

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL WORLD – OUR NEW STORY

Grand Master Julie Scott, SRC

What an amazing opportunity we have to create a New Story to guide human behavior related to living in harmony with the natural world – to transform our paradigm. A paradigm contains the basic assumptions and ways of thinking shared by members of a group. For example, a paradigm is the norms that a society accepts and perpetuates.

In our society, our norm, our paradigm, has been to view nature as apart from us and often as something to be conquered and dominated. Cultural historian and geologist Thomas Berry described our society's paradigm towards Mother Earth as seeing her as a gravel pit and trash dump to be used as we wish. Many people see nature as outside of ourselves and our species, although, of course, as Rosicrucians we know that we are essential elements of the interconnected whole, including nature and the animal kingdom. Others avoid the overwhelming feelings of addressing the challenges that human beings have created for the natural world by denying them.

As our lives and habitual patterns are interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather, and many other issues at this time, that are more related than many people realize, we can take advantage of this auspicious moment to transform society's paradigm – “the norm” – in order to better live in harmony with the natural world and fulfill our role in the interconnected whole.

This issue of the *Rosicrucian Digest* explores this opportunity.

Researchers have studied what causes groups to give up their beloved norms – to make paradigm shifts. They are almost always precipitated by a crisis. The paradigm no longer solves problems like it may have once done. Anomalies – things that the paradigm can't explain – start piling up. The norm starts making us sick.

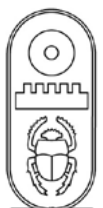
It would seem that we are at that point today.

It may seem like it would be relatively easy to make a shift when the current paradigm is no longer serving the group, however research has shown that this is typically not the case. Often people dig in even deeper to the old paradigm hoping to perpetuate it because they can't even see the possibility of a new paradigm.

Albert Einstein wrote, “During the revolutions [paradigm shifts] in physics early in this century [the twentieth century], it was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built.”

Denise Breton and Christopher Largent in “Recovery: the Art of Paradigm Shifts” write about how this often manifests in science. This can also be applied to society in general.

The more the paradigm fails to do its job, the more old-paradigm scientists try to make it work. The paradigm is ripe for a revolution, but because they've forgotten that they even have a paradigm, scientists



conclude instead that their world is falling apart. Solutions – alternative ways of doing science – don't exist. As far as they're concerned, they've explored all the possibilities, and the only options they see don't help. They're too paradigm-bound to notice that they're stumbling over the limits of their own models.

This is where the Rosicrucians come in. The world needs a new paradigm, a new story as Thomas Berry and others have called it, and the New Story that Rosicrucians have to offer is actually an old one.

The Rosicrucian manifesto, the *Fama Fraternitatis*, published in 1614, tells the story of a mythical figure named Brother C.R., later called Christian Rosenkreutz, who, in his travels, is introduced to some of the most profound wisdom in the world – from Cypress, Damcar, Egypt, and Fez. When he returns to Europe, enthusiastic about sharing what he has learned, the scholars and religious leaders didn't want to hear what he had to say. Rather, they were more interested in protecting what they already believed – in defending their paradigm. They did not want their “knowledge” questioned.

So, Brother C.R. created a fraternity – the Rosicrucian Order – to perpetuate the wisdom that he had gathered on his journey. His goal was to create a fraternity capable of providing council to the rulers of Europe (like the ancient oracles), who would become guiding lights of society. In the *Fama*, new Rosicrucians, who came along 120 years later, perpetuated this wisdom to help restore peace to their world, which was in crisis, and to guide people based on living in harmony with the natural world.

What did Christian Rosenkreutz learn in his travels?



First he visited Cyprus, the birthplace of the Greek goddess Aphrodite whose union with Hermes gave birth to Hermaphrodite, an androgynous child. Androgyny symbolizes the balance of the primordial masculine and feminine, **harmonized wholeness of the spiritual and material**, and freedom from the world's duality. In alchemy, androgyny is a form of spiritual alchemy in which a new being is created through the natural harmony of the feminine and masculine.

Damcar was a mystical city of secret Arabia, inhabited by a group of adepts. An important encyclopedia **gathering together both scientific and esoteric** knowledge was compiled there. Damcar was known to have safeguarded the *Corpus Hermeticum* – the core documents of the Hermetic tradition that perpetuate the wisdom of the Mystery Schools of ancient Egypt. This tradition emphasizes correspondences and our interrelated nature.

While in Damcar, C.R. met with the Ismaelian magi who passed on to him important knowledge in physics and mathematics (contributions from the Arab world) and gave him a secret book called the *Book M* (*Liber Mundi* - Book of the World) with the ideas of Paracelsus, which he translated into Latin.

Paracelsus, the German-Swiss physician and alchemist, **had worked to synthesize many different branches of esoteric knowledge**. He was a pioneer in several aspects of the medical revolution of the Renaissance, emphasizing the value of observation in combination with received wisdom and establishing the role of chemistry in medicine. He rejected the Galen medical approach and met with the most important alchemists of his time, not only to learn their efficacious medical treatments, but also to **discover the latent forces of Nature and how to use them**.

After three years of study in Damcar, C.R. spent a brief time in **Egypt** studying biology and zoology. He then traveled to Fez.

Fez was an important philosophical and intellectual center with magnificent libraries. It was also known for its **alchemy schools**. C.R. perfected his knowledge of historical cycles there and learned through nature that what is below is like that which is above. C.R. was **introduced to the “elementary inhabitants” (gnomes, fairies, nymphs, etc.) who revealed many of their secrets to him**. These are the invisible, spiritual counterparts of visible Nature – the essences of earth, air, water, and fire. According to Paracelsus,

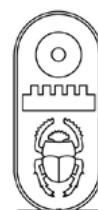
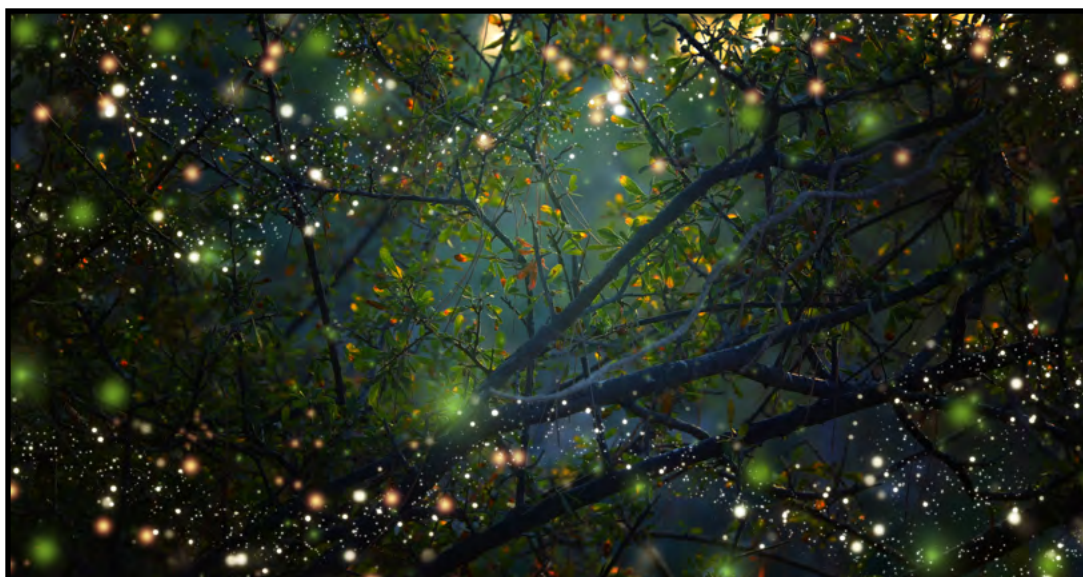
they share the secrets of Nature with those who know how to contact them.

C.R. was extremely impressed with the **trans-disciplinary collaboration** among the scholars of Arabia and Africa who met each year to share their knowledge. They celebrated if they found better ideas or if experience showed the reasoning of their previous findings might not be correct. Every year their knowledge was amended.

The perspective of Brother C.R. expands our awareness to see that we are part of and connected with everything – with each other, you and me, with all humanity, with all beings and all life – trees, dolphins, deer, oceans, and bees, and with the essences of earth, air, water, and fire.

We are connected with and part of everything in the Universe, of which we are not the center. We all swim in the same vibrational sea. The rates of our vibrations give us the impression that we are separate, but we are not.

As Denise Breton and Christopher Largent observed in scientific revolutions throughout history, old-paradigm practitioners can't see that their paradigm caused their crisis. They believe that we don't need a new paradigm, we just need to





NASA image, Hubble ST, Cat's Eye Nebula

make the one we have work better. Nothing is wrong with our social systems, since this would call the underlying paradigm into question. Instead, when things don't work, they declare that something must be wrong with us.

The solution is for each of us to tune into our internal guidance systems – our souls, but of course, that means that we have to disconnect from the prevailing paradigm and paradigms don't let go easily.

Franz Hartmann wrote in *With the Adepts: An Adventure Among the Rosicrucians*:

The continual rush after more money, more comfort, more pleasure, after we already possess all we require, and which characterizes our present civilization, is not necessarily a sign of greed, viciousness, and moral depravity; but it is rather caused by the instinctive impulse, inherent in the constitution of humans, to reach something higher and better, which expresses itself on the physical plane.

People intuitively know that, no matter how rich in money or fame they may be, they have not yet reached

a state in which to be contented and to rest; they know that they must still keep on striving for something, **but they do not know what that something is**. Not knowing the higher life, they strive for more of those things which the lower life affords, and thus waste their energies for the attainment of things which are useless to them. Our curse is to not know our true nature.

Our New Story is based on knowing our true nature – that we are mirrors in which the Divine untiringly contemplates Its own reflection. We are essential elements in the interconnected whole, including the natural world, and are participating in the evolution of the universe. We are part of the harmony of the natural world. This is communicated in every Rosicrucian monograph, in the Rosicrucian manifestos (new and old), and in the work that we carry out in our sanctums. Our Story is living in harmony with the natural world.

We can help to create this societal paradigm shift through our daily choices related to what we purchase, how we spend our time, and how we walk upon Earth. We can educate ourselves and vote

for leaders who understand and support living in harmony with the natural world and then by staying informed and involved in bringing about change. And we can share this New Story by serving as examples for others to follow.

The *Fama Fraternitatis* ends with a request to the leaders of Europe to consider their offer to help restore harmony to society and to declare their agreement. In 2014, 400 years after the publication of the *Fama*, the Rosicrucian Order published another manifesto – the *Appellatio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis*. *Appellatio* means the call or appeal. This manifesto isn't a call to just leaders; it is a call to **every Rosicrucian** and to all mystics to participate in the transformation of our society. **You** are being called upon to participate in shifting our paradigm and to spreading Our New Story – one of living in harmony with the natural world –

for the good of all people, all beings, and our amazing planet.

So Mote It Be!

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ThomasBerry.org

“The best arguments in the world won't change a person's mind. The only thing that can do that is a good story.”

“Humans carry around legacy behaviors and biases, jerry-rigged holdovers from earlier stages of evolution that follow their own obsolete rules. What seem like erratic, irrational choices are, in fact, strategies created long ago for solving other kinds of problems. We're all trapped in the bodies of sly, social-climbing opportunists shaped to survive the savanna by policing each other.”

“She tries to turn the story on its head. This is not our world with trees in it. It's a world of trees, where humans have just arrived.”

“We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and people. . . . In every walk with nature one receives far more than one seeks. The clearest way into the universe is through a forest wilderness.”

“Who does the tree-hugger really hug, when he hugs a tree?”

“Now they need only learn what life wants from humans. It's a big question, to be sure. Too big for people alone. But people aren't alone, and they never have been.”

- Excerpts from the Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers

