

## THE RETURN OF GAIA

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Jules Cashford

Both Einstein and Jung, among many others, agree that no problem can be solved by the same kind of thinking which created it. Einstein warned that ‘With the splitting of the atom everything has changed save our mode of thinking, and thus we head towards unparalleled catastrophes.’<sup>1</sup> This helps to explain why it has so far been impossible to reach a universal agreement on how to prevent the global devastation - happening before all our eyes - almost as though it was impossible to *imagine* what to do. Jung added his own terrifying image: ‘The world hangs by a thin thread, and that thread is the psyche of man.’<sup>2</sup>

The urgent question then becomes: what was - and still is - the thinking that has brought about this crisis, and can we assume that we will even be able to recognize it? We might suspect that a kind of thinking, so powerful as to destroy life forms all over the planet, issues from a distinctly specific view of the world, one we have been living with for so long it now ‘feels natural.’ But no way of thinking exists in a vacuum. It comes from an almost inconceivable plethora of feelings and ideas and, more crucially, the values which underpin them, the way of life which comes out of them, and, ultimately, who we are as human beings, living together with the rest of creation on our one and only Earth.

Yet, as though in answer to the crisis of our time, a new name for our Earth has been emerging over the last forty years, and that is the old name ‘Gaia,’ who was the Mother Goddess of Ancient Greece.<sup>3</sup> The apparent coincidence that brought the image of Gaia back from its distant past was an ostensibly random walk taken by the physicist James Lovelock with his friend and neighbour, the novelist William Golding, who wrote *Lord of the Flies*, and was also a classicist.<sup>4</sup>

It was in the late 1970s, and Lovelock was looking for a name for his hypothesis that the Earth was a self-regulating system. He wanted to propose that the Earth had the capacity for homeostasis—that is, for comprehensive inner adjustment and self-regulation in response to

changes in the outer world. He was going to call this ‘Systems Theory,’ but Golding suggested ‘Gaia’ - and the ‘Gaia Hypothesis’ was born.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 1. Gaia, Mother Goddess Earth. Stone sculpture. Palaikastro, Crete. 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

However, the name, and the memory of an animate Earth, seems to have entered western consciousness, and since then to have acquired an autonomous life of its own. This is just what we might expect from an image which arises spontaneously, apparently out of nowhere, at once familiar and compelling, as though we had known it all along. This points us to the region of myth and dream, where ‘Imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown,’<sup>6</sup> the place from which life-changing energies come.

But perhaps it was *not* so surprising that the image of Gaia would catch the Imagination of the time, almost as though it had a mind of its own. For only a few years before, we had all, in our Imagination, ‘stood’ upon the Moon looking back at the Earth - as though Moon and Earth had changed places. In 1948 the Astronomer Fred Hoyle had said that ‘Once a photograph of the Earth, taken from the outside, is available – once the sheer *isolation* of the Earth becomes plain - a new idea as powerful as any in history will be let loose.’<sup>7</sup> It was as though the human Imagination was set free to imagine the universe, and perhaps multitudes of universes - ‘world without end.’



Fig. 2. NASA Jet Propulsion Lab. (View of Africa – Sahara Desert at the top in brown, South Pole at the bottom).

The new idea was the perspective on Earth that did not start from ourselves, looking out, but from beyond ourselves, looking in, and many of us saw a Living Being – a *Zo-on*, as Plato had said <sup>8</sup> – inviting us to understand that our Earth has Character, Intelligence, Soul: in a word, Consciousness. Or, we might say, not that ‘Earth *has* consciousness,’ but that ‘Earth *is* Consciousness.’ So it may be that ‘Gaia’ arose in response to this vision, offering a new home for the Imagination to start from – ‘a local habitation and a name.’ <sup>9</sup>

Certainly, the ‘Gaia Hypothesis’ soon became far more radical than Lovelock had intended, as though the excitement of the idea were indeed to do with Gaia herself, with a vision of Earth alive, animate and animated, a Subject in her own right – not, as before, ‘dead matter’ without ‘spirit,’ an object to be controlled and explained by mechanistic laws. This ‘new Gaia’ called forth the ‘old Gaia’ - as though a symbol had been reborn, suggestive of Yeats’s idea that ‘Whatever the passions of man have gathered about, becomes a symbol in the Great Memory,’ which is ‘the memory of Nature herself.’ <sup>10</sup>



Fig. 3. Gaia and child. Athenian red-figure calyx krater. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. 5th c. BC.

For, once upon a time, Gaia was a Living Being, the Mother of All in Ancient Greece. And, astonishingly, this was the last time in the west that Earth was formally revered as sacred - more than two and a half thousand years ago.

Even to talk, then, of the sacredness of Earth is to press against the weight of two thousand years of religious and cultural history, as well as conscious and unconscious assumptions about the nature of reality. But perhaps myths never die: they seek new forms through which to renew themselves, age after age - as in this Roman image of Earth, now called Tellus?



Fig. 4. The Goddess Tellus, the Roman version of Gaia, holding two babies, Romulus and Remus, founders of the city of Rome. Marble relief, Ara Pacis, Royal Cast Collection, Copenhagen. 13-9 BC.

In retrospect, then, it is possible that what appeared as a coincidence – giving a scientific hypothesis the name of ‘Gaia’ – could be meaningful at a deeper level, invoking the further hypothesis of ‘Synchronicity’ to point to the way that certain events, happening together at the same time, may be connected not by cause but by meaning. Even playing with this possibility may take us to a deeper realm where future thought-forms are gestating - mindful of Jung’s insight that ‘In the collective unconscious of the individual, history prepares itself.’

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We might expect the first intimations of a new story issuing from the Imagination to *shine* at us from many places at once – to baffle and disturb us with its numinosity – beckoning us beyond our habitual categories of thought - becoming ‘*translucent*’ to ‘the Eternal through

and in the Temporal,' as the poet Coleridge sees it. <sup>12</sup>



Fig. 5. Spring Fresco with swallows, from a wall of a house in Akrotiri, Thera (Santorini). Now in the Archaeological Museum in Athens. c. 1640 BC.

It might be numinous precisely *because* it comes from the depths of the Collective Unconscious to redress the present imbalance in human consciousness - trying, in its image of an *animate* Earth, to restore harmony to Consciousness itself – to the whole.



Fig. 6. The Blue Monkeys playing. Minoan Fresco from the Akrotiri Collection of Thera (Santorini), Greece. c. 1500 BC.

It may be a signal not just to reflect upon our own human consciousness - putting ourselves yet again at the centre of everything - but also to awaken us to the suffering of Earth.

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## The Eleusinian Mysteries in Ancient Greece

In Ancient Greece, Gaia's gifts were celebrated for over 2000 years. From around 2000 BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, people would come from all over Greece to participate in the Mysteries of Death and Rebirth at Eleusis, under the aegis of Demeter the Goddess of the Harvest, who was Gaia's Grand-daughter, born from the union of Chronos, Time, and Rhea, the Flowing One.

It was the time of the year when Demeter's daughter, Persephone, disappeared into the underworld as the fallen seed. Gathering together in Autumn when the Full Moon began to wane, the people would mourn for the loss of Persephone, fast and sacrifice, until the vision of the crescent Moon in the new cycle became for them a symbol of rebirth: of plants and human beings alike:



Fig. 7. Exaltation of the Flower: the Reunion of Demeter and Persephone: Marble stele. The Louvre, Paris. 460 BC.

Persephone was reunited with her Mother Demeter as the returning shoots in Spring, and humans were awakened to the springtime of their hearts, restoring a vision of the whole.

Looking back over four thousand years, it is striking that humanity and Earth were then so deeply related to each other that the holding up of an Ear of Corn in silence was the culmination of the Mysteries - when both Earth and human beings were understood to be reborn together as one.



Fig. 8. Golden Ear of Corn from Eleusis. Private Collection.

This revelation finds a parallel in William Blake's belief that:

'If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.'<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 9. Blake's 'Daimon,' who taught him painting in his dreams. Engraving. Tate Gallery, London. 1819.

Yet there is a difference between the Eleusinian Initiates' *rapt vision of the ear of corn in their own presence*, over two thousand years ago, and William Blake's *vision of what happens when the doors of perception are cleansed*. In Eleusis, the infinite was a communal experience, while with Blake the infinite is imagined in solitude, becoming present through the poem.

Blake's paintings and poems will be our guide through the history of the last 2000 years, offering the perspective of a unified vision.

The work of Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, C.S. Lewis and Owen Barfield, among many others, also shows how consciousness has changed over the millennia, so that we cannot understand the past if we look back only through the lens of the present.

Owen Barfield in particular has offered a sustained perspective on the evolution of human consciousness, and suggests a way of looking at our history which may free us to imagine a way out of our present impasse. Thomas Berry and David Bohm, among many others, have recommended his writing. So who was he?

Owen Barfield and C.S. Lewis, and JRR Tolkein, who wrote *Lord of the Rings*, belonged to a group of Oxford undergraduates who called themselves ‘the Inklings.’ They would meet in an Oxford pub, from the early 1930s to 1949, and discuss – among other things – the nature of consciousness. Owen Barfield (1898 to 1997) is on the left, JRR. Tolkein (1892-1973) in the middle, and C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) is on the right.



Fig. 10. Owen Barfield, J.R.R. Tolkein and C.S. Lewis. From *The Fellowship: Literary Lives of the Inklings*, Gerald J. Russello, 2016.

In his *History in English Words*, *Poetic Diction*, and *Saving the Appearances*, Barfield understands the evolution of consciousness as falling into three distinct stages of different kinds of what he calls ‘Participation’ with the world: Original Participation; Withdrawal of Participation; and Final Participation.<sup>14</sup> We will define the terms briefly first, and then explore them in more detail afterwards.

The first stage, existing from the beginning - *Original Participation* - he describes as a time when the human soul and the Soul of the World were experienced as one whole: there was an instinctive union with the Earth and all creatures on Earth. The human and the natural world were indivisible, and could not be conceived in isolation from each other. These were originally hunter-gatherer, lunar goddess cultures, discovering agriculture around 9000 BC.



Fig. 11. Pregnant Horse from the Palaeolithic Cave at Lascaux, France. c. 15, 000 BC.

When this pregnant horse was first discovered in the Palaeolithic cave at Lascaux, in France, the leafy branch laid across her pregnant womb was assumed to be a weapon - instead of, perhaps, an animal and a plant flowering together.

The second stage Barfield defines as a *Withdrawal of Participation* from the Earth, which happened at different times around the globe – beginning, in Europe and the Near East, around 4000 BC, and reaching a crescendo in 2000 BC, continuing through the Iron Age, c.1250 BC, and lasting in various forms to our present day. What follows is largely the history of the west.

This period in history began when nomadic *non*-agricultural peoples, with gods of sky, sun, wind, and the vast invisible heaven, arrived in Europe from the East. The peaceful values of an agricultural life gave way to animal husbandry and competition for ‘land,’ and

the changing values brought by the invaders.



Fig 12. The Babylonian Marduk slaying the Sumerian Tiamat imaged as a dragon. Gypsum Bas-relief. Neo-Assyrian. British Museum. 865-860 BC.

The details can be found in Marija Gimbutas's book *Goddesses and Gods in Old Europe*.<sup>15</sup> Earth then loses numinosity and is set in opposition to humanity, as the individual soul becomes separated from the World-Soul. Over the centuries the lost numinosity of Earth was transferred to the inner life of human beings, who have, generally speaking – and especially after the Industrial Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the west - come more and more to dominate the now soul-less Earth.

The third stage Barfield calls *Final Participation*. He defines this as a new kind of participation with Earth, not in the old, original way – which in any case is impossible, consciousness inevitably moving on – but at a new *level* through 'the Imagination.' This involves, he explains, a *dual* relation to the world, which acknowledges our present experience of Earth as separate from us, but creates a new poetic union by participating with the natural world, consciously *and* imaginatively.

The aim is to bring about a new kind of relationship with our Earth. And he sees this as the unique moral opportunity of our time.

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Fig. 13. Puck dancing with the Fairies, with Oberon and Titania watching. From Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. William Blake, pencil and watercolour on paper. Tate Gallery, London. 1785.

While these stages of consciousness are initially presented as historical phases, they are also dimensions inherent in all human consciousness at any time, and we may move between them in our thoughts and actions almost without noticing. The Poet Shelley's longing to return to 'the infancy of the world when everyone was a poet and language itself was poetry'<sup>16</sup> - is timeless - as is 'losing' ourselves in Nature, music, art and love? It is 'only the experience of the numinous,' Jung writes, 'which brings about transformation in a person.'<sup>17</sup>

In the west we are now living through a late stage of 'Withdrawal of Participation.' So we are in a position to look critically upon its limitations - and so upon the limitations of ourselves at this point in history - even while acknowledging that we are able to do this

because we have in fact *already* withdrawn participation from the whole – an inheritance that would seem to have both virtue and vice intertwined within it.

As in the Destruction of the Amazon forests, for instance:



Fig. 14. Destruction of the Amazon. Passim!

And also the Initiatives for their Restoration – rare as they are:



Fig, 15. Initiative for the Restoration of 30,000 hectares (roughly 73 million trees) in Amazonia. Partnership among Brazilian Ministry of Environment (MMA), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, the Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity (FUNBIO), Conservation International (CI-Brasil), the socio-environmental initiative adopted by Rock in Rio, and Amazonia Live.

This offers us a unique opportunity to consider whether this present state of withdrawal might be seen only as a *phase* in the evolution of consciousness, and so *not the only and ultimate way* to relate to the world – which would leave us free to imagine a new kind of relationship. In order to do this, it seems essential to get behind some of the ideas which have been instilled in us as inevitable and absolute – whether through the doctrines of various scriptures, the ignorance of cultures other than our own, the official readings of history before we could evaluate them, the collective pressures of social custom, the intellectual valuing of Reason over Feeling and Intuition – and, not least, the belief in the absolute superiority of the so-called ‘human project,’ granting ‘souls’ to ourselves alone.

## Original Participation

So, taking each of these stages in turn, we begin with ‘Original Participation.’

We might already understand this stage of human life through the familiar term ‘*Participation Mystique*,’ coined by the French philosopher and anthropologist Levy-Bruhl; and also from Palaeolithic cave art. <sup>18</sup> In Original Participation, *all* children of the universe – plants, animals, humans - come from the body of the Mother Goddess – whether imagined as Earth or Moon - and, being of the same substance, are all related to each other. They have, as it were, ‘the same nature.’ <sup>19</sup>



Fig. 16. Goddess of Laussel, Dordogne, France. Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux. c. 20,000 BC.

This is the Goddess of Laussel, from a rock shelter in the Dordogne in France. She holds a bison's horn in her right hand inscribed with 13 notches - the number of days of the Waxing Moon to the Full – while her left hand rests on her pregnant belly, overlooking the fertile

valley below. As Mother Goddess Moon, pregnant with the world in her waxing mode, she discloses the laws of fertility and growth as cyclical in her own image. As woman, she acknowledges the lunar law on Earth: ‘As above, so below’ – as it was still being said in the *Emerald Tablets of Hermes Trismegistos*, 20,000 years later.<sup>20</sup>

The world of early people was a Thou not an It; a presence both numinous and personal, and so a Subject in the dialect of thinking, not an inanimate object of thought. All life forms belonged to the same continuum of feeling and were related through imaginative sympathy: they did not have to be apprehended by different modes of cognition. What, in contemporary terms, might now be distinguished into the objective, natural world, and contrasted with the subjective, human world, were once intimately bound together, so Earth was both more awesome - loving and terrifying - and more personal - peopled with divine presences. This is immanence, where the visible appearance and the invisible source are one and the same.

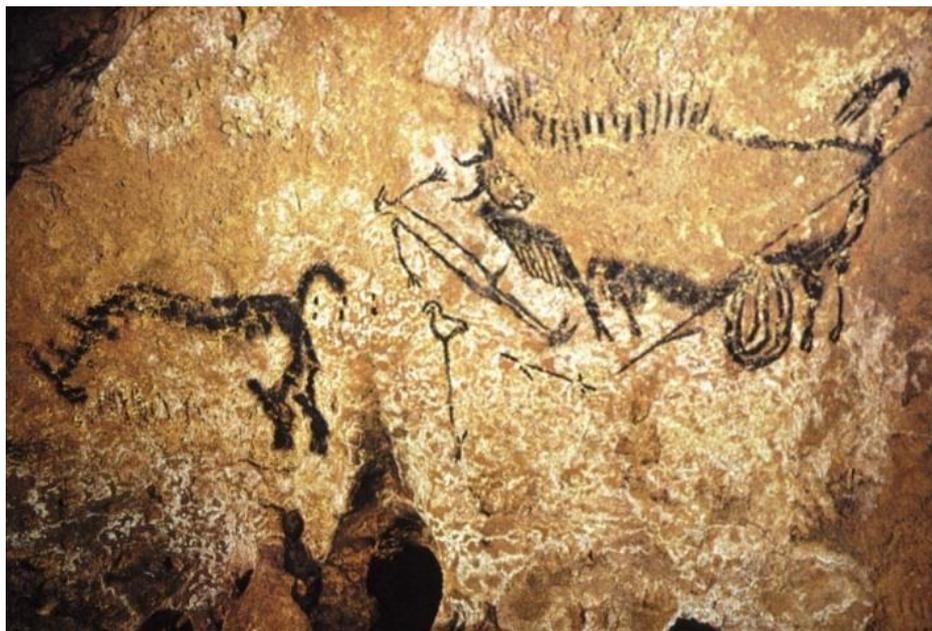


Fig. 17. The Bird Man Shaman, with the head of a bird, is lying in trance beside a staff with a bird on top of it. He faces a dying bison, as though he is travelling, like a bird in the mind, to accompany the dying bison in his journey to eternity. Lascaux Cave, Montignac, France. (Found in a well, 25 feet down). c. 15,000 BC.

The ancient Imagination was concrete, as was the origin of language, embedded in, and rising out of, deeply lived experience, similar, in this respect, to art and poetry of all ages.

This union – of invisible and visible - was found most notably in the Sumerian culture of Inanna-Ishtar, and in Ancient Egypt, and in early Greek thought.



Fig. 18. The Sumerian goddess and god beside the Tree of Life, with the serpents of transformation behind them, understood symbolically as the Moon on Earth, both shedding their 'skins' and being reborn from their own substance. British Museum. 2200-2100 BC.

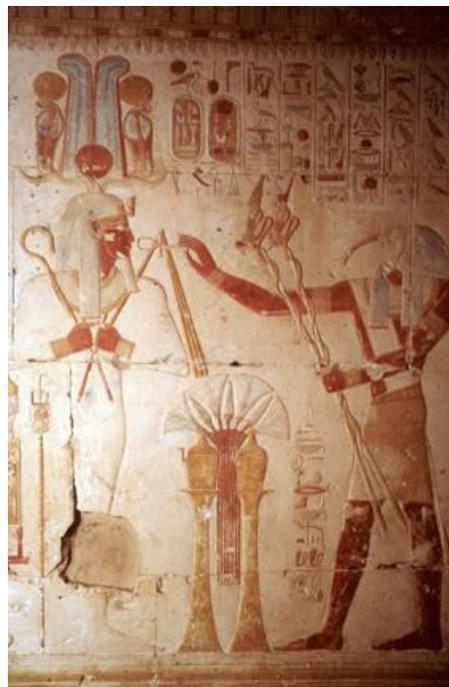


Fig. 19. The Pharaoh Seti I receiving the breath of eternal life from ibis-headed Thoth, the Moon god of Eternity and Time, who holds the Caduceus of two snakes uniting the two lands. Temple of Seti I, Abydos, Egypt. 1300 BC.

Nearly 900 hundred years later in Greece, Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* (429 BC), shows how Earth was still intimately related to the moral life of humanity - from which it followed that Gaia's law could be profoundly disturbed by the unlawful behaviour of human beings.

Oedipus, the King, is quite content in his unconsciousness until Earth suffers. Suddenly, the land of Thebes begins to die:

A blight is on the fruitful plants of the earth,  
A blight is on the cattle in the fields,  
A blight is on our women that no children are born to them.<sup>51</sup>

So it is Gaia who initiates the drama of Oedipus's awakening to who he is and what he has done: the slaying of his father and the marrying of his mother. Reluctantly, Oedipus sends the Seer Tiresias to the Delphic Oracle of the god Phoebus Apollo to reveal the cause.

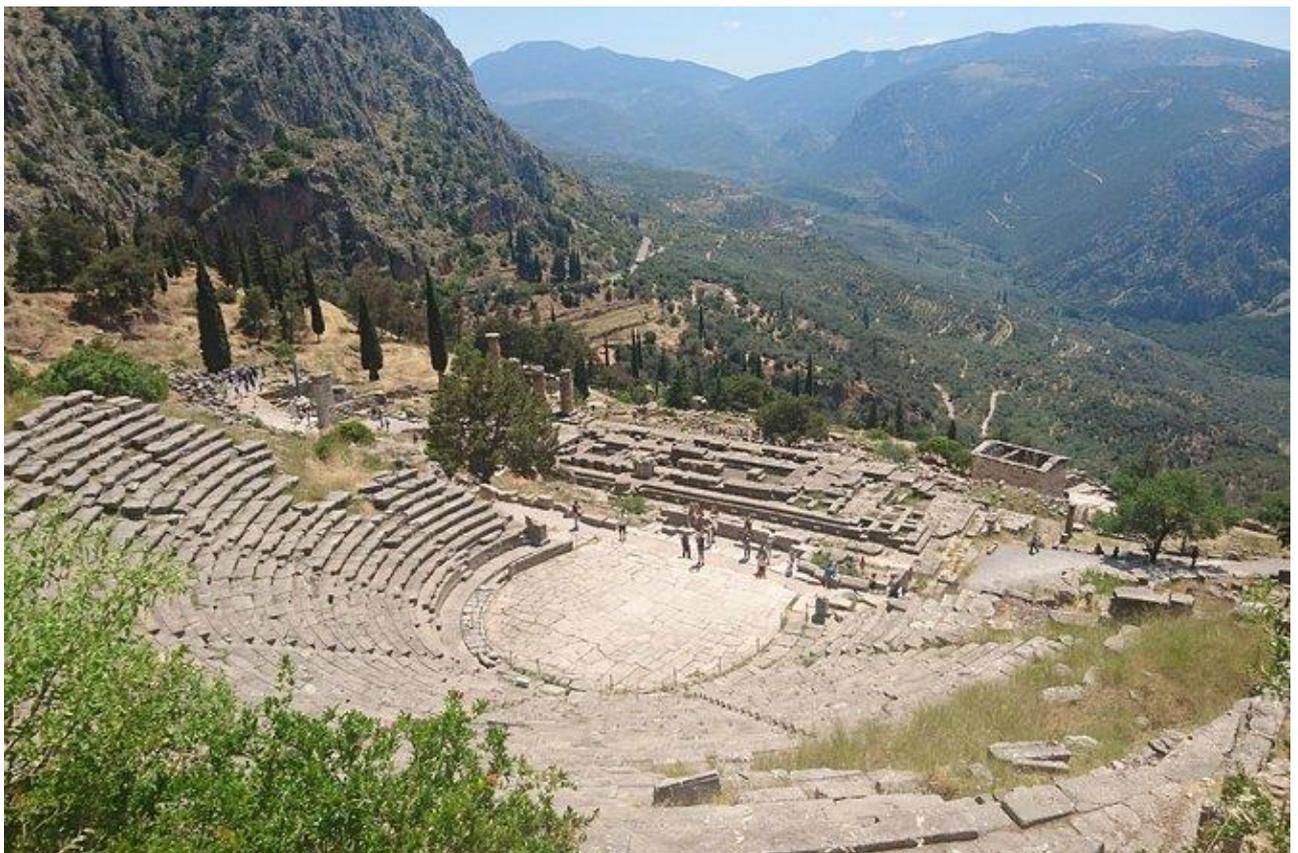


Fig. 20. Delphi was a place of worship for Gaia since Mycenaean times. c.1700 BC - Mount Parnassus, Greece. This stone-built theatre was constructed in the fourth century BC, above the Temple of Apollo.

The Oracle, whose first law was ‘Know thyself,’ and whose second law was ‘Nothing in excess,’ now defines for all time the meaning of pollution as a human crime against the divine order - known in Greece as *Hubris* - the profaning of what is sacred:

King Phoebus in plain words commanded us  
to drive out a pollution from our land,  
pollution grown ingrained within the land.

When Oedipus discovers he is himself the pollution and leaves the city, harmony is restored and Gaia comes back to life. It is significant that, even without Oedipus’s intention to do wrong, pollution occurs. Later, in *Colonos* - the place where the older and wiser Oedipus is to lay his body in the Earth - will bring blessings to the people who live there. Again, Gaia and the children of Gaia are shown to be profoundly related.

So here: what happens to humans happens to Earth, and what happens to Earth happens to humans – the Soul of the one is also the Soul of the other. Or, to put it another way, the Human story and the Universe story were one and the same.

This way of being lasted for thousands of years, but it was destroyed, or gradually diminished, at different times around the world, though persisting in those places where the dominant western paradigm did not reach, even surviving in pockets of Britain in an attenuated form up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. And of course in Shakespeare, who sees it both ways, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Lorenzo muses in the moonlight with his love, Jessica:

Sit Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it....<sup>21</sup>

## Withdrawal of Participation

Joseph Campbell, in his *Occidental Mythology*, writes that in 2000 BC, when the invasions from the east began, and kept coming, a ‘wail went up all over the Near East.’<sup>22</sup> The divinities of the nomadic invaders were the gods who had guided their journeys – the sky gods of sun, star, wind, thunder and lightning, and the all-embracing heaven itself. But the nomadic invaders regarded the goddesses of the territories they entered, not as different manifestations of the divine, but as dangerous dragons and serpents to be destroyed for the sake of the new order.



Fig. 21. Marduk slaying Tiamat. British Museum. c. 9<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> BC. See W.H.Ward. *The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*. no: 579. Carnegie Institute of Washington, 2010.

Here, the Babylonian Wind and Sun god Marduk is slaying the Sumerian Mother Goddess Tiamat - depicted as a serpent-dragon with a crescent Moon upon her head. In the Babylonian text called the *Enuma Elish* we learn that with his wind, blown from his mouth, he splits her body in two. One half he remade as heaven and the other half as earth, and humankind he recreated from the blood of her slain son-lover.<sup>23</sup> But where he, and the other gods, become

the ‘makers,’ or remakers, of heaven and earth, the earlier goddesses *were themselves* Heaven and Earth.



Fig. 22. Marduk slaying the Sumerian lunar goddess Tiamat. Line Drawing of Assyrian cylinder seal. British Museum. c. 800 BC.

Broadly, in this Second phase, the Soul of the World also lost its numinosity. Beginning in the late Bronze Age, roughly around 2000 BC, the nomadic tribes, who conquered the native agricultural communities, withdrew the immanent divinity from Earth, placing it either in the lights and patterns of the heavens or in the invisible world, transcendent to all creation. Mythologically, lunar Goddesses of the Earth were replaced by tribal Gods of the Heavens: Enlil and then Marduk in Mesopotamia, and Yahweh-Elohim in Canaan. The old Mother Goddess of Earth and Moon was seen no longer as life-giving but as dark and chaotic. So a wholly new oppositional paradigm entered western thinking as being ‘inherent in the nature of things.’

Even the Mycenaean and Achaean Greeks, with Zeus their god of thunder and lightning, brought with them a way of thinking that valued conquest, as shown here in the King Cadmus slaying the Serpent of Earth to found his city of Thebes. Similarly, the god Apollo hurled rocks into the River Tephousa to dry her up, when she was in the way of the construction of his Temple in Delphi – a tale told in the Homeric *Hymn to Pythian Apollo*.<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 23. Cadmus, slaying the Serpent of Earth to found the city of Thebes. The Louvre. 560-550 BC.

We often understand these myths now as ‘hero myths; and internalise the ‘other’ – serpent, dragon, medusa or minotaur - as troubling aspects of our inner nature which we must learn to ‘overcome.’ But it is worth remembering their original appearance in our cultural history, so that other strategies of reconciliation may also offer themselves as alternative forms of ‘heroism’– so that oppositional thinking does not have to become the only way of coming to a resolution. Our word *Hero* comes from the Greek word *hieros*, simply meaning ‘sacred.’

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Fig. 24. The Temptation of Eve. Madrid Escorial Codex Vigilanus, San Lorenzo del Escorial. 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which stands at the beginning of our western tradition, registers the disruption of the original human bond with Earth. Yahweh-Elohim (significantly, *after* the Hebrews' fifty year exile in Babylon) is imagined as creating the world completely apart from himself - bringing a new polarity into life: Transcendence and Immanence. The former life-giving images are now precisely reversed into omens of death.

The earlier mythic images of the Goddess cultures now reappear as *actors in the new history*, inviting literal interpretations, depicted in Blake's painting almost as parody. The once life-giving serpent now becomes the temptor and betrayer in the *Genesis* story, bringing death, and Eve is known as a 'secondary creation,' born from the rib of Adam, further from God and so more likely to sin – becoming the 'devil's gateway.'



Fig. 25. The Temptation of Eve, William Blake. Water-colour Painting. Tate Gallery. 1808.

But, as the 16<sup>th</sup> century French Theologian and Protestant Reformer, John Calvin, said: 'If the serpent had approached Adam, it would have been a different story.'<sup>25</sup>

In one of three creation myths in *Genesis* - when taken literally, and only then - we inherit a transcendent god, a fallen universe, original sin inherent in human nature, a curse on the Earth and child-bearing, and, more pervasively perhaps, a distrust of our own spontaneous natures from which Imagination comes.



Fig. 26. The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Fresco, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. Masaccio. 1425.

Numinosity was now found in what could *not* be seen or touched: the ‘graven image’ was forbidden, and even the longings of the heart were to be punished. As Job said:

If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand. This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.<sup>26</sup>

Divinity, or Consciousness, for the first time, is defined as wholly *beyond* creation, not immanent in, or as, creation.

This worshipping of Transcendence was later formally inherited by the Roman Christian Church. But this was in astonishing contrast to the Immanence of the unedited Gnostic texts of the teachings of Jesus - only rediscovered in an urn at Nag Hammadi in Egypt in 1948. In the *Gospel of Thomas*, we read:

Logion 77: Jesus said: I am the All, the All came forth from Me and the All attained to Me..  
Cleave a piece of wood, I am there; Lift up the stone and you will find Me there.'

Logion 22:

'When you make the two one,  
and when you make the inner as the outer  
and the outer as the inner  
and the above as the below,  
and when you make  
the male and female into a single one,  
so that the male will not be male  
and the female (not) be female...  
then shall you enter the Kingdom.'

Logion 67: 'He who knows the universe but knows not himself, knows nothing.'<sup>27</sup>

But, by the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (around the time when the Eleusinian Mysteries were closed by the Roman emperor Theodosius), the orthodox Roman interpretation of Christianity had completely suppressed the Gnostics' understanding of a Jesus who belonged to *This Earth*, proposing instead a heaven for believers and a hell to which 'pagans' went, a name from the Greek, '*paganos*,' meaning simply 'of the countryside.' This seal from 300 AD is supremely eloquent of what was lost:



Fig. 27. Jesus as Orpheos and Bakkikos/Dionysos. Haematite cylinder seal. Formerly in the Berlin Museum (now lost). (From Joseph Campbell, *Creative Mythology*, p. 24). c. 300 AD.

Jesus hangs outstretched on the cross, crucified, as one with *Orpheos-Bakkikos*, with the crescent moon of rebirth as the crown of the cross, and the seven stars of the Pleiades arching above, also known as the Lyre of Orpheos. *Orpheos* and *Bakkos / Dionysos* were also Greek names for Osiris, placing Jesus in the 3000 year old immanent tradition of the dying and resurrected goddesses and gods of the Earth's annual cycle of renewal and transformation. The image invites us to see through the outward names and forms to the shared essence within, so all these manifestations of the sacred are enriched through their mutual affinity – a joyous way of seeing life called Syncretism.

But though the Gnostics' Jesus belongs to the millennial tradition of a divine Earth, orthodox Roman Christianity took their 'Christ' – literally, the 'Anointed One' - out of the seasonal cycles of natural life, proposing instead that he was to be the saviour of *human* history from the ceaseless round of a now inanimate Earth – no longer sacred - thereby ending the three thousand year ritual of death and rebirth in Nature and human nature, once celebrated as one and the same.

The Roman Christians also relocated the birth of Jesus to the time of the birth of their Roman Sun God Mithras at the winter solstice, following the mythical imagery whereby the Sun replaced the Moon, taking the symbolism of divine rebirth out of the seasons of Nature – though, significantly, Easter is still celebrated on the first Full Moon after the Spring Equinox. Formally, though, the Moon was now allocated to his mother Mary as the ‘lesser light,’ as in this rendering of the ceremony known as ‘The Coronation of the Virgin,’ by the Veneziano brothers in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, where we can see the Sun and Moon beneath their feet.

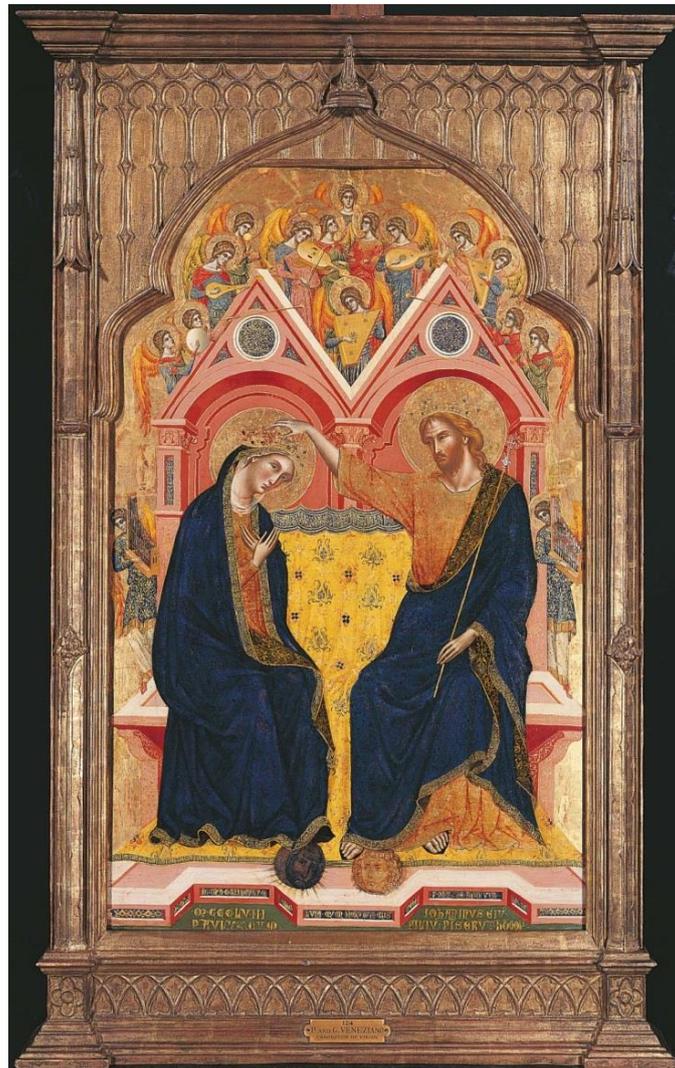


Fig. 28. Coronation of the Virgin. Jesus and Mary with the Sun and Moon beneath their feet. Paolo and Giovanni Veneziano. Frick Gallery, New York. 1321-1358.

Yet formal Christian doctrine, for nearly two thousand years, in various Papal Bulls, has perpetuated the oppositional paradigm of a Soul or Spirit belonging exclusively to human beings - and usually more exclusively to Christians than to anyone else - while Earth and all Earth's non-human creatures were deprived of Soul or Spirit, and so presumed to have no feelings or needs, no intrinsic life of their own. They became simply inanimate objects to serve human purposes, effectively dead matter, as they called it, forgetting that the word matter came originally, via *mater*, for Mother. This can be seen in the history of the Church's attitudes to women and childbirth - the 'faeces and urine of birth' as St. Augustine puts it <sup>28</sup> - as well as anything 'earthly' belonging to 'this world,' along with its focus on original sin and the corresponding need for redeeming it. The idea of the universe as consciousness immanent in all creation was, from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, called 'heresy,' a word coming ironically from the Greek *haireisis*, to 'choose.'

Over the centuries, the Papal Bulls insisted on the literal 'virginity' of Mary, and also (to be logical) of her lineage, but did eventually concede to millions of pleas from Catholics all over the world for Mary to play a more significant role in the Christian story. She was declared 'Assumed into Heaven – Body and Soul' in 1950, and 'Queen of Heaven' in 1954 - to tumultuous applause in St. Peter's Square in Rome.

But in a universe still doctrinally 'fallen,' she was never called Queen of Earth. In many paintings and sculptures she sits enthroned with the Moon beneath her feet, often drawn as the black dragon of death, complete with claws and tail - and so, yet again, Earth continues to be excluded from any kind of divinity.



Fig. 29. The Virgin Mary in heaven with the Moon as a dragon beneath her feet. Geertgen tot St Jans. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam. 1460-65.

Yet, when the Christian story of Mary is understood through the archetypal tradition of the Mother Goddess – usually only in art, folklore and poetry - the ancient divinity of Earth often subtly reappears – as in the 12<sup>th</sup> century legend of the Flight into Egypt, when Mary becomes again the Corn Goddess creating the Miracle of Grain - the seeds of corn, just sewn, suddenly becoming thick and tall plants - hiding the baby Jesus from the Roman soldiers who had come looking for him.



Fig. 30. The Weinstrauch Madonna, with her crown of flowers and fruit, holding Jesus as a baby and crucified on the Tree of Life – the vine tree, reminiscent of the tradition of death and rebirth personified by the Greek god Dionysos. Cast stone sculpture from Munster, near Dieburg, Germany. 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This 14<sup>th</sup> century Madonna from Mainz in Germany, carved out of stone, evokes the feeling of the sacred generosity of Earth in her rich crown of fruits and flowers. She holds both the baby Jesus and the Tree of Life upon which he was crucified – here, his body the stem and his arms the branches – comprehending birth and death within her far-seeing vision, gazing through, and beyond, them both.

## Spirit and Nature

In orthodox Christian theology, the original polarisation - between the transcendent Heaven and the literally ‘cursed ground’ of Earth in *Genesis* - was perpetuated by a radical distinction between Divine Spirit and Fallen Nature. When ‘Spirit’ is contrasted with, or more doctrinally, *opposed to*, ‘Nature’ – it carries the implicit assumption that this is the way things are and have always been - that is, an objective reality. It is then surprising to discover that the origin of our word ‘Nature’ was only formulated by the pre-Socratics in Greece around 600 BC, and only later was *separated from*, and then *opposed to*, Spirit.

‘Nature’ is a Latin word from *Natus* meaning ‘being born,’ and is itself a translation of the Greek *Phusis* – a verbal noun based on *phuo*, to ‘grow’ or ‘appear.’ C.S. Lewis, another of ‘the Inklings,’ points out in his book *The Discarded Image* that *phusis* was an idea first invented by the pre-Socratics to talk about the great variety of growing phenomena under a single name – *phusis*. This was to simplify the existing custom of each place having their own individual names for the plants they grew, which were not always intelligible to other places. Though, it is significant that the specific particularities - or the unique life - of the plants themselves had become less important than the human convention of understanding the underlying idea common to all of them, and sharing it at a new conceptual level of the mind.

This was further complicated when, over 200 years later, Aristotle (384-322 BC) chose to divide the universe into two regions: the lower region of change he called *phusis* – literally, ‘growth,’ from which we get *physical and physics* - and the upper region he called *ouranos*, sky (the name of the Greek god *Ouranos*, whom we call Uranus after the Romans). But because the sky also ‘changed’ with atmosphere and weather, he proposed a still higher level above sky, which he called Aether, which did not change and so was where the eternal gods lived. By introducing this religious element, and confining it to what was both changeless and invisible, the implication followed that everything ‘below the Moon’ – that is, where *Ouranos* ended and *Phusis* began - was *not* divine – a judgement perpetuated in formal Christian imagery, particularly through Aristotle’s influence on Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74). in the 13<sup>th</sup> century:



Fig. 31. The Virgin Mary with a down-turned Crescent Moon beneath her feet. Painted statue. Birnau Church, Lake Constance, Germany. c. 1450.

Having opposed eternity and time, ‘change’ inevitably took on the ideas of irregularity and inconstancy - disregarding the changeless pattern of phases of change in the lunar model of waxing, waning, death and rebirth – corresponding to the living patterns of growth, death and rebirth taking place on Earth below. The Roman Cicero (106-43 BC) then took up Aristotle’s scheme, translating *Phusis* into the word *Natura* from Latin, *Natus*. But this new term ‘Nature’ had now become secular, bringing with it death, whereas the pattern of growth, flowering, death and rebirth were all originally understood as inherent phases of the divine process, and related to humanity through the millennial myths of the dying and resurrected goddesses and gods. Along with Aristotle, Cicero placed all that is eternal ‘Above the Moon – *super lunam*.’

So by Roman times *Natura* was nearer to a concept than an original deity, and the former identification with Mother Earth, Goddess of All, was lost, with the result that Earth moved still further away from the hearts of human beings. Lewis comments:

Nature may be the oldest of things, but *Natura* is the youngest of divinities... 'Mother Nature' is a conscious metaphor. 'Mother' Earth is something quite different. When, in Greek times, for instance, she lies beneath Father Sky, he begets, she bears. You can see it happening. This is genuine mythopoeia. But while the mind is working on that level, what, in heaven's name, is Nature? Where is she? Who has seen her? What does she do?

29



Fig. 32. In this 3rd century AD Roman mosaic, it would seem that allegory has replaced symbolism. Mother Earth's eternal rebirth is now taken over by Aeon, god of eternity and everlasting time, standing in the circle of the zodiac, between the green tree of summer and the bare tree of winter. Tellus, 'Mother Nature,' the Roman version of Gaia - now much diminished - is seated on the ground with her four children, possibly representing the four seasons of the year. She is no longer a symbol of eternity - only the changing patterns of time. Floor mosaic from a Villa in Sentinum in Italy, now known as Sassoferrato. c. 200-250 AD.

## The Internalisation of the Outer World

In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century in the west, this stage of ‘Withdrawal of Participation’ intensified, when what was left of Earth’s wisdom was transferred to humans, and specifically the saving power, so it was thought, of Reason in the Age of Enlightenment. Human consciousness, it was believed, could now at last expand inwards and learn to name and control those outward phenomena whose immanent beauty would otherwise tempt it away from the moral law and the law of Reason (believed by many at the time to be the same).



Fig. 33. *Isaac Newton*. William Blake. The Tate Gallery. 1795-1805.

Blake’s view of Newton is well known: ‘May God us keep / From Single Vision and Newton’s sleep.’ (*Letter to Thomas Butts*, 1802). ‘He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only, sees himself only.’ ‘Reason, or the ratio of what is already known, is not the same as it shall be when we know more.’ (*There is No Natural Religion*, 1788).

The further loss of numinous power in what could be seen and felt in the outer world of Nature left human beings more free to shape their surroundings - though also more alone in the midst of them and so less open to their correction when things went wrong. Nonetheless, the freeing of the outer and inner worlds from each other made it possible for each world to be explored separately, making possible empirical science at one pole and a psychology of

consciousness at the other, as well as many stations in between. Out of this latest phase, the ‘flowering’ of the rational mind was fostered, which was supposed to defy the once overpowering numinosity of Nature and banish what it now called superstition. The question of how to reunite the now separated worlds in a new synthesis was not considered.

Owen Barfield, among others, defines this further stage as ‘Internalisation,’ where the inner world is emphatically opposed to the outer world. We can see it in the proliferation of words expressing something new in human thinking, and also words about the act of human thinking itself. John Locke, for instance, in 1634, adopts the word already newly coined - ‘consciousness’ – but defines it, for the first time, as a ‘perception of what passes in a man’s own mind,’ giving *self*-consciousness its modern meaning.

That was ten years before Descartes in 1644 came up with his *Cogito ergo sum*. Since Descartes, philosophy has typically worked *outwards* from the individual thinking self, rather than *inwards* from the Cosmos to the soul. – What T.S. Eliot called a ‘dissociation of sensibility,’<sup>30</sup> the poet Yeats memorably portrayed as ‘that morning when Descartes discovered that he could think better in his bed than out of it.’<sup>31</sup> Yeats also wrote of a ‘bursting into fragments,’<sup>32</sup> the chief of which was a fragmentation of human beings from Nature, both outer Nature and our own inner nature, assumed up till then, albeit with differing emphases, to be of the same essence.



Fig. 34. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, carrying his crown and eating grass. William Blake. Plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Relief etching. c. 1790–93.

Beneath Blake’s depiction of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, is the inscription: ‘One Law for the Lion and Ox is Oppression.’ It was Blake’s passionate conviction that each person has their own instinctive nature and their own unique genius: ‘No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.’

Barfield warns that this new kind of consciousness has become so invisibly embedded in the way we now perceive the world that we can hardly recognize it:

With the 17th century, the consciousness of ‘myself’ and the distinction between ‘myself’ and all other selves, the antithesis between ‘myself,’ the observer - and the external world, the observed - is such an obvious and early fact of experience to every one of us, such a fundamental starting point of our life as conscious beings, that it really requires a sort of training of the imagination to be able to conceive of any different kind of consciousness.<sup>33</sup>

Yet this new radical distinction between inner and outer kept on growing until it became ‘self’ and ‘not-self,’ and then ‘self’ and ‘other.’ Many self-reflective words appeared for the first time, which are now – ominously - almost impossible to think without – ‘self-knowledge,’ for instance – though, as a conceptual idea, it does not in that moment implicate us, as did the original verbal command of Socrates to ‘know thyself.’ Further, this division of self and not-self may have encouraged a habit of thinking in oppositions, in direct contrast to the Imagination which seeks to unify opposites into a new whole, as the Romantic poets explore.

Around this time, the conception of ‘laws’ governing the outer world arises and grows steadily more impersonal, and then even what is already called ‘matter’ is described objectively and disinterestedly, while at the same time Earth ceases to be the centre round which the cosmos revolves.



Fig. 35. ‘Mother Nature.’ *Atalanta Fugiens*, Alchemical text. 17th century.

In this 17<sup>th</sup> century Alchemical text *Atalanta Fugiens*, Earth, or ‘Mother Nature’ as She has become, is no longer a goddess, only a personification.

It was as though the European drive was to disentangle itself from what it now called its 'environment' – a word from the French, *environs*, which means simply 'round about' - while at the same time inevitably becoming more of a spectator than an actor.



Fig. 36. 'Infant Joy.' *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, 1826. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Barfield concludes that:

We have to accustom ourselves thoroughly to the thought that the dualism, objective, subjective, is fundamental neither psychologically, historically, nor philosophically.<sup>34</sup>

Dualism, then, is simply a stage in our thinking - a necessary stage, but *not* inherent in the nature of things. But the legacy of this assumption is that Nature and Humanity are now polarized in collective assumptions about ‘the nature of reality’ - beliefs that are difficult to see, let alone suspend.

The literary critic Northrop Frye, in his book *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, has warned about what he calls ‘mythological conditioning.’ He writes:



Fig. 37. St. Michael and the Dragon. Les Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry. Musée Condé, Chantilly, France. 1412-1416.

Man lives, not directly or nakedly in nature like the animals, but within a mythological universe, a body of assumptions and beliefs developed from his existential concerns. Most of this is held unconsciously, which means that our imaginations may recognize elements of it, when presented in art or literature, without consciously understanding what it is that we recognize. Practically all that we can see of this body of concern is socially conditioned and culturally inherited. Below the cultural inheritance, there must be a common psychological inheritance, otherwise forms of culture would not be intelligible to us. But I doubt if we can reach this common inheritance directly, by-passing the distinctive qualities in our specific culture. One of the practical functions of criticism, by which I mean the conscious organizing of a cultural tradition, is, I think, to make us more aware of our mythological conditioning.<sup>35</sup>

The term ‘mythological conditioning’ suggests that we may be caught in an old myth without realizing it and, further, that this may be what continually prevents us from responding to Earth’s cry for our help in changing the way we relate to Her.

One of the potential dangers of talking about ‘Gaia’ - without having understood the extent of the separation of ‘Spirit’ and ‘Nature’ of the last 2000 years - is that many people might unconsciously assume that ‘Gaia’ is *outside* us, and forget, or cannot yet feel deeply enough, that *we also are* ‘Gaia’ – one of the infinite forms of the Consciousness of Earth, or perhaps we should say, Consciousness as Earth, including ourselves. Is it then possible, that this recognition could itself be an aspect of the dynamic self-regulation of the whole, suggested in the ‘Gaia Hypothesis’? That, in other words, in ways we can barely conceive, ‘Gaia’ also works through the Collective Unconscious of human beings. Or perhaps, more evocatively, that Gaia is the latest expression of the Soul of the World, the *Anima Mundi*?

In the light of this, it is interesting to see Jung anticipating the end of this two thousand year period of history. When he writes earlier that ‘hemmed round by rationalistic walls, we are cut off from the eternity of nature,’<sup>36</sup> he is expressing his awareness of the limitation of Reason upon us, but almost as though this is inevitable and irrevocable. Yet, in his later Autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, it is as though the ‘eternity’ of nature has come irresistibly to life, when he speaks of his feeling of being ‘spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the processions of the seasons.’<sup>37</sup>

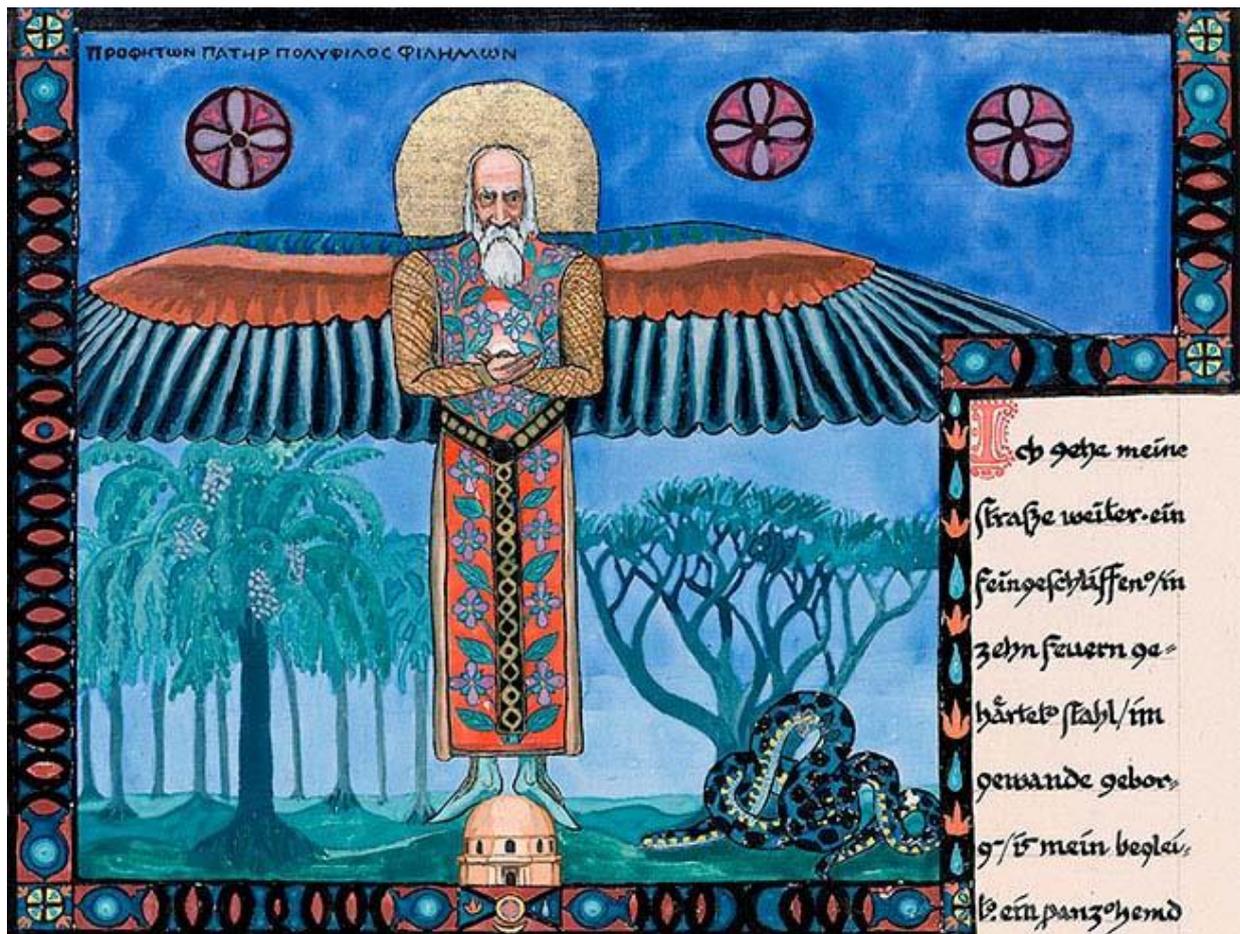


Fig. 38. Jung's painting of his 'Daimon,' Philemon, who taught him about the archetypal psyche in his dreams. Image From the *Red Book* by C. G. Jung, Painted by Jung, and Published by The Philemon Foundation (See footnote 38.)

And it is significant that some pages later he says: 'The more uncertain I have felt about myself, the more there has grown in me a feeling of kinship with all things.'<sup>38</sup> The implication here is that it is *uncertainty* which may open our hearts, and release us from the dualism which first separates us from Earth and then would have us interpret the life of Earth as 'nothing but' our own 'projected' life – perhaps the most arrogant assumption of the myth of the last two thousand years of what might be seen as our own mythological conditioning.

Many poets summon the virtue of 'not knowing' to free the Imagination. Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief for the moment' - for life, as for a poem;<sup>39</sup> and John Keats's plea for what he calls 'Negative Capability,' that is, when a man is capable of being in 'uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.'<sup>40</sup>

## Final Participation



Fig. 39. This painting is called 'Participation' – painted by Owen A. Barfield, who is Owen Barfield's Grandson. He has also created a website where all his Grandfather's books and his own paintings can be found.

This is the opportunity to bring back together the human soul and the Soul of the World at a new level through the Imagination – and this means not only all the Imaginative Arts, but also bringing Imagination into all aspects of life.

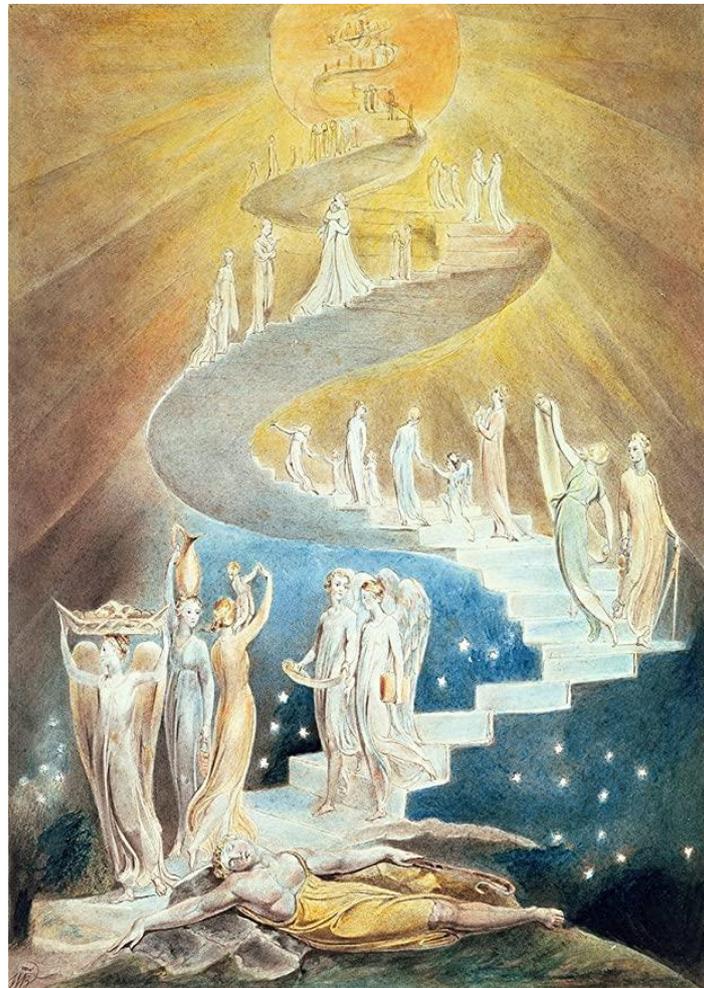


Fig. 40. Jacob's Ladder, William Blake. Pen and watercolour. 1799-1806. British Museum. Blake's imagining of Jacob's dream uniting Earth and Heaven

Einstein said that 'Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.'<sup>41</sup> Since myths are forms of Imagination, a new way of being inevitably seeks a new myth; or, to turn it around, a new myth, becoming numinous, inevitably changes our way of being in the world. As Joseph Campbell writes:

The old gods are dead or dying, and people everywhere are searching, asking: “What is the new mythology to be, the mythology of this unified earth as of one harmonious being?”<sup>42</sup>

Restoring poetry to our vision resembles the novelist Thomas Mann’s understanding of myth as a ‘late and mature’ stage of the individual which comes out of the early youthful engagement with myth, but renders it conscious, and so can live it and not be lived by it.<sup>43</sup>

The poet Coleridge’s work on Imagination came to include the possibility of the conscious will being able to co-exist with Imagination without ‘harming’ it - without diminishing it or driving it away. The challenge is to relate to Imagination with all aspects of our consciousness – pursuing the dialogue that Imagination initiates – with intellect and passion - rather as a poet does when a poem beckons, following wherever it goes. Coleridge writes of Imagination as a ‘unifying, synthetic power, which brings the whole soul of man into activity,’ and this is ‘the soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole’<sup>44</sup> – which reveals the ‘eternal in and through the temporal.’

So the question becomes, how may Gaia be revealed as *eternal* - Who has been dismissed for centuries, if not millennia, as being only and merely temporal?

In one sense, the only change that is needed – if ‘only’ were not in this case ‘everything’ – is that we experience our Earth again as ‘*Thou*’ - with all the mutual love, respect and reciprocity of any personal relationship - as many people already do without even thinking of it- especially of course Indigenous People - which in the end is perhaps no more – and no less - than the Sanskrit understanding of *Thou art That – Tat Tuam Asi...*



Fig. 41. *Albion or Glad Day*. William Blake. Colour printed engraving, finished with pen and ink and watercolour. The Huntington Library, California. 1793-6.

As in Blake's painting of Albion or Glad Day. Blake writes:

He who binds to himself a joy  
Doth the winged life destroy.  
He who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in Eternity's sunrise.<sup>45</sup>

If we look with Blake's 'double vision' – with the inner and the outer eye together – then Nature and human nature become naturally permeable to each other:

A double vision my eyes do see,  
And a double vision is always with me.  
With my inner eye 'tis an old man grey,  
With my outer a thistle across my way.<sup>46</sup>

‘To a Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself,’ Blake says, ‘As a Man is, so he sees.’<sup>47</sup>

So here, it is we who, following Blake’s insight, may – as though in the Eleusinian Mysteries - move beyond our customary ways of being in such a way as to transform them into a new whole - seeing ‘the world as it is, infinite’ – one where - *Gaia, Earth, Nature* - may be seen as ‘Imagination Herself.’

And now we come to Thomas Berry.

## Thomas Berry: The Great Work

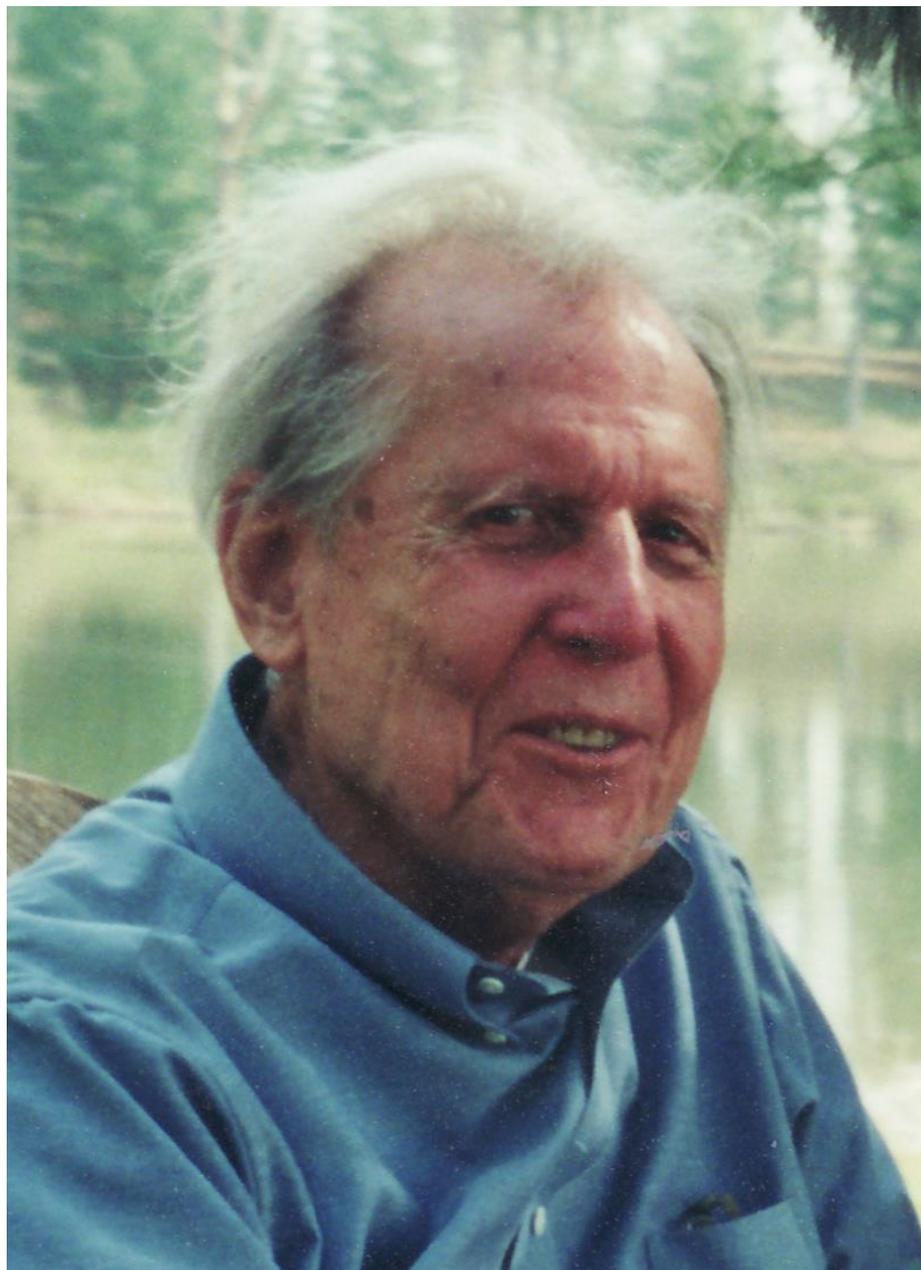


Fig. 42. Thomas Berry. Photograph taken by Liz Hosken, *The Gaia Foundation*, London.

Born in North Carolina in 1914, he was a lifelong Passionist Monk, who became a cultural historian and scholar of the world's religions, especially the religions of Asia – living in China for a year - and also of Indigenous People. He would introduce himself - with a twinkle

in his eye - as someone who, at the age of 11, fell in love with a meadow, and decided then, and forever afterwards, that ‘Good is what is Good for the Meadow.’ Earth comes first, and humans cannot be moral beings without a corresponding morality to Earth.

All his studies opened out into the rest of the universe. His study of theology became a study of history, western history became Asian history and the history of Indigenous Peoples, and human history became the history of the Earth - past, present and future. Whatever was missing from a particular dimension of thought, *that* was what he sought to explore, forever reaching for the widest, most comprehensive, whole: the Story of the Universe. He was, then, in a unique position to place the Human Story and the Earth Story within the Universe Story. He asked us to recognize that we are now ‘between stories,’ and it is our role at this point in history to embody the New Story.

Thomas also diagnosed a way out of our current impasse through the Imagination: ‘Loss of Imagination and loss of Nature, they’re the same thing,’ he said.<sup>48</sup> The way to imagine the New Story and bring it to life was to include *all* the beings in the universe in their own right, given to them with their birth - their own particular right to be who they are: whether predator or prey, mountain or valley, river, sea, forest, birds, fish, insects, trees, flowers – everyone.

In his Schumacher Lectures and in his last books, he taught and wrote the manifesto: *Every Being has Rights*. He explored the idea that ‘the natural rights of natural beings come from the same source as human rights: from the universe that brought us, that brought all things, into being... the right to be, the right to habitat, and the right to fulfill one’s role in the great community of existence.’<sup>49</sup> It followed from this that existing laws, oriented to human beings alone, had to be transformed to include the whole Earth Community of which humans are only a part. He called this ‘Earth Jurisprudence.’ By now he was describing himself not as a *Theologian*, but as a *Geologist*, pointing to the ‘Grand Liturgy of the Universe’ as sacred in itself, beyond any, and all, categories of faith. This is what he says:

The natural world on the planet Earth gets its rights from the same source that humans get their rights, from the universe that brought them into being... (This, he called the *Great Jurisprudence*). Every component of the Earth community has three rights: the right to be, the right to habitat, and the right, and responsibility,

to fulfil its role in the ever-renewing processes of the Earth community. All rights are species-specific and limited. Rivers have river rights. Birds have bird rights. Insects have insect rights. Humans have human rights. Difference in rights is qualitative, not quantitative. The rights of an insect would be of no value to a tree or a fish. Human rights do not cancel out the rights of other modes of being to exist in their natural state. Human property rights are *not* absolute . . . Each component of the Earth community is immediately or mediately dependent on every other member of the community for the nourishment and assistance it needs for its own survival. This mutual nourishment, which includes the predator-prey relationship, is integral with the role that each component of the Earth has within the community of existence .<sup>50</sup>

Thomas was not entirely happy with the language of rights, but he believed that we have to begin from where we find ourselves. Since, in 1886, corporations were, astonishingly, given the rights of individuals, then so at least should Earth, in all her gloriously diverse manifestations, have the rights of an individual life.



Fig. 43. A Meadow.

Law is necessary where morality has failed, and morality is necessary where love is absent. But if we *love, and so know*, the meadows, woodlands, rivers and the whole community of beings who live there, then we *feel* with them and *understand* what everyone needs to

flourish. Their wounds become our wounds: we are all mutually dependent, mutually reflecting and mutually enhancing. That is why we need to learn the language of mountains and rivers, trees, birds, animals, insects, and everyone else, and also the language of the stars in the heavens.

Is this not – in one of its infinite dimensions - what ‘Final Participation’ might look like?



Fig. 44. Delphi, with a sole individual in the centre.

Looking back, 2,400 years ago, it seems quite reasonable that humans and Earth would be bound together in mutual relationship, so that *Gaia* would suffer the King’s folly - both in Herself, and also as the only way to bring the King to an awareness of what he has done and, ultimately, who he is?

Yet how is that different from what is happening now, at this moment, all over the planet? Are we not ourselves, like Oedipus, *also* guilty of *Hubris*?

In the many long centuries of distancing ourselves from Earth, we no longer register what we do: it does not seem to *implicate* us. How, we wonder, what happens so far away, so high above and deep below, how could it have anything to do with us? We seem to have learned how to deny, or explain away, the visceral connection between human acts and natural devastation, habitually resisting the relationship between causes and effects until we can barely recognize the destruction as our own – a classic human failing, but now with consequences far beyond our understanding. There are of course many exceptions, especially with Indigenous People, but taking the world’s *collective response* as a whole, do we not, more or less, just *wait* - hang about - the adolescents of Earth’s Creation, still expecting Her to work it out Herself? After all, She always used to.

\* \* \*

In ancient Greece, Gaia called out once, and She was heard. But what if, in a Silent Spring, Gaia calls, Persephone calls, and no-one is listening, no-one can hear? And now there is no Delphic Oracle to confront *each one of us* with the truth of what we are doing, and remind us of who we are – Children of Earth - unless we seek it in our own hearts’ anguish, and act.

To end with Einstein:

Human beings are part of the whole called by us ‘the universe,’ a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest – a kind of optical illusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires, and affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free us from this prison by widening our circle of understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of Nature in Her beauty.<sup>51</sup>

## End Notes

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3. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, sc. 1. 43-44: 'What's in a name? ... That which we call by any other name would smell as sweet.'
4. William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, London, Faber & Faber, 1954.
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6. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, sc. i, 14-15.
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13. William Blake in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *Blake: Complete Poetry and Prose*, London, Nonesuch Library, 1961, p. 187.
14. Owen Barfield, *History in English Words*, Edinburgh, Floris Books, 1967; *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning*, Oxford, Barfield Press, 2010; *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Hanover, NH, Wesleyan University Press, 1988. For Owen Barfield's many other books, see Owen Barfield's website: 'owenbarfield.org.'
15. Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 7000 to 3,500 BC, Myths and Cults*, University of California Press, 1982.
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17. C.G. Jung, Letter to P.W. Martin, 20 August, 1945, in *C.G. Jung Letters I*, selected and edited by Gerhard Adler in collaboration with Aniela Jaffe, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, p. 377.
18. See Baring and Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*, Chapter One, The Palaeolithic Mother Goddess, pp 1-45.

## Original Participation

19. See Owen Barfield, *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. edition, Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1988, p. 42.
20. See Jules Cashford, *The Moon: Symbol of Transformation*, Carterton, Greystones Press, 2016, Ch. 1, pp. 23-26.
21. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 55-65.

## Withdrawal of Participation

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32. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
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  37. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe, London, Fontana Paperbacks, Flamingo edition, 1965, pp. 225-6.
  38. Jung, *Ibid.*, p. 392: “Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself, but in his view thoughts were like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air, and added, “If you should see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them.” It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche. Through him the distinction was clarified between myself and the object of my thought. He confronted me in an objective manner, and I understood that there is something in me which can say things that I do not know and do not intend, things which may even be directed against me.”
  39. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Litteraria*, London, J.M. Dent, 1975, Ch. IV, pp. 168-9.
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Fig. 22. Marduk slaying Tiamat, depicted as a serpent. Line Drawing. Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal. British Museum. c. 800 BC.

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Fig. 33. ‘Isaac Newton,’ William Blake. Ink and watercolour. 1795-1805. The Tate Gallery.

Fig. 34. The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, carrying his crown and eating grass. Plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake. Relief etching. c. 1790–93.

Fig. 35. ‘Mother Nature.’ Michael Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens*. Alchemical text, published by Johann Theodor de Bry in Oppenheim in 1617.

Fig. 36. 'Infant Joy.' William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 1784.

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Fig. 37. 'St. Michael and the Dragon.' *Les Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry*. Musée Condé Chantilly, France. c. 1312-1416.

Fig. 38. C.G. Jung's painting of Philemon. Image from *The Red Book* by C. G. Jung. Published by The Philemon Foundation.

### Final Participation

Fig. 39. 'Participation.' Painted by Owen A. Barfield (Grandson). Watercolour.

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Fig. 40. 'Jacob's Ladder,' William Blake. Pen and watercolour. 1799-1806. British Museum.

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Fig. 42. Thomas Berry. Photo taken by Liz Hosken, The Gaia Foundation.

Fig. 43. A Meadow.

Fig. 44. Delphi, Mount Parnassus, Greece.

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