

Nomination

of

Riane Eisler, J.D.

for

The Templeton Prize

for

Progress in Religion

2002

CITATION

DR. RIANE EISLER

Fleeing the Nazis as a child, via a refugee childhood in Cuba, Riane Eisler came to America to forge out of the experience of the most devastating event of the 20th century a body of work that has inspired millions worldwide to try to build a better world. Widely honored today for her work as a cultural evolution and educational theorist, Dr. Eisler's highly original contribution has profound significance in advancing our understanding of God, our spiritual task on earth, and how we act this out in our daily lives. Through development and elaboration of the dominator and partnership models of human interaction in books such as *The Chalice and the Blade*, *Sacred Pleasure* and *Tomorrow's Children*, she has articulated a new vision of our spiritual heritage that charts the way to a more humane future. Renowned anthropologist Ashley Montagu called *The Chalice and the Blade* –a U.S. best-seller now in 17 languages -- the most important book since Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Along with the macrohistorian Arnold Toynbee, Christian evolution theorist Teilhard de Chardin, and Islamic futurist Ibn Khaldun, Eisler is the sole living scholar and the first woman to be named one of the 20 most important macrohistorians.

Riane Eisler's work has received widespread recognition as an original contribution of profound significance in advancing our understanding of God, our spiritual task on earth and how we act this out in our daily lives. To already within her lifetime have her work compared to Darwin's in importance in science, and to be identified with Toynbee, de Chardin, Khaldun, moral theorist Pitirim Sorokin, and even Saint Augustine as one of the 20 most important macrohistorians, is a rare achievement.¹ To write a book that has been an international best-seller, published in practically every language in Europe, in Central and South America, as well as in Chinese and Japanese, is an extraordinary accomplishment in itself. To follow this book with a series of other works that deepen and expand our understanding of the major problems confronting humanity, and help us find new dimensions of the sacred in our lives and relationships signifies brilliance combined with dedication. But to do all this as a woman pioneering both in science and in spiritual understanding, in what is still overwhelmingly the "man's world" of scholarship, goes far beyond the unusual to the truly unique.

Today the global leadership both in science and spirituality is widely and with the deepest of concern beginning to recognize the need for our species to go beyond talk to *actually shift* from the old ways of rule by domination to the ways of peace and partnership called for by Jesus, Gautama, Mohammed, Hildegard of Bingen, and indeed all the great religious visionaries. There is growing agreement in both scientific and spiritual leadership that we must do this, or, after the investment of at least a billion years in the evolution of humanity, our species truly faces the prospect of extinction.

This is the basic challenge to which Eisler's work is addressed, and why there has been such a positive response to it from both the world of scholarship and general readership, as well as from many different religious denominations working to advance our understanding of and relationship to God.

In order to fully appreciate the significance of the breakthroughs that Dr. Eisler has made in increasing our understanding of God through her work in cultural evolution, systems and educational theory, we must come to grips with the tenacity of a powerful legacy that has shaped and, in some instances, warped our perception of the human condition. This process requires sustained effort and may evoke resistance as individuals or institutions come face-to-face with their long-held perceptions and suppositions.

The reason for this resistance (be it active or passive) is best understood in terms of how we assimilate and conceptualize family, communal, and societal dynamics. In the course of our socialization process, a certain type of mental map making takes place that strongly affects our inner lives and sense of self. Riane Eisler's research findings and their implications for us as social and spiritual beings confront us with new information and insights that put some of these 'mental maps' into question. M. Scott Peck describes very well what can happen in *The Road Less Traveled*.

"What happens when one has striven long and hard to develop a working view of the world, a seemingly useful, workable map, and then is confronted with new information suggesting that this map needs to be largely redrawn? The painful effort required seems frightening, almost overwhelming. What we do more often than not, and usually unconsciously, is to ignore the new information. Often this act of ignoring is much more than passive. We may denounce the new information as false, dangerous, heretical, the work of the devil. We may actually crusade against it, and even attempt to manipulate the world so as to make it conform to our view of reality. Rather than try to change the map, an individual may try to destroy the new reality. Sadly, such a person may expend much more energy ultimately in defending an outmoded view of the world than would have been required to revise and correct it in the first place."

Eisler contextualizes the contemporary struggle over what kinds of relations should flourish on this earth in the underlying tension between the dominator/control and partnership/respect models. What Eisler calls Cultural Transformation theory proposes “that underlying the great surface diversity of human culture are two basic models of society.” In her introduction to *The Chalice and the Blade*, Eisler gives us an overview of her findings regarding these two models or paradigms.

“The first, which I call the *dominator* model, is what is popularly termed either patriarchy or matriarchy – the *ranking* of one half of humanity over the other. The second, in which social relations are primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking, may best be described as the partnership model. In this model – beginning with the most fundamental difference in our species, between male and female – diversity is not equated with either inferiority or superiority.

Cultural Transformation theory further proposes that the original direction in the mainstream of our cultural evolution was toward partnership but that, following a period of chaos and almost total cultural disruption; there occurred a fundamental social shift. The greater availability of data on Western societies (due to the ethnocentric focus of Western social science) makes it possible to document this shift in more detail through the analysis of Western cultural evolution. However, there are also indications that this change in direction from a partnership to a dominator model was roughly paralleled in other parts of the world.

The title *The Chalice and the Blade* derives from this cataclysmic turning point during the prehistory of Western civilization, when the direction of our cultural evolution was quite literally turned around. At this pivotal branching, the cultural evolution of societies that worshiped the life-generating and nurturing powers of the universe – in our time still symbolized by the ancient chalice or grail – was interrupted. There now appeared on the prehistoric horizon invaders from the peripheral areas of our globe who ushered in a very different form of social organization. As the University of California archaeologist Marija Gimbutas writes, these were people who worshipped “the lethal power of the blade” – the power to take rather than to give life that is the ultimate power to establish and enforce domination.”

□ Some Breakthroughs of Eisler’s Work in Advancing Our Understanding of God

One can say that our understanding of God is influenced by our understanding of ourselves, which includes our awareness of our power, desires, feelings, limitations, our competencies in relating to the world and especially to other human beings, since we are social beings. If our understandings of ourselves in relation to community – that is, our mental maps – are shaped by the societal model that surrounds us, then our exposure to this primary societal model can restrict our vision and our capacity to transcend the limitations of this particular system. By its very principles, what Eisler calls the dominator/control model, which has prevailed in most of today’s societies for several millennia, suppresses other more egalitarian and cooperative alternatives in which power is less concentrated and restricted. This prevailing societal model permeates not only the web of political, economic, and social relations, but it powerfully shapes familial and spiritual values, structures, and images – including how we understand God.

- ◆ Eisler points out that we are told two conflicting stories about humanity and our relationship to God. On the one hand, we are told that humanity is deeply flawed, and hence must be rigidly controlled and constantly punished. On the other, we are told that we are made in God’s image. But what is the image of God? From her inquiries, Eisler finds that the core of all the world’s great religions is the insight that God is love, that God is good and caring.

- ◆ From where does this insight come? Eisler shows that it is rooted in very ancient traditions where the powers that govern the universe were seen as nurturing and life-affirming. That aspect of God is still at the heart of what people worldwide resonate to in spirituality and religion. But then there is another voice: a harsh and angry aspect that has historically been invoked to justify cruelty and oppression, violence and heartlessness.
- ◆ Eisler shows that this image of the deity is a product of a way of structuring religions for what she identifies as the dominator/control model. It is not a conspiracy. When people relate to each other in the dominator-dominated mode, they develop beliefs justifying these kinds of relations that are then passed on from generation to generation. The picture we then have of God “is like a beautiful portrait that has been painted over, with the original showing through only in bits and pieces,” as Eisler writes. She shows that great spiritual teachers have tried to restore this picture. And most of us know in our hearts that the creative and caring rather than the destructive and punitive aspect of the divine is what God wants us to emulate, that this is the image in which we were created. Restoring this image of the divine entails some historical detective work.
- ◆ An important contribution of Eisler’s labors is this scholarly detective work. Drawing from archeology, mythology, anthropology, art history and other disciplines, Eisler takes us back to the roots of religion in universal human questions about our nature and the nature of the world.
- ◆ Contrary to the negative, dominator-colored ideas of Nietzsche, Freud, Girard and others who claim that religion originates with violence, even human sacrifice, Eisler helps us see that the earliest sacred imagery in all the major centers of civilization focuses on the life-giving and nurturing powers of the universe. Her work also helps us see how, from more arid, less nurturing and life-supporting regions of the globe; very different images of the powers that govern the universe emerge. When these harsh and angry images were brought into the mainstream of civilization, a cultural shift occurred to a system of top down rule ultimately backed up by fear and force. Elements of the earlier, more partnership-oriented image and teachings were retained and intermittently strengthened and further developed. However, the overlay of dominator images and teachings now justified harsh and often brutal rulers and ways of life.
- ◆ Drawing from her re-examination of the four gospels in the New Testament, Eisler points out in *The Chalice and the Blade*, that “we find that the cornerstone of dominator ideology, the masculine-superior/feminine-inferior species model is, but for a few exceptions, conspicuous by its absence. Instead, permeating these writings is Jesus’ message of spiritual equality.” Reading both *Matthew* 7:12 and *Luke* 6:13 we see, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” This message of ethical reciprocity is often called the golden rule. If we overlook the exclusively male gender references, we can see an ethos of social and spiritual partnership and mutual respect. In fact, embedded in this quotation is a direct reference to traditional Jewish teaching, “this is the law.” In a text dating back several centuries prior to the common era, we find this sentiment in *Leviticus* 19:18 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Moving slightly later to around 30 B.C.E. we can find a corollary in the famous saying attributed to Rabbi Hillel in the *Talmud*, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the entire Law (*Torah*); all the rest is commentary.” In Islamic tradition we find “Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Forty Hadith of *an-Nawawi* 13). A section in the *Qu’ran* (4:19) that does not even limit gender says: “O you who believe, you should not treat women with harshness...on the contrary, live with them on a footing of kindness and equity.”
- ◆ To untangle the two strains of dominator and partnership imagery and teachings about God requires dealing with issues that are very emotionally charged. As countless readers have remarked of this healing aspect of her skill, Eisler does this in a non-accusative, loving way. Her applications of systems theory takes us from blame and shame to an understanding of social systems. At the same time, she does not shirk from addressing emotionally loaded issues, such as how the social

construction of the roles and relations of the female and male halves of humanity is central, rather than peripheral, to the two basic models for structuring relations she calls the partnership and dominator models.

- ◆ In *Sacred Pleasure*, her important sequel to *The Chalice and the Blade*, Eisler refines the basic dominator and partnership concepts and extends them into the extremely sensitive arena of human sexuality and the pain-pleasure dichotomy, arguing that sexuality and pleasure are inherently spiritual and are an avenue for a deeper experience of God. She shows how the dominator model distorts both sexuality and spirituality, alienating us from the sacred in our most intimate relationships and how reclaiming partnership spirituality can again make us whole.
- ◆ Eisler's breakthroughs in educational philosophy and practice – a further application of her basic research outlined in her new book *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* – help bridge the gap between science and religion. For example, in *Tomorrow's Children* she proposes teaching what she calls “meaningful evolution.” She writes: “I have chosen the phrase *meaningful evolution* to describe a view of evolution in which we can find a larger sense of purpose. It is an approach that draws from an emerging body of scientific findings pointing to the evolutionary roots of caring for others and caring for what happens to future generations. It highlights that what we do in this lifetime is meaningful because it advances the evolution of our species and fulfills our responsibilities to this planet... It offers a bridge between the core partnership values of religion and the empirical findings of science. Meaningful evolution transcends the conventional polarity between spirituality and science, grounding spirituality in evolution. It identifies for us as a species a meaningful relationship to life and the wonder of the universe. It takes into account key evolutionary developments such as the evolution of consciousness, creativity, and love... Young people are empowered to be the best they can be when they know that our strivings for love, beauty, and justice – what for centuries have been called the highest ideals that drive civilization ahead – are part of human biology, rooted in evolution. Whether or not they are given a formal religious context, these strivings constitute the core of a partnership spirituality that recognizes a larger mission for us in life and imbues us with a sense of awe and wonder at the majesty of the universe. When young people understand that these strivings are at the core of our humanity, they can imbue their lives with greater meaning. Most important, they can more consciously and caringly participate in the great adventure of the evolution of life on our planet.”
- ◆ Eisler's work provides ethical and moral standards urgently needed in our time. She writes: “Partnership spirituality is both transcendent and immanent. It informs our day-to-day lives with caring and empathy. It provides basic standards of human rights and responsibilities. It provides ethical and moral standards for partnership relations as alternatives to both a lack of ethical standards and the misuse of “morality” to justify oppression and violence.”
- ◆ Eisler proposes spiritual education as a core component of education. She writes: “We can all develop the spiritual courage to trust our own loving inner voice – to think for ourselves, challenge injustice, and put love into action.”
- ◆ Eisler's work inspires this “spiritual courage” – the courage to do God's work of caring and love even when it means questioning established traditions of domination. She writes: “A spirituality that tells us to accept things as they are and unquestioningly obey ‘higher authorities’ – including punitive, angry deities – is not the spirituality of Isaiah and Jesus, or of Gautama, Hildegard of Bingen, or any of the great spiritual visionaries of history. They did not ask us to look the other way, to tamely accept injustice and cruelty. They tried to change things, as when Jesus stopped the stoning of a woman and Hildegard stood up to a pope.” She continues: “Indeed, at the core of all the major faiths — be they Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Hebrew, Christian, or Confucian — are the partnership values of sensitivity, empathy, caring, and nonviolence. These are the spiritual values

many of us are striving to reclaim. These are the values that support the relationships we yearn for. And these are the values we can use to develop a partnership spirituality and morality that applies standards of empathy, caring, and responsibility to our day-to-day lives – a spirituality that focuses on joy, on life, and on love rather than on pain, death, and hate.”

□ Some Applications of Eisler’s Contributions

Behind the global circulation and impact of Eisler’s *The Chalice and the Blade* and other books lies the remarkable and gratifying story of how her works have been taken up and used within countless workshops organized by people of a remarkably wide range of faiths.

- ◆ Her books and articles have become part of the curricula for Unitarian Church groups as well as by a wide range of Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Baptist groups.
- ◆ Her works have also spread throughout the Baha’i faith, and are having a significant impact on Muslim and Buddhist scholars interested in strengthening the partnership elements in their faiths.
- ◆ Earlier, as part of the workshop approach to spreading an understanding of her work, Partnership Education Centers were spontaneously formed throughout the U.S. and even as far away as the Seychelle Islands.
- ◆ An International Partnership Initiative launched by the Chairman of Volkswagen International spread her work within the international business community.
- ◆ The Chinese Academy of Social Science, in a three year study by leading archeologists and anthropologists, substantiated the operation of Eisler’s dominator and partnership model interaction in Asian culture, publishing *The Chalice and the Blade in Chinese Culture* in both Chinese and English.
- ◆ A world partnership conference in Crete—which figures significantly in her work as the site of the high point for an early partnership culture— drew people from 50 countries.
- ◆ Currently, Eisler is president of the fourteen-year-old nonprofit Center for Partnership (launched with grants by the Laurance Rockefeller and Epstein Family Foundations, funded over the years in part by the Roy A. Hunt Foundation), which is now developing a global program of educational renewal based on her work. This venture can be visited on the internet through the Center website www.partnershipway.org.
- ◆ Additionally, Eisler has been a highly popular speaker to assemblies worldwide— ranging from gatherings of scholars and educators to conferences of progressive religious denominations and such stellar events within the religious community as the World Parliament of Religion. Here the consonance of her work with the highest ideals for the progressive religious community is particularly notable in the stress within the famous Manifesto for the World Parliament specifically upon partnership and the necessity for gender equality as basic to the advance of humanity.

In recognition of the spiritual impact and global importance of her contributions to science and spirituality, Eisler has received many honors. These include:

- ◆ Eisler is a member of the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality, along with other spiritual leaders such as the Dalai Lama and Bishop Desmond Tutu.
- ◆ The spiritual contribution of the partnership ethos is recognized in the Manifesto of the Club of Budapest, of which, again with the Dalai Lama, Eisler is an honorary member. This international organization is headed by general evolution theorist Ervin Laszlo, with whom Eisler was a co-founder of the General Evolution Research Group, a group of scientists from many nations concerned with the application of evolutionary theory to the advancement – and at this critical time, survival – of humanity.

□ The Originality of Eisler's Spiritual Contributions

The assessments of Riane Eisler's works enumerated in the following section is a fusion of sentiments and descriptions by religious scholars, scientists, writers and journalists and serves to confirm the magnitude of her contributions and her merit for receiving the Templeton Prize.

- ◆ Dr. Eisler produced a major breakthrough in *The Chalice and the Blade* that casts an entirely new light on all major problems we face.
- ❖ In this work she elegantly provides humanity with the tools to help us "redraw our mental maps" of civilizations' evolutionary development.
- ❖ In this original synthesis she has created a revelation that opens the spirit to unimaginable possibilities.

- ◆ In *The Chalice and the Blade* and *Sacred Pleasure*, Dr. Eisler has written epic masterpieces that have enabled us to glimpse a new dimension of the sacred in our daily lives and relationships.
- ❖ Her development and elaboration of the dominator and partnership models of human interaction has given us the tools with which to better comprehend our spiritual heritage and chart our way beyond mere survival to a more humane future.
- ❖ As evidence of the increase in our understanding of God and recognition of her vision's power, *The Chalice and the Blade* is translated and available in 17 languages.

Before *The Chalice and the Blade* was published, the University of California, which was interested in publishing it, sent Ashley Montagu a blind copy of the manuscript (the author of the manuscript was not revealed). [A copy of his evaluation is included in the nominating submission materials.] He found the work constituted "a highly significant contribution both of the historical facts, and much to be desired reorientation toward the understanding and solution of the fundamental problems and challenges that face humanity." Not only did he find the work original, but also described it as "eloquent and persuasive." So much so that he stated that in sixty-five years of reading related kinds of books, he knew of none that anywhere approached this one, for no one, to his knowledge had "so brilliantly stated what needs to be done, literally in order to save the world."

Had Ashley Montagu been alive today, he might very well be the person nominating Riane Eisler for this prize. His own superlative words of praise which follow constitute as compelling a case as any towering figure in science could make.

"I regard this book as one of the most important of the 20th century, and for the matter of that, of any century. Apart from Darwin's *Origin of Species* no book has impressed me as profoundly as *The Chalice and the Blade*."

¹The choice of Eisler as one of the 20 most important macrohistorians was by the world renowned Swedish scholar Johann Galtung in a work rapidly becoming the classic for this field: Galtung, J., and Inayatullah, S. (Eds.), *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians* (Praeger, 1998).]

Supporters of Riane Eisler's nomination

Prof. Dr. Rita Suessmuth – former President of the German Parliament (from the Christian Democratic Union) for 10 years ending in 1998 and Professor of Education at the University of Dortmund and lecturer in Political Science at Gottingen University. She serves in an advisory capacity on boards of the Bertelsmann Foundation, Institute for East-West Studies, Chairperson of the board of the German AIDS Foundation, and President of the German Association of Adult Education Centres.

Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta - Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 along with his fellow countryman, Bishop Belo. Leader of the newly independent nation of East Timor. Roman Catholic born in Dili, East Timor. Four of his siblings were killed by the Indonesian military.

His Royal Highness El Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan – Crown Prince of Jordan, brother of the late King Hussein, set up the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in 1994 and is integrally involved with this enterprise. Among his activities in the field of religion is his involvement in the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue at the Vatican and the Independent Commission on Christian-Muslim-Jewish Relations through the aegis of the Deanery of Windsor.

Dr. Jim Kenney – International Director of the Council for a Parliament of World Religions, (Chicago, IL), he is also a trustee of: the International Interfaith Centre in Oxford (UK). He writes, lectures, was formerly the Chair of the Department of Religions at Barat College (Lake Forest, IL) and in 1975 co-founded Common Ground, an adult educational organization and study center focusing on great cultural, spiritual and philosophical traditions of which he has been Executive Director since 1998.

Rabbi Dr. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi – One of the catalysts and dominant figures in the Jewish Renewal movement who was selected with other notable Jewish scholars to meet with HH the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in 1990. Born in Poland in 1924, raised in Vienna, fled Nazi Europe to North America, he was ordained at the Central Lubavitch Yeshiva in New York in 1947 and has held professorships of religion at University of Manitoba and Temple University.

Rev. Walter Wink – Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York. Previously he was a parish minister (Methodist) and taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York. The author of many books and articles on biblical history, theology and spirituality, he was a Peace Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace during 1989-90.

Kayabje Gelek Rinpoche – born in Tibet in 1939, is a blood relation to the 13th Dalai Lama. Fled Tibet in 1959. In the late 1970's, he was directed by both the senior and junior tutors to HH the Dalai Lama to begin teaching Western students. He teaches and travels worldwide, from his base in Ann Arbor, Michigan called Jewel Heart.

Dr. Durre Ahmed – Islamic scholar in Religious Studies and Professor of Social Science at Lahore College, Pakistan and travels internationally as a sought after university lecturer. Received her doctorate at Columbia University and through her work, has been the recipient of grants from The Templeton Foundation and The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS) directed by Dr. Robert J. Russell.

Prof. Stuart Schlegel – Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and Episcopalian minister, he has written extensively about his area of expertise, the Philippines and Indonesia. He is also active in peace and justice work as well as non-violence.

Deepak Chopra, M.D. – acknowledged as one of the world's great leaders in the field of mind/body medicine, he is widely credited with melding modern theories of quantum physics with the timeless wisdom of ancient cultures. His work envisions a medical system based upon the premise that healing is a lively state of balance and integration of body, mind, and spirit.

Susan Griffin – well known writer, social thinker, eco-feminist and teacher. She was the recipient of a MacArthur grant for Peace and International Cooperation, an NEA Fellowship and an Emmy award for her play, *Voices*.

Rabbi Michael Lerner – American born rabbi who initiated the discussion on the 'Politics of Meaning' in American civic discourse in the mid 1990's. Pre-eminent student of the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel while he attended the Jewish Theological Seminary, he is a philosopher, editor of Tikkun Magazine, and rabbi of Beyt Tikkun (House of Love and Healing) in San Francisco.



Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c.mult. Rita Süßmuth

Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages
Präsidentin des Deutschen Bundestages a. D.
Vizepräsidentin der Parlamentarischen Versammlung der OSZE

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Berlin, den 5. Juni 2001

Dear Dr. Harper:

I feel honored to write this letter in support of such a worthy nomination, that of Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize. Naturally, I am very familiar with Dr. Eisler's pioneering work that has helped resurrect for us the partnership model of social relations that had been lost or devalued for much of our history. As a result of my exposure to her contributions, when I was President of the German Bundestag (or Parliament) I invited her to speak at a conference in Bonn where we both introduced her thinking about the partnership model. I subsequently got to know her personally and worked with friends in the International Partnership Initiative of the then-Chairman of Volkswagen International, Daniel Goedavert (who wrote the foreword to the German edition of Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade*), to spread the partnership message in Europe and the world.

Her seminal work, *The Chalice and the Blade* (*Kelch und Schwert* in German) is a milestone in spiritually elevating our vision of how to relate to one another from the micro to the macro level in society. As a Roman Catholic, as a long time member of the Christian Democratic Union in Germany and as Professor of Education at the University of Dortmund, the issues of children and families have been of great concern to me. The kind of society and the values that we promote in our social policy are of utmost importance for guaranteeing a future that is more humane, equitable and nurturing.

Riane Eisler's pioneering work shows us not only that we have precedents and models in our pre-historic tradition on which to draw, but that these very elements are what are needed so desperately today to renew and revive the spiritual, social and political malaise and the divisiveness that has held us back from realizing our full potential as creatures of God created in the divine image and as stewards of the earth.

Dr. Eisler's ongoing efforts to educate both us and future generations about our rich heritage and full flourishing as human beings and her contributions, most notably demonstrated by her books, mark achievements of towering importance and enduring worth. She richly deserves major recognition and honor for bringing these

discoveries to the fore and for elevating the level of discourse in both the spiritual and practical dimensions of our lives. I wholeheartedly recommend your committee bestow on Riane Eisler this most esteemed award for her inspirational work.

Sincerely,

Rita Suessmuth
Prof. Dr. Rita Suessmuth

JRH NOBEL da PAZ TIMOR

San Francisco 16 May, 2001

Dr. Susan Harper, Executive Director
The Templeton Prize
Five Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
100 Matsonford Road
Radnor, PA 19087

Dear Dr. Harper:

Riane Eisler and I have not yet met, but I feel a close affinity for her. In each of our respective fields of endeavor, we are committed to reviving and modeling a partnership way of living. In such a spirit, I am honored and impelled to endorse her nomination for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

While I am not a theologian, seminarian or a scholar of religion or history, my own commitment to human dignity and respect for human rights and justice in the world, in particular for our people in East Timor resonate strongly with the message that Dr. Eisler has helped in reclaiming from our forgotten past. It contains a powerful spiritual truth that transcends time and spatial boundaries.

Our struggle for freedom in East Timor, waged against a brutal oppressor, could be carried out without killing a single civilian opponent. Riane Eisler's pioneering work helps revive an ancient uplifting message that has been suppressed for millennia. To these questions posed last year by Sir John Templeton,

"Likewise, can new information from science research on basic spiritual truths and realities reduce conflict between religions? Can religious conflict vanish if people come to recognize from science research spiritual information that is universal to all people?"

Her contributions certainly provide a resounding and affirmative response.

It gives me great pleasure to add my voice to those of other illustrious and distinguished individuals in commending Riane Eisler's nomination to you and your committee for the Templeton Prize.

Sincerely,



Dr José Ramos-Horta
Nobel Peace Laureate
Cabinet Member for Foreign Affairs, East Timor Transitional Administration

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Royal Palace
Amman, Jordan

21st January 2001

Dear Dr. Harper.

It is with much pleasure that I nominate Dr. Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize, to be awarded to a nominee who has encouraged additional spiritual information through scientific research to supplement the wonderful ancient scriptures, for the year 2002.

Dr. Eisler's commitment to reinterpreting sacred texts and traditions, thereby illuminating the values of compassion, love, peace, and cooperation, which are contained beneath overlaid messages of repression, fear and violence is of enormous value in enhancing our world. Central to my thinking is the importance of an overall ethic of human understanding and inter-religious dialogue and it is my view that Dr. Eisler's work provides a very soundly based contribution, which will support these critical areas.

I am most sincerely

Yours truly,

El Hassan bin Talal

Dr. Susan Harper
Executive Director
The Templeton Prize



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March 1, 2001

Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion
Five Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to recommend Dr. Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Her landmark book, *The Chalice and the Blade*, gave a powerful and critically timed impetus to the emerging conversation about the roles of females and males and, more important, of the feminine and masculine dimensions, in the development of human societies and cultures. Her focus on the long-neglected feminine dimension of spirituality and on the rediscovery of a distinctly different yet vitally important approach to the divine mystery sharpened the inquiry of scholars, sociologists, anthropologists, and students of religion as it opened new doors for countless seekers after spiritual significance.

It is essential to note, however, that Dr. Eisler's contribution has not been confined to the academic discussion of culture and spirituality. Her creative elaboration of the spiritual and cultural ideal of "gylany"—her own coinage, a fusion of the Greek roots for "woman" and "man"—and of the dynamic of "partnership" between female and male and engagement between the masculine and the feminine have resonated with many thousands of persons and have resulted in the revitalization of existing spiritual communities and the creation of new partnership circles, spiritual focus groups, and grassroots collectives dedicated to spiritually grounded service. The remarkable *The Partnership Way* offered a workbook for communities and groups eager to move beyond the patriarchal "dominator" model to full partnership between the genders in spiritual service to the world.

In my own work in the international interreligious movement, I have been struck by the number of persons actively committed to the development of new approaches to spirituality and community that have been touched in one way or another by Riane Eisler's innovative work and her charismatic modeling of new ways of human interaction.

While many aspects of the original work in *The Chalice and the Blade* have occasioned scholarly controversy, the larger work that has distinguished the career of Dr. Eisler has been hailed as an



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evolving, self-consistent, and deeply evocative call for new ways of living in the world, responding to the challenge of diversity, and nurturing a spirituality that embodies the full complexity of human nature and culture while at the same time opening new pathways to appreciation of and engagement with the fullness of the divine spectrum.

It was perhaps inevitable that Riane Eisler would in time turn her attention to the challenge of nurturing the next generation. Her *Tomorrow's Children: A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century* offers what has been termed "a kinder, gentler curriculum," designed to suggest ways for bringing deep spiritual resonances to the system of modern education. Like Eisler's other works, *Tomorrow's Children* moves quickly beyond the thought exercise to the action plan, and one that can be easily sampled, tested, revised, and applied by concerned groups engaged in this most basic of community-building activities.

Writing as one who deeply believes that active spirituality in service to the world can make all the difference, I am heartened by the developing work of Riane Eisler. I commend her to the Templeton Prize judges with great enthusiasm.

I will of course be delighted to respond to any query you might have.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Kenney
Director, Global Dimension
Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

הרב משולם זלמן הכהן שחטר-שלומי

Rabbi Dr. Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi

ALEPH Alliance for Jewish Renewal,

Yesod,

Naropa Institute,

Spiritual Eldering Institute

July 30, 2000

Dear Templeton Award Committee

I am delighted to send this letter in support of Riane Eisler's nomination for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. Dr. Eisler and I grew up in Austria in the first half of the twentieth century and each of us fled that land after the Nazi take-over. While our lives took very different paths after our escape from Europe, I find a special parallel and distinct connection in the spirit of both of our work.

Riane's groundbreaking work in archeology and cultural anthropology has made a major contribution in our understanding of the differences and the interplay between power dynamics of societies and the timeless spiritual values and teachings of some of the dominant religions. She has provided a framework for scholars of religion and people with a spiritual practice to re-evaluate the foundations of their faith communities and prune them of some of their extraneous and destructive baggage.

Without a doubt, Riane has "encouraged additional spiritual information through science research to supplement the wonderful ancient scriptures." Through her hard work and extensive research she has created a powerful synthesis that enables us to have conversations within and across denominational boundaries that make us rethink our relationships to our traditions.

Much of my work has dealt with discovering paradigmatic shifts and recognizing when these are necessary to renew and rejuvenate ("re-jew-vinate" in my own tradition) processes that have outlived their intended functions. The challenge is finding out to do this within the context and precepts of the tradition so that one maintains the vital connection that is so essential for continuity and community.

On a whole other level, Riane Eisler has done work in our pre- and early history that shows us that we have been missing a major part of the big picture. She has helped rescue a paradigm that had been "lost" and suppressed for so long that its absence stunted our development as a civilization, particularly in the area of religion which has a major bearing on the other key institutions in society.

Through her archaeological analysis and anthropological work, she has helped to bring to light the way destructive and violent traditions have subtly and systematically distorted many of the world's major religions and injected fear, hatred, domination, and misogyny into the mix of primary and timeless values of love, compassion and cooperation that are at the heart of the great faiths.

Her work utilizes these disciplines in addition to her application of systems theories to put in question much of the brutal and repressive aspects of western religious doctrines, which have been assumed to be part and parcel of these revelatory faiths. My teachings and those of some of my distinguished fellow rabbis and scholars in the Jewish world complement and validate her work.

Riane's books, articles and her appearances at conferences across the globe help inspire and guide others who, like herself, wish to put the teachings of cooperation, compassion and partnership into action in the world. Her tireless efforts have created the Center for Partnership Studies.

I am honored to recommend her and feel that the important work that she has done and continues to do is absolutely deserving of the Templeton Prize. Your committee could do no better than to award her the prize and the receipts of such a prestigious honor will be an investment in a life affirming spiritual future.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter of support. Riane Eisler is a treasure whose name and work deserve much more attention and recognition. You can help make an important difference. I hope you will.

Sincerely



Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

October 30, 2000

Dr. Susan Harper
Executive Director
5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
100 Matsonford Rd.
Radnor, PA 19087

Dear Dr. Harper,

I am writing in support of Riane Eisler for consideration for the Templeton Prize. I first became aware of the richness and originality of her work in her pathbreaking book, The Chalice and the Blade (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987). What she accomplished was a complete reconception and rewriting of the history of the emergence of humanity and the foundation of civilization. In the course of her argument I found my own assumptions and preconceptions turned upside down. She refuted the assumption by Nietzsche, Freud, and Rene Girard that violence was intrinsic to human societies. This entailed showing that in the earliest societies known to us there may have been outbursts of violence, but not war as we know it. Prior to the rise of the conquest states around 3000 B.C.E. there were few walled cities, few signs of mass killings, and little evidence of the kind of hierarchies that would spring up with the ordination of kings and empires.

In her later works, Dr. Eisler developed a more nuanced case, acknowledging that there were some societies that were less than peaceful, and that what we have is a wide variety of experiments in social living during the 5,000 years before the rise of the conquest states. These included forms of representative government and even democracy. This leads to a radical revision of our attitude toward Greek democracy, which, it turns out, did not invent that system of governance, but represents a survival of earlier democratic forms, but which had excluded women from power sharing, and which excluded slaves altogether.

As a biblical scholar, I was most drawn to her reconception of the teaching of Jesus. In only a matter of a few pages, she revolutionized my understanding of what Jesus was about. He was not "gentle Jesus meek and mild," but the first person in history to critique the system of domination which, since around 3000 B.C.E., had penetrated to virtually every corner in the world. He was not technically a feminist, but he had a view of human relations that encompassed both masculine and feminine values.

Even more striking--and all-pervasive--are Jesus' teachings that we must elevate "feminine virtues" from a secondary or supportive to a primary and central position. We must not be violent but instead turn the other cheek; we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us; we must love our neighbors and even our enemies. Instead of the "masculine virtues" of toughness, aggressiveness, and dominance, what we must value above all else are mutual responsibility, compassion, gentleness, and love. (121)

The Chalice and the Blade ends with an appeal for a new politics, a new economics, and a new spirituality. It is the latter that is most surprising and urgently

needed. Too many analyses of our present malaise leave out the spiritual altogether, when in fact the spiritual is the key to the recovery of spiritual health in the body politic.

Her second major book, Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), develops further the themes of the first, focusing on the way sexuality has been perverted by a life-denying ethic.

Not content to remain at the level of abstraction, she wrote a study guide for groups, and has actively campaigned for social changes consistent with her vision of a world where partnership replaces competition.

It gives me great pleasure to recommend Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Walter Wink".

Dr. Walter Wink

Professor of Biblical Interpretation
Auburn Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027



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Dr. Susan Harper, Executive Director
The Templeton Prize
Five Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
100 Matsonford Road
Radnor, PA 19087

Dear Dr. Susan Harper,

I write this letter in support of Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion for 2002. The richness and originality of her work as seen in her scholarly books, her numerous articles, conferences and her ongoing work through her Center for Partnership Studies, provides a unique view of the paths taken by western humanity.

Riane Eisler has utilized scientific findings through her work with archeology and anthropology to innovatively present an alternative outlook to prevailing views, shedding light on what was previously held as a fixed understanding of western societal development. With this, important implications arise pertaining to the understanding of many world religions and their core teachings and practices. Many speak of her work as a doorway to enable theologians, religious scholars and spiritual practitioners to address the confusion of the overlay of violence and limit placed upon western faiths, allowing for an emphasis on partnership/relationship through peace, compassion and wisdom.

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition particularly focuses on developing motivation both rooted and resulting in wisdom and compassion. Riane Eisler's work emphasizes acknowledging what is indeed the essential message of religions as they serve to develop wisdom and compassion in our shared relationship with the world in which we live.

For all her efforts and achievements, I am happy to recommend Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize.

Sincerely,

Gelek Rinpoche
Founder and President



National College of Arts

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN.

4, Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore 54000, Pakistan,
Ph: 7353567-7325338, Fax: 7323767.

No: _____

Date: _____

Dr. Susan Harper, Director
Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion
Five Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
100 Matsonford Road
Radnor, PA 19087

March 1, 2001

Dear Dr. Harper,

I write this letter primarily as a social scientist and scholar in religious studies in support of Riane Eisler's nomination for the Templeton Prize. While hers is by no means a household name in the Islamic world, her work is of such profound importance that it should be much more widely recognized in religious and academic circles than it is. And your committee with its wisdom and good judgment can help towards making this more of a reality. I say this not only as a scholar but also as author (*Masculinity, Rationality and Religion* ASR, Lahore, and *Women and Religion in the South*, ZED Books, London) and as the Director of a recently concluded program in science and religion in Pakistan (funded by CTNS and the Templeton Foundation).

I first became aware of Dr. Eisler's work when, during a teaching stint in Helsinki, Finland, a colleague brought her book, *The Chalice and the Blade*, to my attention. Given the relatively short life of so many texts and ideas today, this itself was remarkable as the book had been published much earlier but has gone through many editions. After reading it and other writings of Dr. Eisler, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the longstanding impact and significance of her work goes well beyond the USA, extending from Europe to South Asia. Since then, I have been in touch with Dr. Eisler and we maintain communication. I value her inputs not only on the partnership model in Judaism and Christianity but also in areas relevant to Islamic history and psychology with which I am presently engaged. Many of her ideas can be fruitfully applied to the revisioning of this world religion, which as you may know, is today a controversial one particularly regarding women. Thus, I stand by her nomination not only as a social scientist and scholar of religion, but also as a Muslim woman from the Third World.

On May 16, 2000 in Washington's National Cathedral, Sir John Templeton asked "Can all religions learn to be so humble as to be enthusiastic (rather than resistant) to new spiritual information?". Of course the jury is still out regarding the answer. However, it will not take all religions learning to be humble for there to be significant progress. It will require that influential clergy, theologians, and religious scholars take new spiritual



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information seriously and come to grips with some age old assumptions that may now be cast in a new light.

Similarly, Sir John asked, "can new information from science research on basic spiritual truths and realities reduce conflict between religions?". It seems clear to me that Riane Eisler's research in the fields of archaeology, anthropology and systems theory occupies a pivotal place in such an inquiry. Her findings offer powerful tools for committed and passionate people of faith with which to extract the timeless precepts and values that are the core of their religious traditions. This process might be described as one of rediscovery and refinement. The use of this approach, which Dr. Eisler has pioneered, not only offers the possibility of spiritual transformation of religious institutions but of people themselves.

On the merits and importance of *The Chalice and the Blade* alone, one could make a strong case for awarding the Templeton Prize to Dr. Eisler. One need only read the words of the late Ashley Montagu to appreciate the significance of this work. When it was published, he said that it was the most important book since Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Eisler later wrote *Sacred Pleasure* which picks up where the *Chalice* left off and has followed that with *Tomorrow's Children*. She puts into practice what she has written about through her tireless work with her Center for Partnership Studies and continues to share her message by speaking all over the world.

I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor and so it is with great pleasure that I recommend Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Sincerely,

Dr. Durre S. Ahmed
Chair, Dept. of Academic Studies
Director, Graduate Program in
Communication and Cultural Studies.

STUART A. SCHLEGEL
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University of California, Santa Cruz

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March 16, 2001

Dr. Susan Harper
Executive Director, The Templeton Prize
5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130
100 Matsonford Road
Radnor, PA 19087

Dear Dr. Harper:

I am writing to support the nomination of Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize in 2002.

I first read Dr. Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade* when I was working on my own most recent book on the Teduray people of the rainforest in the southern Philippines. I lived with the Teduray for two years in the mid-'60s and have subsequently written a number of rather technical books about various aspects of their life and culture. This last book, entitled *Wisdom From A Rainforest: The Spiritual Journey of an Anthropologist*, was to be for a wider and less specialized readership than the others and it was my hope to express in it the extraordinary beauty and elegance of Teduray cultural and social ways and the tremendous impact that living among them has had upon my life and subsequent career.

When I read *Chalice* I realized immediately that Dr. Eisler's characterization of an underlying "partnership model" of social life fit the Teduray perfectly and helped illuminate the relevance of their cultural and social life in a new and profound way. They were not only egalitarian and peaceful, but in almost every aspect of their thinking and relating they were what she has delineated as "a partnership society." Thus the Teduray could be usefully compared with other such partnership groups as the Semai and the M'Buti pygmies and could be contrasted, point by point, with "dominator societies" such as the United States or the Philippines. This opened up what I had to say about the Teduray wonderfully and made my book a joy to think through and write.

Moreover, when I made contact with Dr. Eisler to discuss these issues she began at once to give me encouragement and feedback. I interacted with her frequently, at her invitation, throughout the next two years as I was writing *Wisdom*. She read and commented on drafts and shared her insights, many of which I found incisive and illuminating.


In short, my experience of Riane Eisler is of a brilliant and seminal thinker, who understands and helps create spiritual discourse, who has developed important original contributions to the scholarly literature, and who nurtures and encourages all who interact with her with the utmost generosity. She is a paragon of the very partnership ethos which she has so vividly described. And this is not my experience alone; it has been shared by countless other scholars and writers, on many continents, who have found in Dr. Eisler an intellectual stimulus, a kind mentor, a generous colleague, and a supportive friend.

I cannot think of anyone more deserving of a Templeton Prize.

Sincerely,

Stuart A. Schlegel

SPIRITUAL
EMOTIONAL
PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENTAL



THE
CHOPRA
CENTER
FOR
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May 2, 2001

Dr. Susan Harper
Executive Director
The Templeton Prize
Five Radnor Corporate Center
100 Matsonford Road, Suite 130
Radnor, PA 19087

I am privileged to write to you in support of Riane Eisler's nomination for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. Eisler's book *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* is a significant work that revolutionized our thought on the past, present, and spirituality. As one of the most profound writers of our time, Riane Eisler's work influences our culture, society, and education. She transcends traditional thinking and forges new paths by bridging archeology and anthropology with spirituality. Occasionally we have opportunity to recognize the world's exceptional thinkers; nominating Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize gives us chance to do so. I wholeheartedly support her nomination.

Sincerely,



Deepak Chopra, M.D.

Susan Griffin 904 Keeler Ave Berkeley Ca 94708 510 5289296

March 22, 2001

Dear Dr. Harper:

One cannot overestimate the value of Riane Eisler's work and its significance to a renewed interest in spirituality among so many people, both men and women. She has brought together research and insights from many different sources and fields to create not only a lucid synthesis but also an original, vivid and viably relevant theory of the social history of gender; a theory which has deep implications for every religious practice. She is also a fine writer. In addition, she has a great ability to make the consequences of her ideas felt and the theories themselves palpable and accesible and this too has made her influence significant.

Dr. Eisler is a pioneer. Through her innovative method, she has allowed students of religion to see what has not been evident before, creating a great potential for spiritual growth. After the publication of her landmark *The Chalice and the Blade*, she has continued to generate fascinating and challenging writing. She has also followed up her work by initiating and supporting practical applications of her ideas.

Important in itself, her work also inspires other work, not only intellectually, but in the constructive reformation of society.

I give her my highest recommendation.


Susan Griffin

TIKKUN

A BIMONTHLY JEWISH CRITIQUE OF POLITICS, CULTURE & SOCIETY

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April 4, 2001

Dr. Susan Harper

Executive Director

The Templeton Prize

5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 130

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Dear Dr. Harper:

In traditional Jewish practice there are many occasions during the course of daily life at which one is expected or commanded to make or speak a blessing usually before engaging in a particular activity. In so doing, we help remind ourselves of the sacredness of life and that even some of the most mundane things we do as a matter of course can be made more conscious and elevated in the doing by the quality of our awareness. By the same token, a request for assistance that requires work and concentration can be typically experienced as either a burden or as a gift, a blessing. For me, at this time of major activity with the coming of Passover, receiving a request to write a letter of support for Riane Eisler's nomination for the Templeton Prize is such a blessing and I am honored to have this opportunity.

My theology as a Jew and rabbi was strongly influenced by my teacher Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, of blessed memory. It is no coincidence that my career not only involves congregational work, but has, for many years, entailed social activism not unlike my teacher and mentor. This includes my serving as editor of TIKKUN magazine since its inception fifteen years ago. Religious teachings become most powerful and meaningful when they manifest themselves in the world and how we relate to each other in the physical dimension. It is in this spirit that I feel Riane Eisler's contribution to progress in spirituality can best be appreciated.

While Dr. Eisler is a cultural anthropologist and futurist who has mined the works of archeologists, anthropologists and systems theory, she is also a profound and original thinker. She is able to draw important connections from the fields of her scientific research with the historical development of social and religious institutions. Her penetrating analyses have proved to be a catalyst of some major rethinking of a number of spiritual communities across the globe. The fact that her first major work along these lines, *The Chalice and the Blade*, has been translated into over a dozen languages attests to this fact.

My understanding of our purpose in this life, to heal the world (tikkun olam), has a strong parallel in the "partnership" model of societal relations that Dr. Eisler has been instrumental in reclaiming in her findings from societies that existed in several parts of the world. Her work and thought is of such fundamental importance that two of her articles have appeared in TIKKUN magazine. The impact and the implications of her work on a major reevaluation of principles and raising the level of discourse in many spiritual communities cannot be underestimated. I was pleased to be able to bestow upon her the annual TIKKUN Award for her contribution to the spiritual wisdom of our planet at our most recent conference, in May of 2000 at the Riverside Church in New York.

It is for these critically important reasons that I am pleased and proud to support the nomination of Riane Eisler for the Templeton Prize. The caliber of her contributions absolutely merits such an honor.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Michael Lerner