



A Neuron with Imagination, by Francisco Ramos Stierle

The old paradigm of life tells us that we are a collection of separate objects. We focus our attention, but in doing so, we often dissect a part of the whole without taking into account the visible, and often invisible, connections. As a result, we miss seeing relationships and only see the effects, the "what". In this old paradigm, knowledge comes from analyzing a static Nature -- a "stuff-based" view of reality. Because reality isn't experienced dynamically, we relate to things with a sense of conquest. In this paradigm, power is something you acquire as a top-down force that is exerted over other life.

To be vulnerable, then, is seen as a sign of weakness. That's why being "invulnerable" is about finding security by shattering your enemies; I create defenses and walls and borders to isolate me from the "danger" of being violated. A dramatic image for this view of life is the single neuron that tries to build higher and stronger walls to stop communication with its "dangerous" surroundings. In this ill-conceived notion of reality, it is a matter of time before the neuron atrophies in isolation and dies prematurely.

In the new paradigm, though, the entire Universe is in communion. It is a science of relationships in all dimensions, and life is experienced as a flow. Organisms are alive with visible boundaries, but determined by what flows through those porous boundaries: matter, energy, information, love. This paradigm is process oriented, and we are constantly asking "how," not "what." And so, knowledge is dynamic and always changing, like the flame that keeps its shape by constantly burning. When we experience this dynamic knowledge, it turns into wisdom and then reality cannot be confined only to the material world.

Here, power is shared in an inclusive and horizontal way, from the bottom-up, such that its value resides in the way an organism serves the community. Instead of looking for perfection, life looks for wholeness. Being vulnerable with courage is my best security because I see my security as the security of all. There are no enemies. A neuron, in this new paradigm, is interconnected and functional. While it has clear boundaries, it has imagination, and understands how matter, energy, information and love flow through molecules, society, mind, family and communities. Because of the plasticity of other connections in the brain, when a healthy neuron dies, being loved by the community, its legacy carries on.

--By Francisco Ramos Stierle

