distance, has a feeling of adventure to it that I enjoy. I’ve really been getting a different feel for the world because of it, as well as the rest of my experience.

**And now we must bid farewell…**

In the end, I’ve developed and cleared my mind on many levels in the past month. I’ve come to understand more about the secrets of existence. Having devoted my field study to the gathering of material from academic studies, I will be putting these ideas into practice, even if it’s in as simple a form as going for a nice walk every day to connect with the genus loci of my neighbourhood. Very soon I will be starting a Druid Grove (grove : Druid :: coven : witch) with a few very interested friends, which is going to be awesome because I’ll finally have a chance to introduce friends of mine to one another who have never before met, but whom I know for a fact will get along perfectly. I love doing that.

Most importantly, I have developed as a poet and songwriter. Hopefully I’ll be at a performing level of skill within a few months. I’ll let you know how that goes in my next field study. Thanks for reading, I hope you enjoyed.

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1. Buhner, p. 82 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Orr, p. 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. pp. 7-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Penny Billington (see various other references and bibliography) alternatively employs two related though very distinct proper nouns throughout her book: Druidry and Druidism. My understanding is that Druidism denotes the greater spiritual belief, whereas Druidry is the practice of it, in a way similar to the difference between biology and physiology. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Monroe, p. 160 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Buhner, pp. 51-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Monroe, pg. 160 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.physics.uiowa.edu/~umallik/adventure/quantumwave.html [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Narby, pp. 108-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. You could also say that it’s the other way around: Magnetic is the basic flowing energy, electro is the “charge” of inspiration acting on it. A paradox! These are important, as will be detailed in a moment. My clever way out of this is to just say that everything is really all one, so there isn’t a real difference between “electro” and “magnetic.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Narby, p. 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. pp. 65-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Monroe, p. 21, italics mine [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Matthews, pg. 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Monroe. pg. 79 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Bachelard, p. 37 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid. pp. 35-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Bachelard, p. 30 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)