

## Nature beings and the etheric body<sup>1</sup>

---

DR. JACQUES MABIT<sup>2</sup>

In this article we propose to address the little-discussed and confusing subject of nature beings. In the mapping of the invisible world, their place is often poorly defined and wrongly associated with disembodied spirits. For contemporary modernity, they simply do not exist. Knowledge of these beings and their mode of operation is, however, fundamental to explain numerous so-called paranormal phenomena (sleepwalking, the presence of ghosts, etc.) and pathological behaviors in human beings that do not find a conventional medical explanation. These disorders are essentially associated with their etheric body, which we will try to describe succinctly. As an illustrative example of the universality of their presence and their mode of behavior, we will consider in a little more detail the case of mermaids and elves with “uneven feet.”

### Nature beings

Nature beings represent a category of beings of sentient creation, linked to the elements of nature (water-earth-air-fire) and therefore often referred to with the term "elementals", but also more often incorrectly called "nature spirits". These creatures have no physical body, only an etheric body (electromagnetic envelope) and an energetic body, which explains the unfortunate formulation of "nature spirits" and maintains the confusion by associating them with the world of "spirits". So, they are not really "spirits" strictly speaking.

All traditions of the world have recognized the existence of these nature beings and, based on their association with one of the elements of creation, have given them different names while identifying similar characteristics.

- Water: undines, mermaids, nymphs, dryads, etc.
- Earth-Forests: gnomes, goblins, trolls, sylphs, elves, etc.
- Air: djinns, fairies, etc.
- Fire: salamanders, vulcans, etc.

The list of their various names is endless: follets, leprechauns, servans, sottais, kobolds, nutons, matagots, gripets, korrigans, nisses, brownies, goblins, hobgolins, puck, etc., with many regional variations.

In various traditions, there are generic names for these different beings of nature (they are sometimes confused with demons, deities, spirits...). Some examples are the Laminak of the Basque Country, the Devas of India and the Pixies of England.

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the opening conference of the 1st International Congress of Traditional Medicines. One Health – Traditional Medicine (OHTM), “Some conceptual obstacles in the dialogue between traditional medicines and Western medicine”, in Traditional knowledge and practices facing current challenges in health, research and development and sustainability of health sciences, 18-19-20 October 2023, Cheikh Anta-Diop University, Dakar, Senegal.

<sup>2</sup> Medical Doctor, Founder of the Takiwasi Center, Peru: [www.takiwasi.com](http://www.takiwasi.com)

Western tradition also initially recognized their existence, but with the appearance of rationalism it tends to transfer and confine them to the realm of the imaginary, folklore, mythology, "popular beliefs", superstition, tales and legends.

According to tradition and place, these beings of nature are known as the Little People, the Good Neighbors, the Petty Nobility, the People of Peace, and the Hill Dwellers. In a rather detailed book, *L'Univers Féérique (The Universe of Fairies)*, Edouard Brasey (2008), despite certain inaccuracies, sums up what can be said about these beings of nature:

*"They know nothing of good and evil; they act only on the impulse of the moment, according to their whim and fantasy. They are neither good nor evil, or both at the same time, but without any awareness of the beneficial or disastrous consequences of their acts. They are fundamentally amoral... Some initiatory traditions teach that elementals constitute the "third kingdom", alongside angels and the human kingdom. Among the Latins, Celts and Germans, the cult of the divinities of nature and the elements went hand in hand with what the Romans called the genius loci, the 'genius of the place'. While angels, messengers from heaven, were purely spiritual entities whose role was to provide a link between human beings and Divinity, beings of nature were "energetic" entities, animating the human world. "These guardian spirits protected matter with their energy and protected it from any disturbance that might affect its integrity. They are, in a certain way, the guardian spirits of nature and matter, in the same way that there are guardian angels for human beings. They watch over the growth and good health of animals and plants and constitute the spiritual part of the earth, stones, rivers and wind. They feed exclusively on the subtle essence of natural elements. These guardian spirits are not totally invisible; they have a body, although it is not a physical and material body like ours, but a body made of pure energy, luminous, translucent and mobile, which blends into the natural environment, adopting its shape and color, like a chameleon. That is why it is so difficult to see them: they blend in with the leaves, the bark of trees, the waves of the sea or the clouds that slide across the sky." (Brasey E., 2008).*

Its specific reduction solely to the etheric body (the energetic body is common to all beings of creation) deserves a brief description of the characteristics of this body, since it is the only structure they have in common with humans and, therefore, the one through which they will end up communicating or interfering with them.

### **The etheric body**

The etheric body is perishable at death and is sexual (different for males and females), which is not the case with the energetic body. The etheric body (sometimes also called the astral body) is sensitive to the influences of the stars, in particular the moon (but not the sun), and to climatic influences.

In humans, the etheric body manifests itself somatically through the autonomic nervous system. Disturbances in the etheric body are therefore expressed as an imbalance in the orthosympathetic/parasympathetic system that manages the automatic and unconscious functions of maintaining life (body temperature, heartbeat, digestion, breathing, etc.). This symptomatology is medically classified as vagal syndrome: sudden changes in temperature, diarrhea and vomiting,

tremors, changes in heart rate, paleness, dizziness, headaches and a feeling of general malaise. These symptoms disappear once the etheric body has been cleansed and regulated, in particular by using substances capable of absorbing electromagnetic waves on the one hand and, on the other, by closing the etheric body by means of immersion baths in salt water.

The etheric body can be evidenced, visualized and quantitatively measured using Korotkov's GDV (Gas Discharge Visualisation) bioelectrography system (not to be confused with the aura linked to the spiritual body) (Korotkov KG, 2010; Grozdeva D., Dikova T., 2018).

The etheric body is sensitive to electromagnetic waves and is the one that comes into play in the practices of magnetisers and radiesthetists. It is also at this level that sleepwalking and paranormal phenomena (poltergeists, for example) manifest themselves. They must be distinguished from mediumship, which operates only at the level of the energetic and spiritual bodies.

The etheric body is not limited by physical obstacles, especially in its movements.

After death, the soul and the immortal bodies (energetic and spiritual) immediately separate from the physical body and leave this world, while the mortal bodies (etheric, emotional and psychic) may persist for some time, alone or together, especially after sudden or violent deaths, when the person does not have time to be aware of his or her physical death or because of excessive attachment to this material world (loved ones, territory, material goods...) that prevents full and complete transition to the world-other. This persistent presence manifests itself in the form of a ghost. These ghosts wander around places with which they have been familiar or in the vicinity of loved ones. In the Amazonian tradition, rituals are performed at the time of death and in the period immediately afterward to ward off the disturbing presence of the deceased. The natives refer to them as "grieving souls," an inadequate term since they are not souls but secondary mortal bodies. Some religious traditions use the term "wandering souls," which is also inappropriate in the strict sense, for the same reasons.

The etheric body is labile at birth and will stabilize over time, normally reaching full stability at the age of 12. This relative instability makes the child fragile in the face of certain powerful, sudden or violent stimuli, which causes a relative detachment of the etheric body from the physical body. This is the case of "*susto*" (fright), which requires treatment of the etheric body (i.e. the neurovegetative or autonomic nervous system)<sup>3</sup>. This may be the case of children (or fragile people) who, on the bank of a river, see their etheric body swept away by the etheric force of the river's flood. In this case, the reintegration of the etheric body into the physical body will be the subject of specific care, carried out by specialists, among whom there are still today the "soul callers", another incorrect term since it does not refer to the soul (an immortal spiritual entity) but to the etheric body. This confusion is understandable given that the etheric body is invisible (non-material), possesses certain attributes of the deceased when they are ghosts (coming from the psychic and emotional bodies), and seems to animate life since an extreme unresolved disturbance of the etheric body can lead to death.

One of the most commonly used maneuvers in various traditions consists of restoring the integrity of the etheric body by passing inert substances, plant or animal, over the patient, capable of absorbing these electromagnetic disturbances. The inert substances used range from alum stone to newspaper

---

<sup>3</sup> See Giove R., Mabit J. (October 2022).

and candles; in the Amazon, the plant substances can be the wood of the chonta palm (*Bactris gasipaes*) or the leaves of the red pinion (*Jatropha gossypifolia* L.); in the Amazon and the Andes, the animal substances can be the guinea pig (*Cavia porcellus*) (Reyna Pinedo V., 2002)<sup>4</sup> and on the Peruvian coast, ancestrally, the "Peruvian naked dog" (Maniero E., 2015)<sup>5</sup> or even certain varieties of chicken.

Returning to the beings of nature, sometimes referred to as "Small People", they are then sexual beings who are born, reproduce and die. They are mortal, although they can live for centuries. They are fiercely attached to their territory and defend it against unauthorized intruders. They feed on the etheric energy of the natural element to which they are linked (earth, water, air or fire). Their role is to protect and preserve the elements and territories that correspond to them. Lacking an emotional, psychic and spiritual body, they have no moral conscience and are therefore neither good nor bad. They can behave "benevolently" towards those who respect them and their territory, or become aggressive or even dangerous towards intruders<sup>6</sup>. They live in the wild, often in places far from the nuisances caused by humans and their modern, urban lifestyle. They are generally invisible, but sometimes they let themselves be seen by sensitive or sufficiently harmless and pure humans, in humanoid forms, or confused like chameleons with the element of nature that corresponds to them. Since they do not have a physical body, these humanoid modes of perception must be understood, not as an absolute reality, but as a visualization of their own characteristics perceived symbolically by the human brain. They are generally small, even very small, and for this reason they are sometimes called dwarves (see the 7 dwarves of Snow White).

In the West, it was Paracelsus, the 16th-century Swiss-German physician, who attempted to organize knowledge around these "elemental beings," as he called them, most notably in his "Book of Nymphs, Sylphs, Pygmies, Salamanders, and All Other Spirits" (Paracelsus, 1566 [1998]). It was he who coined the word "gnome" (gnomi). Didier Khan (Khan D., 2021) takes up this question of the elemental beings of nature in several of Paracelsus' writings, showing his attempts and sometimes corrections in exploring this mysterious field. However, some basic definitions remain, which can be grouped as follows:

*"They are neither demons (although they themselves may be possessed by demons), nor spirits, nor human beings. They have a subtle flesh that cannot be bound or grasped, because it is not made of earth. This subtle flesh can pass through a wall, because it resembles a spirit, although in reality they are flesh, blood, and bone. They give birth to children and offspring, they speak and eat, drink, and walk, things that spirits do not do. They have no soul and are therefore excluded from salvation by Christ, they are mortal, and they are sensitive to weather phenomena."*

---

<sup>4</sup> An old breeder from the Isère region told us that a breeding technique of his time consisted of placing a guinea pig among the rabbits, since it was the guinea pig that got sick and acted as a shield between the disease and the rabbits.

<sup>5</sup> The Moche culture (1st-7th centuries) on the Peruvian coast left numerous ceramic representations (*huacos*) of this dog and its therapeutic use. See op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Like a dog defending its territory from the intrusion of a stranger, its aggression in this area is not linked to any form of moral conscience.

In this "subtle flesh" we recognize an equivalent of the etheric body, with a very clear differentiation between human beings and spirits, despite the confusing similarities.

Healers and sorcerers can master the relationship with some of these beings, just as it is possible to domesticate an animal and use it for one's own beneficial or evil purposes.

Just as animal species have their own characteristics, different families of beings in nature have specific traits. It is remarkable to observe that these traits are found in almost identical form in cultures extremely far apart in space and time.

Let us take two illustrative examples: mermaids and elves with "uneven feet."

## **Mermaids**

Mermaids appear both in Homer's *Odyssey* from 3,000 years ago and in Andersen's fairy tales (1837). Magnificent examples can be seen in Romanesque art in Poitou (France) between the 11th and 12th centuries: on the portal of Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers, for example, on the western portal of Saint Pierre d'Aiffres, and on the portal of Saint Pierre in Chauvigny (Daoudal S., 2007). In Greek myth, they are rather bird-like sirens, with the theme of the fish-mermaid being developed especially from the 7th to 8th centuries.

But the "myth" of the mermaid is still very much alive today. We have seen it in Gabon, Australia and the Amazon. The Amazonian healer Ignacio Pérez Ortiz, from Rumizapa, with whom we worked for many years, invoked his friend the mermaid he called Dina Albertina in his treatments. Another of master healer, Aquilino Chujandama, who lived in Yukanayaku, on the Huallaga River, a tributary of the Amazon, had a mermaid that lived, he said, in a hole in a stream at the foot of his house. He cried bitterly when his mermaid disappeared after fishermen with dynamite passed by.

At a conference held in Bangui on "Witchcraft and Justice in the Central African Republic" the extreme topicality and prevalence of witchcraft was reported. Newspapers publish weekly articles on "exceptional" stories of mermaids, such as this article from *L'Agora*, 2007, No. 032, entitled: "An overly jealous mermaid arrives at her lover's house" (Collectif Bangui, 2008).

As Solène Daoudal notes, "*The motif of the mermaid seems deeply protean and charged with great ambiguity: demonized, the mermaid ends up being eroticized; she arouses astonishment between attraction and repulsion*" (Daoudal S., 2007).

In all traditions, the mermaid is associated with the theme of seduction through her song. Popular tradition has used it in the expression "to yield to the song of the siren", evoking a seductive but deceptive call.

In the Abbey of La Sauve Majeure in France, on one of the capitals, two naked men, chained by plant vines, hold their feet with their hands to resist the temptation of the fish-sirens on the opposite capital.

In the *Odyssey*, Circe advised Ulysses not to listen to the song of the sirens, which would attract his ship towards the rocks. The seduction was such that Ulysses had to plug his ears with wax balls and

tie himself to the ship's mast in order to resist. It should be noted that Ulysses was about to enter unknown territory and that the sirens, guardians of this space, opposed this intrusion.

The Shipibo ethnic group of the Ucayali River and its tributaries, in the Peruvian Amazon, recognizes the existence of an "aquatic world" (Jene nete) in which water people live, similar to the human world.

*"Shipibo myths speak of the existence of the "water world", Jene nete, where there are beings among whom are the water people. They have roads, houses, means of transport, food, drink, etc. In other words, life under water, in a way, is parallel to life outside. (...) As grandfather Rodriguez comments, each being has its own space, but none of them can live independently of other beings or resources. He also mentions the Shipibo names for certain spaces, such as water, land, forest and sky. (...) In the past, this is how they lived, that is, they learned from all the plants that are here and from there they learned everything they needed to be able to do evil, to heal, to be able to do their things, to magically tie a woman; to be able to have their protections. These men manipulated them like their children. (...) This is the world, Nete. This is how they know it, that is how they learn."*

Mermaids, along with freshwater dolphins (*bufeos*), are the main inhabitants of this aquatic world:

*"That is where the mermaid is that these men manipulate for this and that. (...) - Mermaids are beings that can also transform into people. They usually take humans under water. They communicate with the Shipibos through dreams."* (UNICEF-CILA, 2012).

Mermaids teach healers their seduction songs, which they use especially during ayahuasca sessions. These high-pitched songs induce ecstatic states of fascination. They allow sorcerers to put their victims under their spell, provoke blind adhesion and induce an irresistible love attraction. These techniques are part of the practice of control and manipulation of people, highly developed in traditional Shipibo medicine (Tournon J., Silva M., 1988).

We ourselves experienced these states of ecstatic fascination during ayahuasca sessions with the famous Shipibo sorcerer Guillermo Arévalo (Ketsembetsa). The siren songs intoned in the Shipibo language in a head voice induce an abolition of the critical sense and an imperious attraction.

### Elves with "uneven feet"

Elves are nature beings linked to the forests, a particular species of which is characterized by asymmetry of the lower limbs, one foot larger than the other, or backwards feet. This family of elves is found in France and Switzerland with the dahu and its numerous regional variants, or with the "kavere" or "kapere" of New Caledonia<sup>7</sup>, "strange goblins with backwards legs". Their Amazonian equivalent is the chullachaqui (from the Quechua chulla or ch'ulla, [odd, uneven, unique, asymmetrical] and chaki [foot]).

---

<sup>7</sup> See the excellent documentary "The tribe of the invisibles in New Caledonia", which contains numerous contemporary testimonies on the relationship between the natives and the elves. [https://documentation.ac-noumea.nc/IMG/pdf/la\\_tribu\\_de\\_linvisible.pdf](https://documentation.ac-noumea.nc/IMG/pdf/la_tribu_de_linvisible.pdf)



Their mocking, mischievous, joking and roguish side characterizes these elves; they love to play, deceive, make objects disappear... They are the origin of the verb "lutiner" in French<sup>8</sup>, which means "to mock" and "to torment" in the vocabulary of gallantry (Dubois P., 1992). In New Caledonia, they "love to laugh at the expense of men by losing them in the mangroves or in the mining thickets... they have their legs backwards and following their steps inevitably leads to getting lost." In the Amazon, the chukllachaki, also known as "shapishico", takes on the appearance of a known person to trick their victims and get them lost in the jungle. They hide the machetes of the indigenous people who work in the jungle and play jokes on them, not always in good taste. They are recognized as guardians of the jungle, respected and feared at the same time (Galeano JC., 2009).

The anthropologist Rosendo Gualima points out that the Asheninkas of Peru "have always believed in a Father, Creator, Almighty God, the Pawa Tajorentsi, as it has been translated; also in the spirits of the forest, of the different plants and trees, as well as in the 'mother' of water, which is the spirit of water, represented in different ways. Similarly, the 'owner' of the forest and the animals, known by some as the chullachaqui, is in charge of taking care of the animals and punishing those who exceed the hunting limits, for example." (Gualima R., 2021).

In the field of mischief, the dahu (or dahut) of France has two lateral legs shorter than the other two, in order to be able to stand on the mountain slopes, and is associated with the initiatory mischief of the "dahut hunt" (Jacquat M., 2000).

Nature beings are dedicated to preserving the territory entrusted to them and ensuring that the natural elements remain in balance and flourish. An undue human intrusion into this territory prompts them to defend it fiercely and to act against the intruder, sometimes aggressively and violently, without bringing into play a moral sense that they lack. Traditional healers called upon to intervene or enter an unknown space will generally begin by performing a ritual to ask permission from the nature beings who are guardians of the place and, as a precaution, will protect their etheric body. In these situations, in the Amazon, each individual systematically makes an offering of tobacco (juice or smoke) to the guardians of the place and blows tobacco smoke over their body (*soplada*) to protect themselves.

## **Conclusion**

The recognition of the ontological existence of these created beings, endowed with specific characteristics according to their species, and their differentiation from "spirits" and ghosts, is a prerequisite for an adequate mapping and understanding of the invisible world and the possible pathological manifestations they can arouse in humans. The multiplicity of these beings and the ways in which they are perceived by humans, their lack of a material body, their extraordinary potential (invisibility, rapid movement unimpeded by matter, etc.), their role, sometimes perceived as beneficial, sometimes harmful, facilitate popular imaginary and projective discourses, as well as symbolic interpretations among academics. This makes them very difficult to grasp for rational minds and explains the confusion surrounding them, both among indigenous peoples and traditional

---

<sup>8</sup> In French, "elve" is translated as "lutin"

practitioners themselves and among scientists, jurists and religious scholars who deal with these issues. Between the denial of rationalist-materialist thought and the imaginary explosion of "believers", there should remain a reasonable space for a serene and measured study of this mysterious universe, which has been extremely neglected by the academic world, with exceptions such as that of Claude Lecouteux, professor at Paris-Sorbonne (Lecouteux C., 1988, 1885, 2000), who "*regrets the absence of a definition of the semantic field of elves, which gives rise to numerous misconceptions about them, and to a loss of understanding of the traditions and myths associated with them*".

## References

- Brasey E., (2008) *L'univers féérique*, Pygmalion Ed., 864p.
- Grozdeva D., Dikova T. (2018) Gas discharge visualization – historical developments, research dynamics and innovative applications, September 2018, *Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae* 4:27-33, DOI:10.14748/sssp.v4i0.5448
- Korotkov KG, Matravers P, Orlov DV, Williams BO. Application of electrophoton capture (EPC) analysis based on gas discharge visualization (GDV) technique in medicine: a systematic review. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2010 Jan;16(1):13-25. doi: 10.1089/acm.2008.0285. PMID: 19954330.
- Reyna Pinedo V. (2002) *La soba o limpia con cuy en la medicina tradicional peruana*, Laika Comunicaciones Ed., 116 p.
- Maneiro E. (2015) *El perro sin pelo del Perú, una herencia milenaria*. Edición bilingüe, Librería Cultura Peruana, pp 224.
- Paracelse (1566 [1998]), *Le Livre des nymphes, sylphes, pygmées, salamandres et de tous les autres esprits*, trad. Sylvie Paris, Nîmes, Lacour-Ollé, 1998. L'édition Huser est intégralement consultable sur la base de données THEO, établie par Urs Leo Gantenbein (directement accessible sur [www.paracelsus-project.org](http://www.paracelsus-project.org)).
- Kahn D., (2021) *La question des êtres élémentaires chez Paracelse*. Roberto Poma; Maria Sorokina; Nicolas Weill-Parot. *Les Confins incertains de la nature*, Vrin, pp.213-237, 2021, 978-2-7116-3017-2. (hal-02887009)
- Giove R., Mabit J. (Octubre 2022) *Percepción y tratamiento del susto por madres de familia de la ciudad de Tarapoto*, RPA *Revista Peruana de Antropología* Vol. 7, N° 11, pp. 32-50. [https://takiwasi.com/docs/arti\\_esp/percepcion-tratamiento-susto-tarapoto.pdf](https://takiwasi.com/docs/arti_esp/percepcion-tratamiento-susto-tarapoto.pdf)
- Daoudal S. (2007) *Sirènes romanes en Poitou (XIe-XIIe siècles)*. Avatars sculptés d'une figure mythique, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007, 180p.
- Collectif Bangui (2008) *Colloque : Sorcellerie et Justice en République Centrafricaine*, Université de Bangui, 1et et 2 Août 2008, *Revue Centre-Africaine d'Anthropologie RECAA* n°2.



UNICEF-CILA (2012) Shipibo, territorio, historia y cosmovisión, Instituto de investigación de Lingüística Aplicada (CILA), Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, y UNICEF.

Tournon, J., & Silva, M. (1988). Plantas para cambiar el comportamiento humano entre los shipibo-conibo. *Anthropologica*, 6(6), 161-176.

Dubois P. (1992), *La grande encyclopédie des lutins*, Paris, Hoëbeke, 191 p.

Galeano JC (2009) *Folktales of the Amazon*. Libraries Unlimited, 2009. Chullachaki: Owner of Trees and Animals, p. 43. The Flute of the Chullachaki, p. 53.

Gualima Padilla R. (2021) "La enfermedad en las comunidades ashéninkas, el susto y el choque de aire", *Revista Amazonía Peruana* n°34, pp.79-98

Jacquat M. (2000), *Petit précis de dahutologie* in *L'Alpe* N° 8, p. 20-25., Editions Glénat/Musée dauphinois, Grenoble.

Lecouteux C. (1988) *Les nains et les elfes au Moyen Âge*, Imago, 1988, 207 p. ; (1995) *Démons et génies du terroir au Moyen Âge*, Imago, 218 p. ; (2000) *La Maison et ses génies : croyances d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Imago, 202 p.