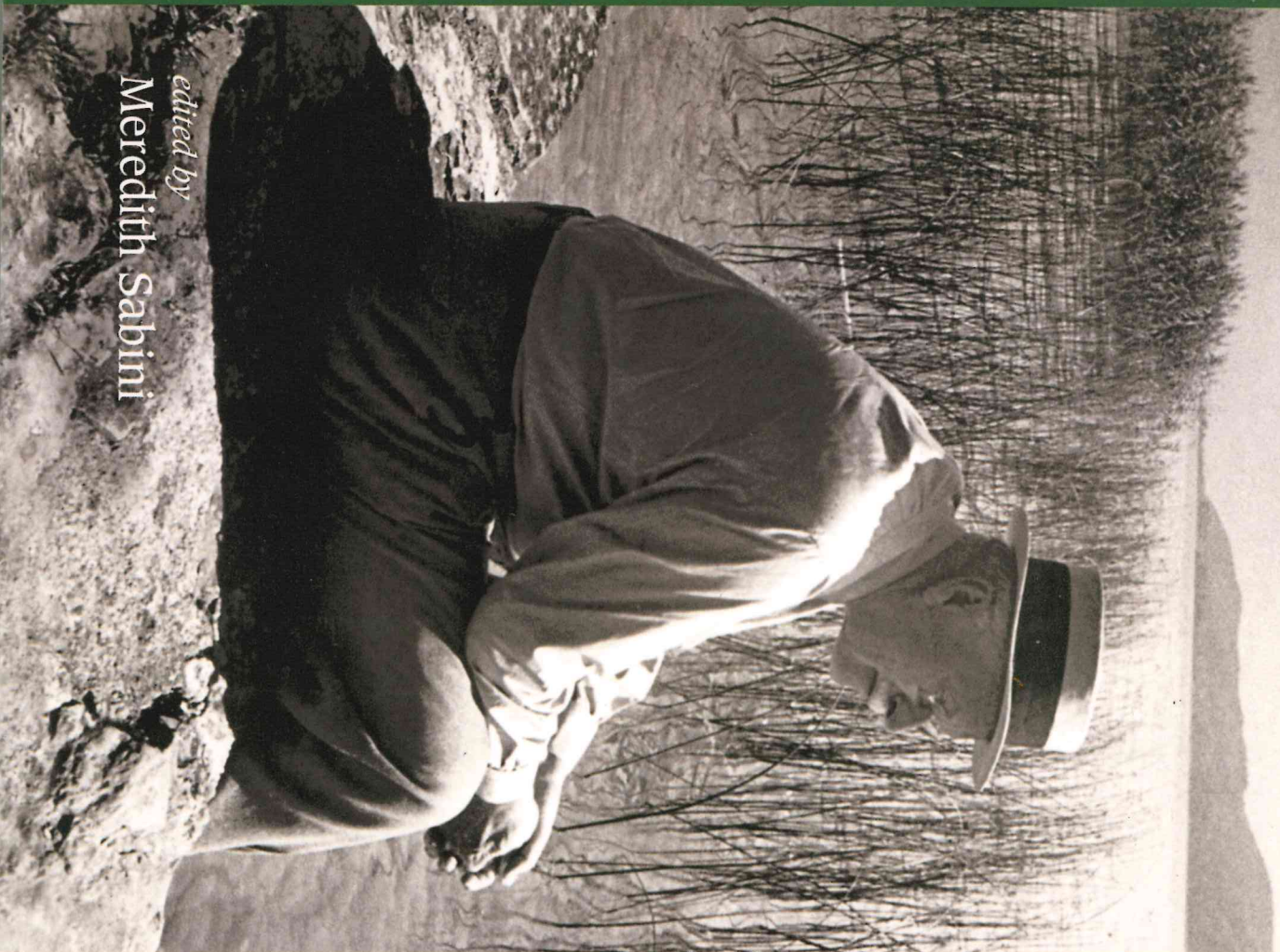


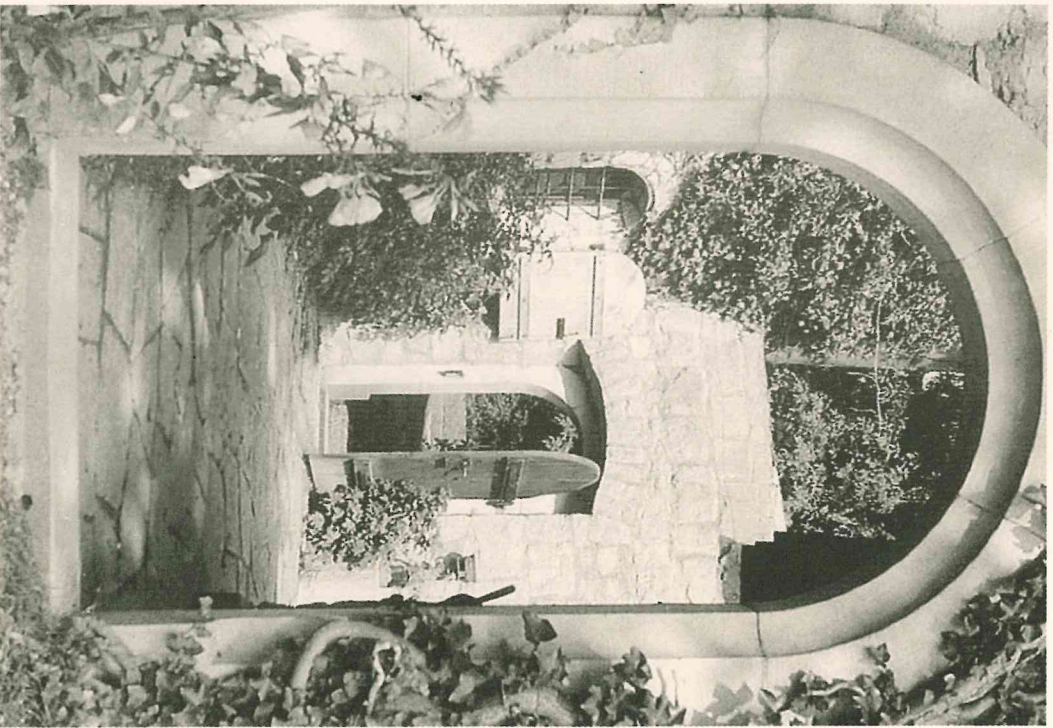
T H E E A R T H H A S A S O U L

C.G. JUNG on Nature,
Technology & Modern Life



edited by
Meredith Sabini

Entrance to Jung's retreat at Bollingen



*"Our task is not to return to Nature
in the manner of Rousseau,
but to find the natural man again."*

THE EARTH HAS A SOUL

C.G. Jung on Nature, Technology & Modern Life

edited by
Meredith Sabini, Ph.D.



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To the Ancestors, whose words of wisdom
"Just remember to follow Nature"
I sensed, even in the dream,
were not as simple as they seemed.

M.S.

Inner courtyard, Bollingen tower



*"Nature is not matter only, she is also spirit.
Spirit seems to be the inside of things...
the soul of objects."*

CHAPTER THREE

Nature Was Once Fully Spirit and Matter

Jung believed the loss of emotional participation in Nature has resulted in a sense of cosmic and social isolation. It is not the airy Christian soul that we have lost but the more concrete "bush-soul" that links us with a totem or ancestral spirit in Nature. Not so long ago, the spirits within Nature were still alive and active; Judeo-Christian religion and scientific materialism have contributed to the current negative attitude toward its spiritual dimension. Jung sees the necessity of restoring to Nature its original wholeness and considered matter and spirit as equal mysteries. Matter is the tangible exterior of things and spirit the nonvisible interior. They are given qualities of the world that can only be partially understood and thus tend to be represented by numinous symbols.

EXCERPTS

*

THROUGH SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING, OUR WORLD HAS BECOME dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos. He is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional participation in natural events, which hitherto had a symbolic meaning for him. Thunder is no longer the voice of a god, nor is lightning his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree means a man's life, no

snake is the embodiment of wisdom, and no mountain still harbors a great demon. Neither do things speak to him nor can he speak to things, like stones, springs, plants, and animals. He no longer has a bush-soul identifying him with a wild animal. His immediate communication with nature is gone forever, and the emotional energy it generated has sunk into the unconscious. (CW 18, PAR. 585)

This enormous loss is compensated by the symbols of our dreams. They bring up our original nature, its instincts and its peculiar thinking. Unfortunately, one would say, they express their contents in the language of nature, which is strange and incomprehensible to us. It sets us the task of translating its images into the rational words and concepts of modern speech, which has liberated itself from its primitive encumbrances—notably from its mystical participation with things. Nowadays, talking of ghosts and other numinous figures is no longer the same as conjuring them up. We have ceased to believe in magical formulas; not many taboos and similar restrictions are left; and our world seems to be disinfected of all such superstitious numina as “witches, warlocks, and worrycows,” to say nothing of werewolves, vampires, bush-souls, and all the other bizarre beings that populated the primeval forest. (CW 18, PAR. 586)

Nature is not matter only, she is also spirit. Were that not so, the only source of spirit would be human reason. It is the great achievement of Paracelsus to have elevated the “light of nature” to a principle and to have emphasized it in a far more fundamental way than did his predecessor Agrippa. The *lumen naturae* is the natural spirit, whose strange and significant workings we can observe in the manifestations of the unconscious now that psychological research has come to realize that the unconscious is not just a “subconscious” appendage or the dustbin of consciousness, but is a largely autonomous psychic system. . . . Consciousness can, as we know, be led astray by naturalness as easily as by spirituality, this being the logical consequence of its freedom of choice. The unconscious is not limited only to the instinctual reflex processes of the cortical centers;

it also extends beyond consciousness and, with its symbols, anticipates future conscious processes. It is therefore quite as much a “supra-consciousness.” (CW 13, PAR. 229)

That nature spirit was opposed by the Christian spirit in the first centuries. The early Christians repudiated nature worship of every description—nature was not to be looked at nor admired—while the antique religions consisted of an intense nature worship, particularly Mithraism. Therefore the mithraeums are always found in lovely places, near a spring in the woods perhaps, or in natural grottoes and caves. There is such a place in Provence—I have forgotten the name—where a beautiful clear spring comes out of the green under a wall of rock, on the surface of which the Romans carved a huge altar picture of Mithra slaying the bull. Then they made holes in the rock into which they inserted beams, and so erected the temple right beside the spring. The spring was always outside for the sacred ablutions, and there the mystery of rebirth was performed. There is the same arrangement at Saalburg near Frankfurt; the mithraeum has been reconstructed, and the mystical spring is just as it was in those early days for the rebirth ritual. So the spirit of late antiquity was expressed in the worship of the deity *inter nemora et fontes*. It was a beautiful form of worship, and there Christianity met its most formidable enemy; the natural joy one feels in nature had to be combated by the Christian spirit. They said the devil was tempting them, luring them away to natural beauty, to the beauties of the flesh, and making them dull in spirit. (VS, PP. 581-2)

There is nothing without spirit, for spirit seems to be the inside of things. Dionysus is concerned with the outside of things, with tangible forms, with everything that is made of earth, but inside is the spirit, which is the soul of objects. Whether that is our own psyche or the psyche of the universe we don't know, but if one touches the earth one cannot avoid the spirit. And if one touches it in an unfriendly way of Dionysus, the spirit of nature will be helpful; if in an unfriendly way, the spirit of nature will oppose one. Therefore the

countless legends of people who have offended the spirit of things. The primitives are tremendously afraid of doing the wrong thing, of not being polite to the spirits; in certain places they have to bow, or to whisper something to propitiate a certain ghost; they have to pay attention. We never pay attention, so we probably offend the spirits of things all the time, and because we have not been polite they will be against us, and this leads us more and more into a kind of dissociation from our own nature. (VS, p. 459)

The psyche, if you understand it as a phenomenon occurring in living bodies, is a quality of matter, just as our body consists of matter. We discover that this matter has another aspect, namely, a psychic aspect. It is simply the world seen from within. It is just as though you were seeing into another aspect of matter. This is an idea that is not my invention. Old Democritus talked of the "spiritus inserrus atomis," the spirit inserted in atoms. That means the psyche is a quality which appears in matter. (JS, p. 303)

Our consciousness performs a selective function and is itself the product of selection, whereas the collective unconscious is simply Nature—and since Nature contains everything it also contains the unknown. It is beyond truth and error, independent of the interference of consciousness, and therefore often completely at odds with the intentions and attitudes of the ego.

So far as we can see, the collective unconscious is identical with Nature to the extent that Nature herself, including matter, is unknown to us. I have nothing against the assumption that the psyche is a quality of matter or matter the concrete aspect of the psyche, provided that "psyche" is defined as the collective unconscious. In my opinion the collective unconscious is the preconscious aspect of things on the "animal" or instinctive level of the psyche. Everything that is stated or manifested by the psyche is an expression of the nature of things, whereof man is a part. (LT, II, p. 540)

The development of consciousness is a slow and laborious process that took untold ages to reach the civilized state (which we dare some-

what arbitrarily from the invention of writing, about 4000 B.C.). Although the development since that date seems to be considerable, it is still far from complete. Indefinitely large areas of the mind still remain in darkness. What we call "psyche" is by no means identical with consciousness and its contents. Those who deny the existence of the unconscious do not realize that they are actually assuming our knowledge of the psyche to be complete, with nothing left for further discoveries. It is exactly as if they declared our present knowledge of nature to be the summit of all possible knowledge. We cannot define "nature" or "psyche," but can only state what, at present, we understand them to be. No man in his senses, therefore, could make such a statement as "there is no unconscious," i.e., no psychic contents of which he and others are unconscious—not to mention the mountain of convincing evidence that medical science has accumulated. It is not, of course, scientific responsibility or honesty that causes such resistance, but age-old misoneism, fear of the new and unknown. (CW 18, PAR. 439)

My own personal experience, going back over several decades and garnered from many individuals, and the experience of many other doctors and psychologists, not to mention statements of all the great religions, including shamanism, confirm the existence of a compensatory ordering factor which is independent of the ego and is no more miraculous, in itself, than the orderliness of radium decay, or the attainment of a virus to the anatomy and physiology of human beings, or the symbiosis of plants and animals. What is miraculous in the extreme is that man can have conscious reflective knowledge of these hidden processes, which plants, animals, and inorganic bodies seemingly lack. Presumably it would also be an ecstatic experience for a radium atom to know that the time of its decay is exactly determined, or for a butterfly to recognize that the flower has made all the necessary provisions for its propagation. (CW 11, PAR. 447)

I hazard the conjecture, which is based on certain experiences, that the lowest layers of our psyche still have an animal character.

Hence it is highly probable that animals have similar or even the same archetypes. That they do have archetypes is certain in so far as the animal-plant symbioses clearly demonstrate that there must be an inherited image in the animal which drives it to specific instinctive actions. (UT, I, p. 427)

Therefore the gods are symbolized as animals—even the Holy Ghost is a bird; all the antique gods and the exotic gods are animals at the same time. The old wise man is a big ape really, which explains his peculiar fascination. The ape is naturally in possession of the wisdom of nature, like any animal or plant, but the wisdom is represented by a being that is not conscious of itself, and therefore it cannot be called wisdom. For instance, the glowworm represents the secret of making light without warmth; man doesn't know how to produce 98 percent of light with no loss of warmth, but the glowworm has the secret. If the glowworm could be transformed into a being who *knew* that he possessed the secret of making light without warmth, that would be a man with an insight and knowledge much greater than we have reached; he would be a great scientist perhaps or a great inventor, who would transform our present technique. So the old wise man, in this case Zarathustra, is the consciousness of the wisdom of the ape. It is the wisdom of nature which is nature itself, and if nature were conscious of itself, it would be a superior being of extraordinary knowledge and understanding. The glowworm is a pretty primitive animal, while an ape is a very highly developed animal, so we can assume that the wisdom embodied in the ape is of immensely greater value than that relatively unimportant secret of the glowworm.

That is the reason why primitives feel so impressed or fascinated by the animal. They say that the wisest of all animals, the most powerful and divine of all beings, is the elephant, and then comes the python or the lion, and only then comes man. Man is by no means on top of creation: the elephant is much greater, not only on account of his physical size and force but for his peculiar quality of divinity.

And really the look of wisdom in a big elephant is tremendously impressive. (ZAR, pp. 1393-4)

What more natural conclusion can we draw than that we are dealing with a generally human disposition, which is instinctive and innate, as instinct is with all animals? How else can we explain identical or analogous products among tribes and individuals who could not have known of the existence of the parallel creations? Do you really believe that every chick invents its own way of breaking out of the egg? Or that every eel makes an individual decision to start for the Bermudas, as though the idea were entirely novel? Why don't people take into account the thoroughly documented facts that I present in my alchemical studies? But they don't read those books, and they are satisfied with quite puerile prejudices, like the one that I mean inherited ideas, and other nonsensical things! (UT, I, p. 526)

Today, for instance, we talk of "matter." We describe its physical properties. We conduct laboratory experiments to demonstrate some of its aspects. But the word "matter" remains a dry, inhuman, and purely intellectual concept, without any psychic significance for us. How different was the former image of matter—the Great Mother—that could encompass and express the profound emotional meaning of Great Mother. In the same way, what was the spirit is now identified with intellect and thus ceases to be the Father of All. It has degenerated to the limited ego-thoughts of man; the immense emotional energy expressed in the image of "our Father" vanishes into the sand of an intellectual desert. (MHS, pp. 94-5)

It makes no substantial difference whether you call the world principle male and a father (spirit) or female and a mother (matter). Essentially, we know as little of the one as the other. Since the beginning of the human mind, both were numinous symbols, and their importance lay in their numinosity and not in their sex or other chance attributes. Since energy never vanishes, the emotional energy that manifests itself in all numinous phenomena does not cease to

exist when it disappears from consciousness. As I have said, it reappears in unconscious manifestations, in symbolic happenings that compensate the disturbances of the conscious psyche. Our psyche is profoundly disturbed by the loss of moral and spiritual values that have hitherto kept our life in order. Our consciousness is no longer capable of integrating the natural afflux of concomitant, instinctive events that sustains our conscious psychic activity. This process can no longer take place in the same way as before, because our consciousness has deprived itself of the organs by which the auxiliary contributions of the instincts and the unconscious could be assimilated. These organs were the numinous symbols, held holy by common consent. (CW 18, PAR. 583)

It is a general truth that the earth is the depreciated and misunderstood part, and so the unconscious regularly puts great emphasis on the chthonic fact. Nietzsche has expressed that very beautifully: "*Thu sollt wieder Freunde von den nächsten Dingen werden.*" (You shall become friends of the immediate things.) And the immediate things are this earth, this life. For quite long enough our ancestors, and we ourselves, have been taught that this life is not the real thing, that it is provisional, and that we only live for Heaven. Our morality is based upon the negation of the flesh, and so our unconscious often tries to convince us of the importance of living here and now. In the course of the centuries man has repeatedly experienced the fact that the life that is not lived here, or the life lived provisionally, is utterly unsatisfactory. It leads into neurosis. (VS, PP. 192-3)

It remained for modern science to despiritualize nature through its so-called objective knowledge of matter. All anthropomorphic projections were withdrawn from the object one after another, with a twofold result: firstly man's mystical identity with nature was curtailed as never before, and secondly the projections falling back into the human soul caused such a terrific activation of the unconscious that in modern times man was compelled to postulate the existence of an unconscious psyche. (CW II, PAR. 375)

As a matter of fact, alchemy actually takes up and carries on the work of Christianity. In the alchemical view, Christianity has saved man but not nature. The alchemist's dream was to save the world in its totality: the philosopher's stone was conceived as the *filius macrocosmi*, which saves the world, whereas Christ was the *filius microcosmi*, the savior of man alone. The ultimate aim of the alchemical opus is the *apokatastasis*, cosmic salvation. (VS, P. 227)

Letters

*

To Count Hermann Keyserling

25 August 1928

Dear Count,

The negative relationship to the mother is always an affront to nature, unnatural. Hence distance from the earth, identification with the father, heaven, light, wind, spirit, Logos. Rejection of the earth, of what is below, dark, feminine. Negative relationship to material things, also to children. Flight from personal feelings...

Yours very sincerely, Jung

(LT, I, p. 52)

*

20 July 1958

Dear [Edward] Thornton,

The question you asked me is—I am afraid—beyond my competence. It is a question of fate in which you should not be influenced by any arbitrary outer influence. As a rule I am all for walking in two worlds at once since we are gifted with two legs, remembering that spirit is *pneuma* which means "moving air." It is a wind that all too easily can lift you up from the solid earth and can carry you away on uncertain waves. It is good, therefore, as a rule, to keep at least one foot upon *terra firma*. We are still in the body and thus under the rule of heavy matter. Also it is equally true that matter not moved by the spirit is dead and empty. Over against this general truth one has to be flexible enough to admit all sorts of exceptions, as they are the unavoidable accompaniments of all rules. The spirit has no merit in itself and it has a peculiarly irrealizing effect if not counterbalanced by its material opposite. Thus think again and if you feel enough solid ground under your feet, follow the call of the spirit. My best wishes.

Yours cordially,

C.G. Jung

"In the excellent choices of Jung's writings presented here, he shows us what we have lost and how we might find it again." —JOSEPH L. HENDERSON, M.D.

Join Jung as he rediscovers the original unity of Nature, and the spirits inside matter come to life once again. These selections, not just from his published writings, but also from speeches, obscure seminars, interviews, and letters, show a less familiar side of the famous Swiss psychiatrist, whose deep concern over the loss of our emotional and mythic relationship with Nature is expressed in moving, poetic terms. While never losing sight of the rational, cultured mind, Jung speaks for the natural mind, source of the evolutionary experience and accumulated wisdom of our species. Through his own example, Jung shows how healing our own living connection with Nature contributes to the whole.

**"True to my nature-loving bias, I have followed the call of the wild, the age-old trail through secluded wilderness, where a primitive human community may be found."*

**"It is a general truth that the earth is depreciated and misunderstood."*

**"Natural life is the nourishing soul of the soul."*

**"We keep forgetting that we are primates and have to make allowances for these layers in the psyche."*

**"In the last analysis, most of our difficulties come from losing contact with our instincts, with the age-old unforgotten wisdom stored up in us."*

**"Sometimes a tree can tell you more than can be read in a book."*

Meredith Sabini, PhD, is an essayist, poet, and psychologist licensed since 1981 who has contributed to the fields of ecopsychology and evolutionary psychology. She is founder and director of The Dream Institute of Northern California, a cultural and educational center in Berkeley.



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