

## ABOUT: **DREAMS FOR THE EARTH**

Books, poems, words, philosophy, history: they challenge me; they sustain me.

**Marija Gimbutas** (1921–1994) was a Lithuanian archaeologist and anthropologist known for her research into the Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures of "Old Europe."

**Riane Eisler** (1931– ) is an Austrian-born American systems scientist and author who writes about the effect of gender politics historically on society.

Gimbutas gained fame and notoriety in the English-speaking world with her last three books that presented an overview of her conclusions about Neolithic cultures across Europe.

Eisler is most known for her 1987 book **The Chalice and the Blade**, in which she synthesized societal behavior patterns she labeled as "partnership" and "dominator."

Gimbutas saw as the differences between the Old European systems, which she considered goddess- and woman-centered, and the Bronze Age Indo-European patriarchal culture that supplanted it. According to her interpretations, female-centered societies were peaceful, honored women, and espoused economic equality. The male-dominated peoples, on the other hand, invaded Europe and imposed upon its natives the hierarchical rule of male warriors.

Somewhat similarly Eisler highlights the tension between what she calls the dominator model and a more feminine partnership model. Eisler proposes tension between these two modes of behavior underlies the entire span of human cultural evolution. She traces this strain in Western culture from prehistory to the present

amalgamating from her studies how human goddess cultures (the Chalice) were supplanted by warrior cultures (the Blade).

For Eisler, goddess culture partnership models between men and women were replaced by a “5,000-year detour” of male domination. The dominator model presumes the ranking of one-half of humanity over the other. The partnership model does not demand inferiority or superiority. For Eisler, gender equality isn't about female domination; it is about equality between the sexes and genders with the purpose of realizing the full potential of humanity.

Impressed, I began work on a series called *Return of the Chalice* but, it soon morphed into my next series, *Dreams for the Earth*, as a result of reading a book by **Thomas Berry** (1914-2009), the cultural historian and scholar of the world's religions.

In 1988, Sierra Club Books published Berry's book, *The Dream of the Earth*.

**The New York Times** did not review it. Neither did **The Washington Post**.

Nevertheless, concepts emanating from Berry's book lightened outward, enlightening many. After reading Berry's book, I began creating the *Dreams for the Earth* series.

Berry considers our ecological fate from a species perspective; he proposes a new intellectual-ethical framework for the human community by positing planetary well-being as the measure of all human activity. He shows us why it is important to respond to the Earth's need for planetary renewal, and what we must do to break free of the “technological trance” that drives a misguided dream of progress. Only then, he suggests, can we foster mutually enhancing human-Earth relationships that

can heal our traumatized global biosystem. He points toward a transformation of consciousness that is needed if we and the planet are to survive.