



Complexity and Chaos – its role in forming the Sacred

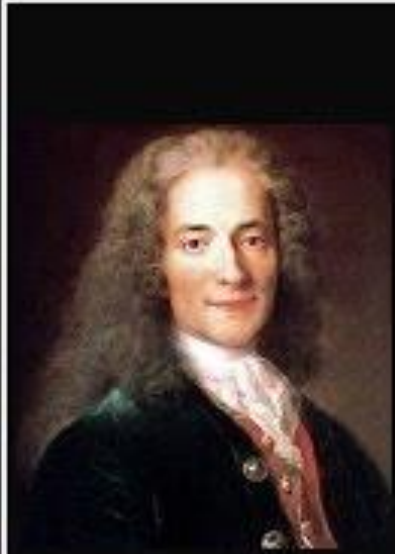
Sacred Geography

Dr Bernadette Brady



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

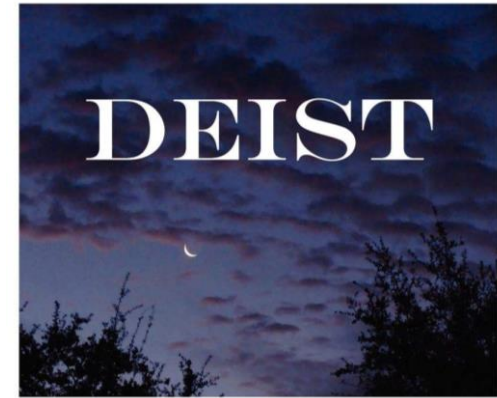
There are two theories concerning the creation of order



I cannot imagine how the clockwork of the
universe can exist without a clockmaker.

(Voltaire)

izquotes.com



The Cosmos theory
which is the theory of
origin from order.

Order creates more
order.

A linear causal creation myth - Genesis



The Creation

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And the evening and the morning were the first day.

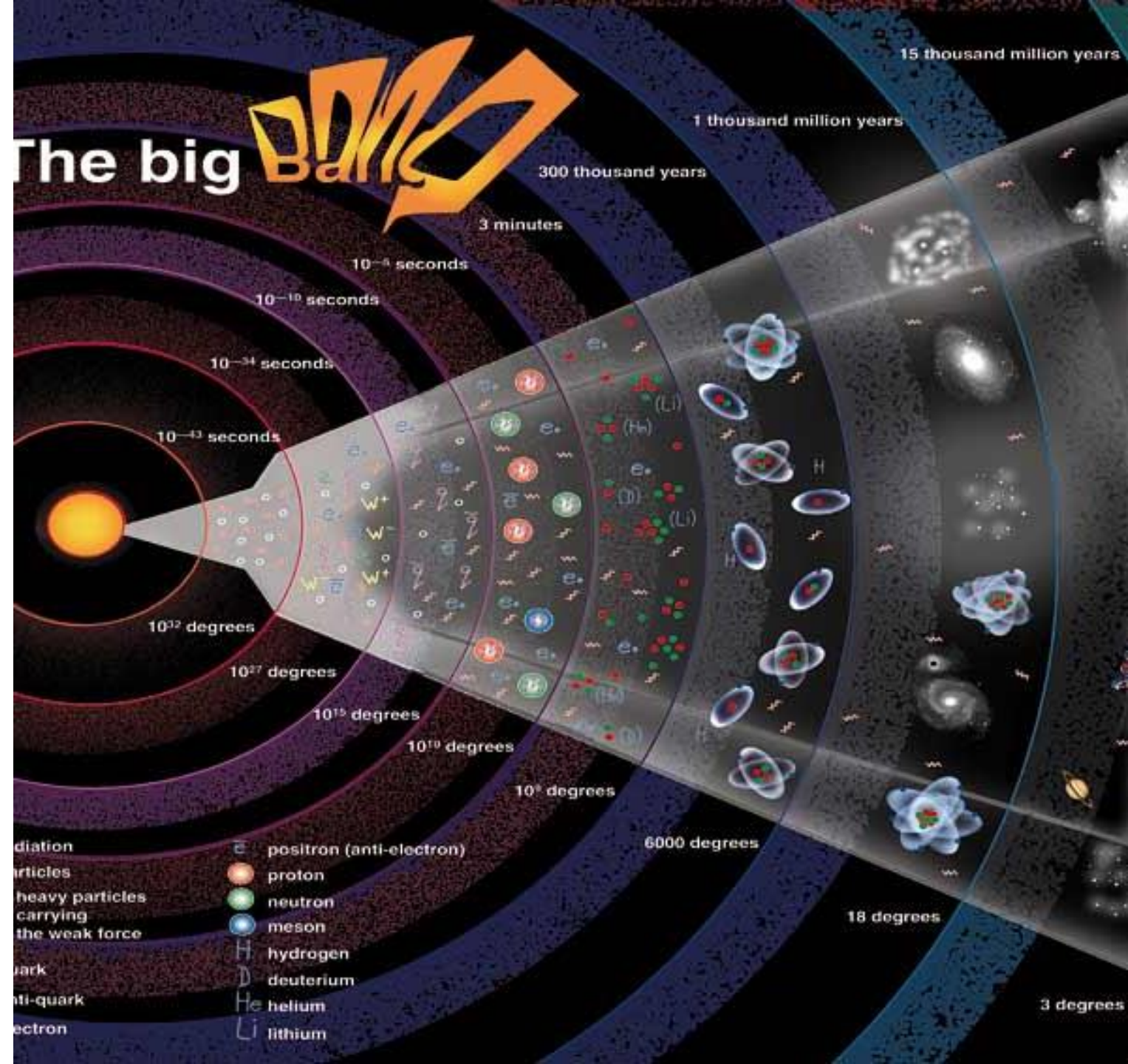
And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven.

And the evening and the morning were the second day.

The modern *Genesis* - Causal Creation of Order – Order from Order



Causal or Cosmic Creation myths



Evolution – linear development

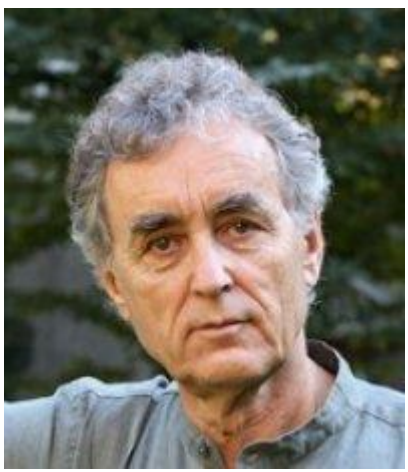
Superiority - one state is more evolved and therefore better than an earlier state

Knowledge is developed by reductionism

Separate Objects

This leads to a right and a wrong and the idea of “The Truth”.

Science and Technology



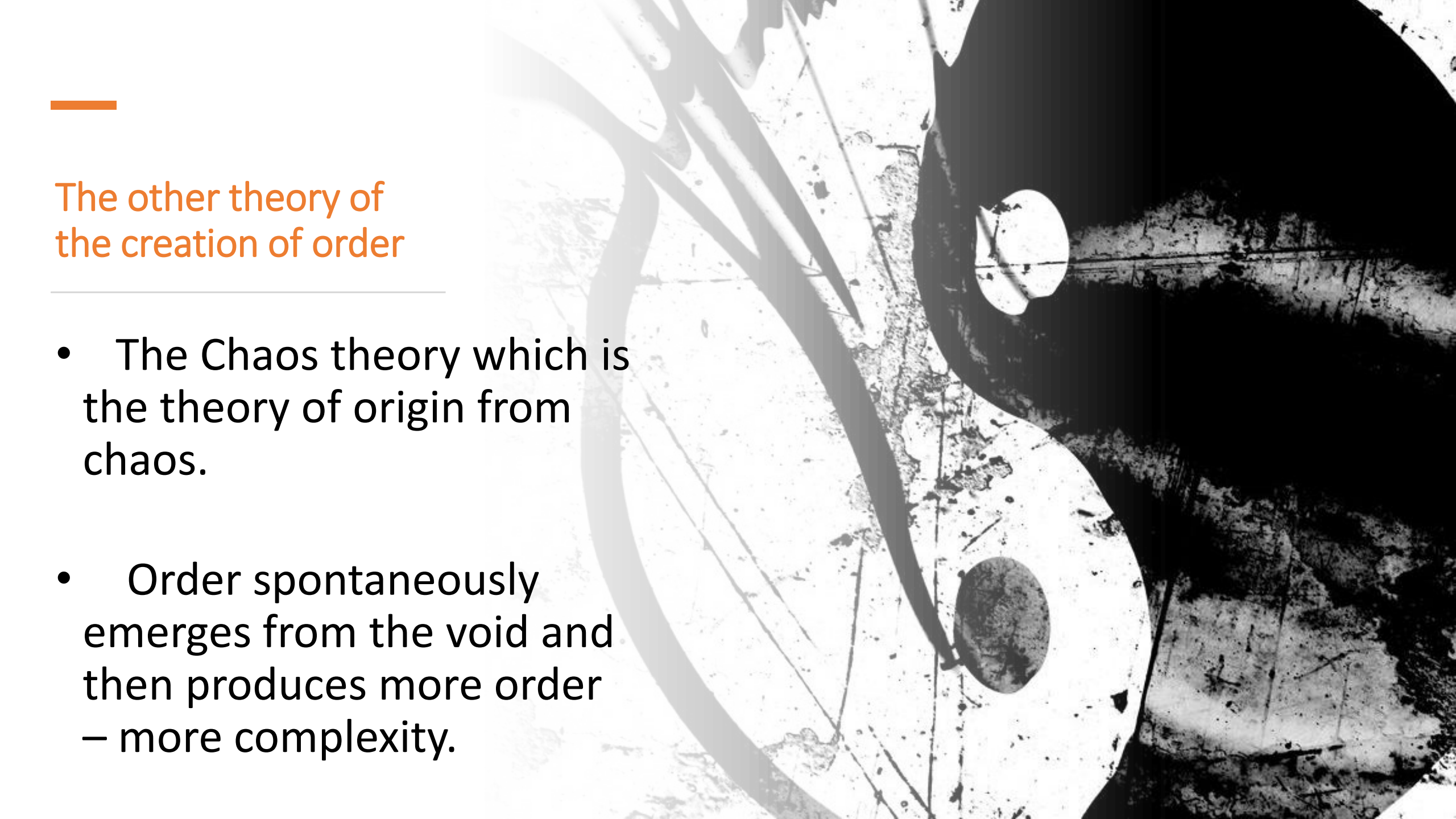
... Newton's differential equations became the mathematical foundation of the mechanistic paradigm. The Newtonian world machine was seen as being completely causal and deterministic. (Capra, 1997: 119)

Capra, Fritjof. (1997) *The Web of Life*. London: Harper Collins.



All action is the result of a previous measurable event.

Causal creation myths lead to a mechanical world view.



The other theory of the creation of order

- The Chaos theory which is the theory of origin from chaos.
- Order spontaneously emerges from the void and then produces more order – more complexity.

A Chaotic Creation Myth

In the beginning the earth was a bare plain. All was dark. There was no life, no death. The sun, the moon, and the stars slept beneath the earth. All the eternal ancestors slept there, too, until at last they woke themselves out of their own eternity and broke through to the surface.

When the eternal ancestors arose, in the Dreamtime, they wandered the earth, sometimes in animal form -- as kangaroos, or emus, or lizards -- sometimes in human shape, sometimes part animal and human, sometimes as part human and plant.

Two such beings, self-created out of nothing, were the Ungambikula. Wandering the world, they found half-made human beings. They were made of animals and plants, but were shapeless bundles, lying higgledy-piggledy, near where water holes and salt lakes could be created. The people were all doubled over into balls, vague and unfinished, without limbs or features.



How Order is formed by feedback

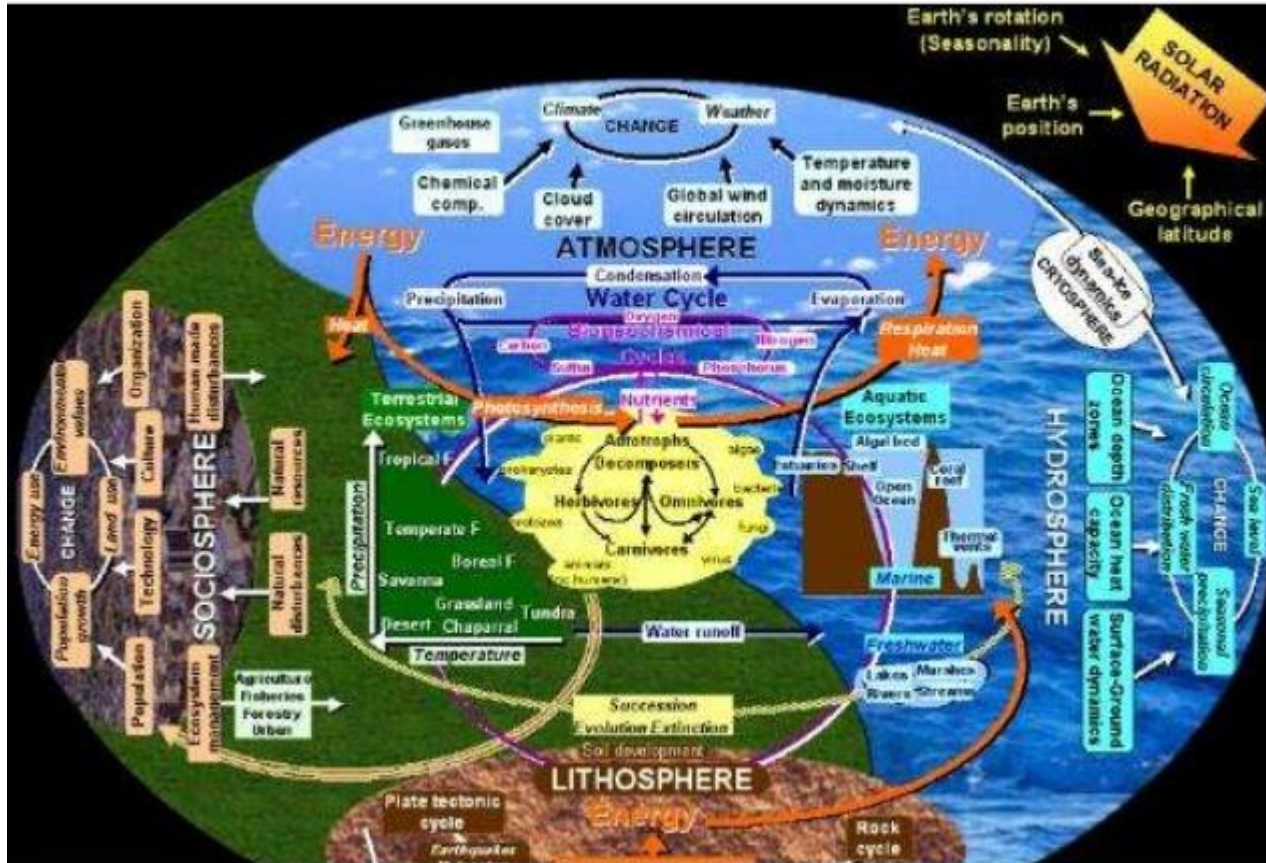


- 1) Chaotic and complex relationships can lead to simple patterns.
- 2) Exact predictions is impossible – [although there is development within self-similar lines].
- 3) There are large consequence of self-re-enforcing feedback process. (Capra, 1997: 123)

Capra, Fritjof. (1997) *The Web of Life*. London: Harper Collins.

Chaotic theory of creation of order

Overview of Environmental systems



Order is Non- Hierarchical

Order is Complex rather than separate

All Living systems

All systems in feedback

Cyclic rather than evolutionary

Repetition of human activity.
Repetition of animal activity.
Repetition of climate.
Repetition of thought!

The Chant... in time, sound or place.

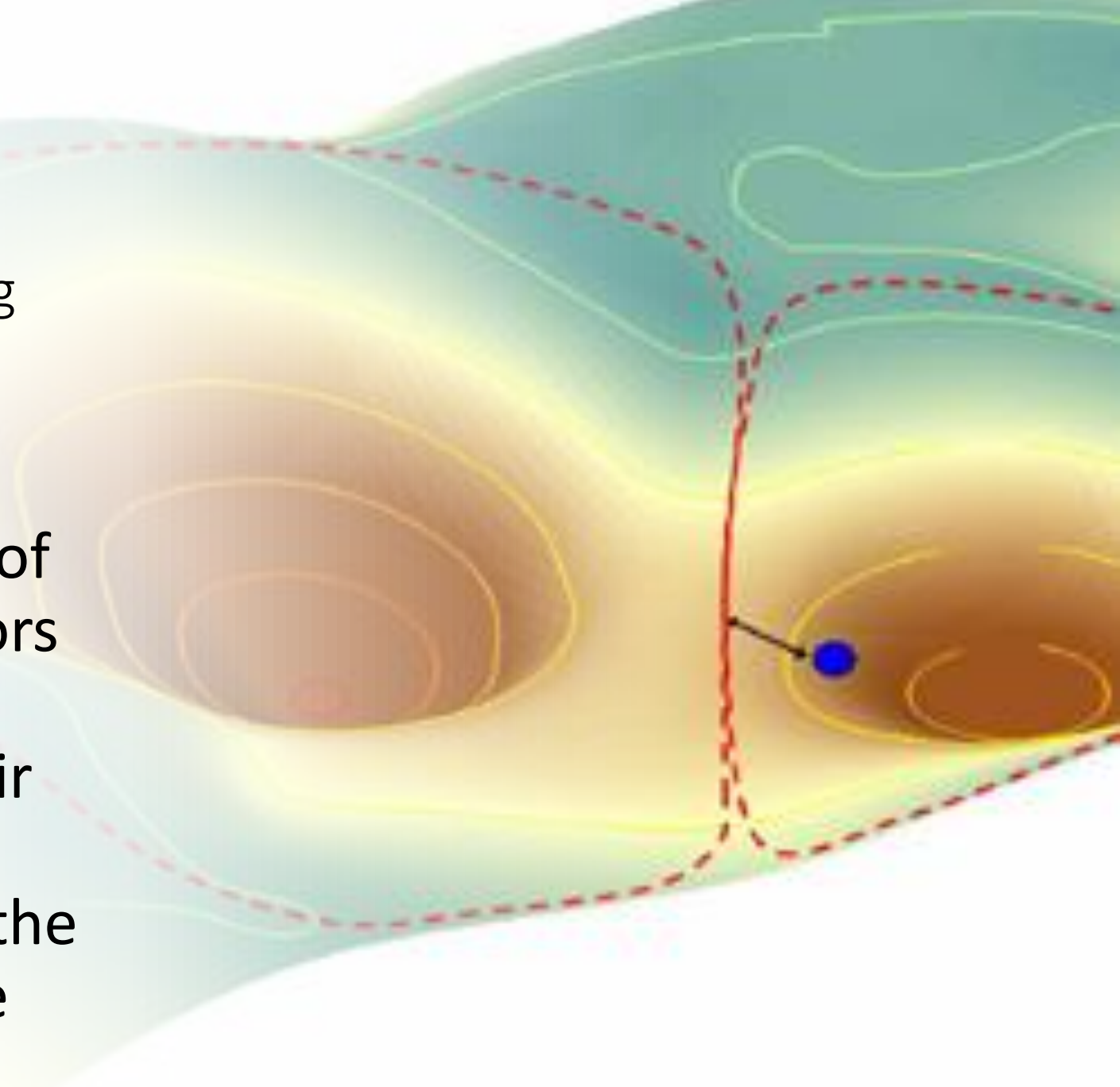
Repetition
creates
‘basins, which
are also types
of ‘strange
attractors’





Durkheim's and Eliade's views on sacredness can be approached using chaos and complexity.

‘The qualitative analysis of a dynamic system, then, consists of identifying the system's attractors and basins of attraction, and classifying them in terms of their topological characteristics, the result is a dynamical picture of the entire system, called the “phase portrait”’ (Capra, 1997: 134)

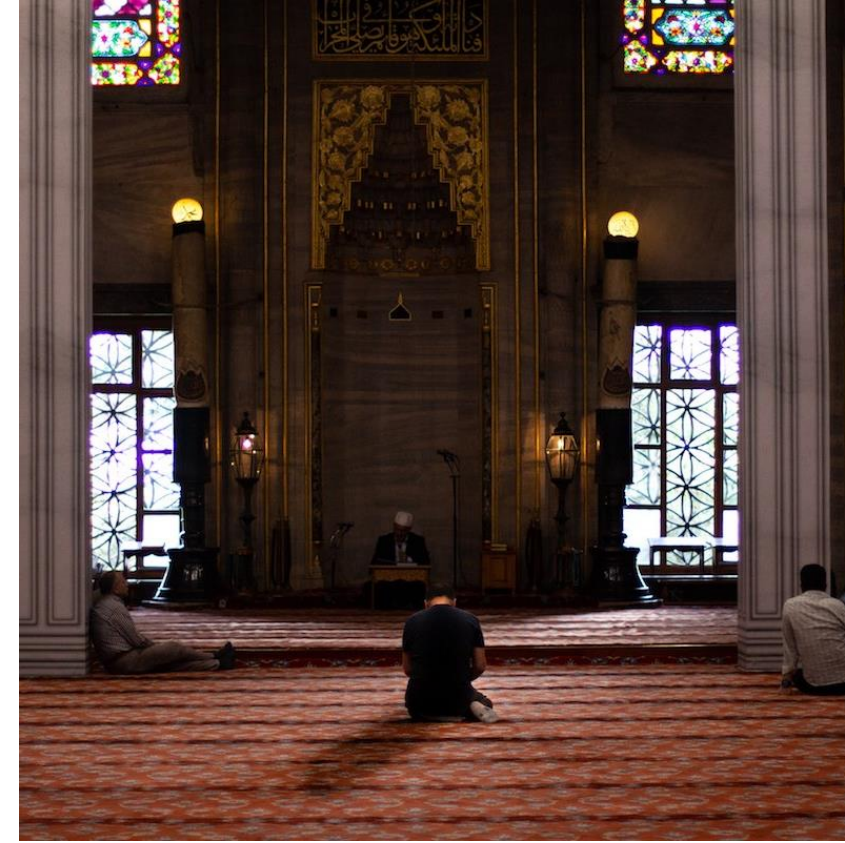
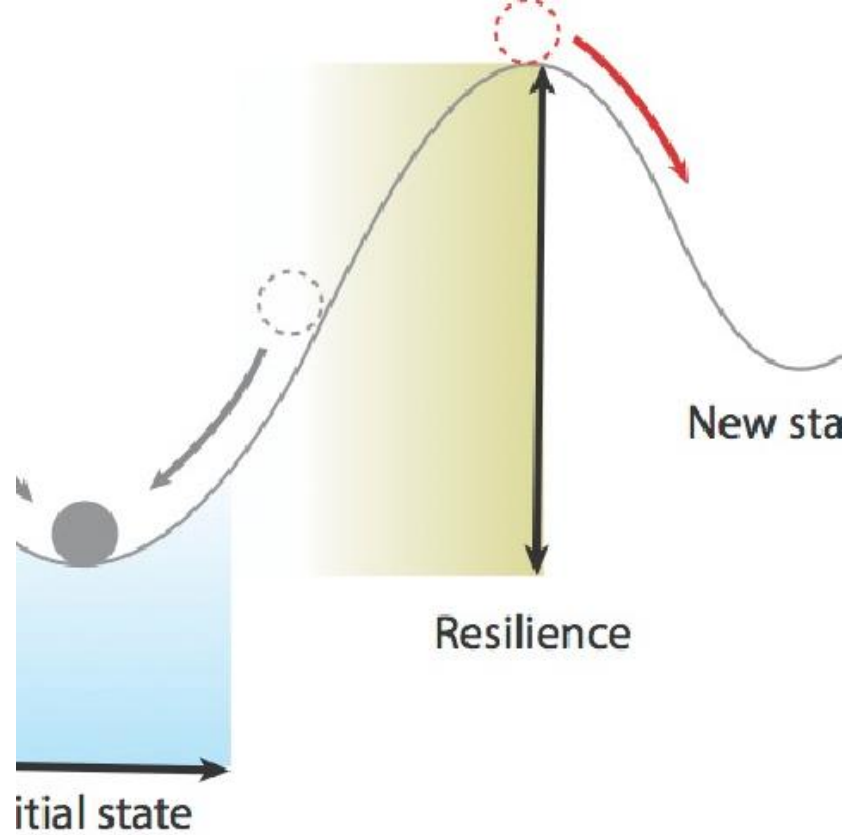


Sean Kane suggest that **mythology tells us that order become conscious or comes into form via dance, or via the repeating of a ritual, of a rhythm.** He suggest that within a myth (a unfolding pattern) there will emerge a trickster or mentor who leads the hero though the pattern or the narrative.



Kane, S. A. (1998). *Wisdom of the mythtellers*. Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.





A phase portrait of
sacredness

Through repetition basins are created.

Basins are resistant to change as there is a type of 'gravity' which pulls objects back to the basin's sphere of influence.



The Habits of a Place

Bringing Chaos and Complexity thinking into your field work.

Look for what is repeated.

What is expected to happen based on the HABITS of the place?

As you, or others or things, enter the basin what happens?

References

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