

Jung's Self-Reports of his Paranormal Experiences

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The sign over the entrance of Jung's estate.

VOCATUS ATQUE NON VOCATUS DEUS ADERIT

(Called or not called God will be there)

This phrase is inscribed over the door of Carl Jung's estate in Küsnacht, Zürich. I had the privilege to visit this place in April of 2025. The house was built in 1909 by Jung and his wife Emma when she inherited from her father and IWC after his sudden death. They bought the land from an orphanage and built the house as they dreamed by the shores of lake Zürich. As of 2018 it has turned into a **museum** and people can visit the house, the library and the study of Jung which is preserved as it was at the time when he died in 1961. Along with two colleagues, Martin Roesch and Katya Kobzeva we had the privilege to scroll through the place where Jung spent most of his lifetime. In the

large sunny dining room, many famous personalities of the early 20th century paraded from world leaders to major thinkers of those times. In this dining room great meetings with colleagues and students took place in the evenings usually consuming their favorite Burgundy wines, while in the summer time they would move out to the beautiful garden by the lake. There was an extra room adjacent to the main house like a greenhouse where he kept exhibits of his world travels. Artifacts from the Pueblo Indians, Africa, India etc. I was impressed by a bust of Homer in one of the corners of this room.

As we proceeded to the first floor, we saw the waiting room of his patients. The patients would walk in the house from the main entrance as everybody else who lived or worked there and then they would be accepted at his study, a room next to his main library where he conducted the sessions.

His impressive library consists of more than five thousand books but it seems that there is no available record of them. The categorization of books is left as it was done by Jung himself. Unfortunately, no pictures were allowed to be taken so we have no documentation of our visit. There is also a shop that is selling souvenirs, as well as some of Jung's books at the reception, and visitors can purchase whatever they please.

On the land that surrounds the house Jung had usually maintained a garden with all kinds of vegetables and he would encourage his patients to join him as he was conducting his therapy with them. Everyone knows how therapeutic the encounter with the soil and plants can be. It seems that his own therapy was taking place when in the summer vacations with his kids, in the small isles of upper lake Zürich, they would build castles with canals and fortresses all day long. In this family camping out in the wild they would light a fire and share fairy tales and do star gazing. This is in stark contrast with today's vacations, which lack the authentic bond with mother nature and the link to way of life of our ascendants.

Further on sometimes in the summer he would take his patients into this little garden house and conduct the session in there. Either for reasons of privacy – they had five children with Emma- or when the weather was too hot. Coincidentally – or

synchronistically as Jung would put it – our current year is one hundred and fifty years away from Carl Jung's birth. In Zürich the **International Congress of Analytical Psychology** celebrated the 150th Anniversary of C.G. Jung.

Undoubtedly, Jung was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th Century. He was not only a psychiatrist, he was a genuine researcher of the human psyche and spirit, he was an amateur philosopher and an original intellectual with respect to his intuition and visions. Even though he was severely criticized for his preoccupation – others would say obsession – with alchemy, the occult, and even astrology, no one can dispute his contributions to mainstream psychology. Concepts like the animus/anima, the Self, the mask, the notion of the complex, the Shadow, the psychological types of introvert vs extrovert, active imagination, transference and countertransference, the archetypes, the process of individuation, the idea of collective unconscious, or the principle of synchronicity are concepts that came here to stay. His collected works add up to twenty full volumes without his autobiography, or the other two volumes of his letters, or the **Red Book**. The University of Zürich has the complete archive of 34,000 letters from and to C.G. Jung. This prolific writer and innovative therapist never stopped working until his death when he was almost 86 years old. When he turned seventy, he responded to a letter of a German student of his like this:

“I can only hope and wish that no one becomes “Jungian.” I stand for no doctrine, but describe facts and put forward certain views which I hold worthy of discussion. I criticize Freudian psychology for a certain narrowness and bias, and the Freudians for a certain rigid, sectarian spirit of intolerance and fanaticism. I proclaim no cut-and-dried doctrine and I abhor “blind adherents.” I leave everyone free to deal with the facts in his own way, since I also claim this freedom for myself.”

In an earlier advise to fellow therapists he was very clear as to what makes a good therapist from an ivory tower scholar, proving once again how way out of line from the mainstream flow he was.

“Anyone who wants to know the human psyche will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology. He would be better advised to [abandon exact science] put away his scholar’s gown, bid farewell to his study, and wander with human heart through the world. There, in the horrors of prisons, lunatic asylums and hospitals, in drab suburban pubs, in brothels and gambling-hells, in the salons of the elegant, the Stock Exchanges, Socialist meetings, churches, revivalist gatherings and ecstatic sects, through love and hate, through the experience of passion in every form in his own body, he would reap richer stores of knowledge than text-books a foot thick could give him, and he will know how to doctor the sick with real knowledge of the human soul. He may be pardoned if his respect for the so-called cornerstones of experimental psychology is no longer excessive. For between what science calls psychology and what the practical needs of daily life demand from psychology there is a great gulf fixed.”

In this essay I have no way to enclose a life so rich than that of C.G. Jung. There are dozens of books out there that have done so many years ago. Instead, I am planning to focus on the experiences of the paranormal he had the courage to share with the public, either in his memoir or through his letters. So, actually it will be Jung talking in his own words and I have no intention whatsoever to comment on them or try to rationalize on what they were or were not. I leave that to you, our readers. Finally, I will close this section with an essay by Roger Woolger on what he thought was Jung’s stance on the reincarnation topic.

The spiritualist background.

“...*If practical experience has not already done so, that the improbable does occur, and that our picture of the world only tallies with reality when the improbable has a place in it.*”

Jung’s doctoral dissertation was actually based on the spiritualist experiments with his cousin Helen Preiswerk which took place between 1895 to 1899. May be the phenomena described underneath have something to do with the seances that were held in that summer house in 1898.

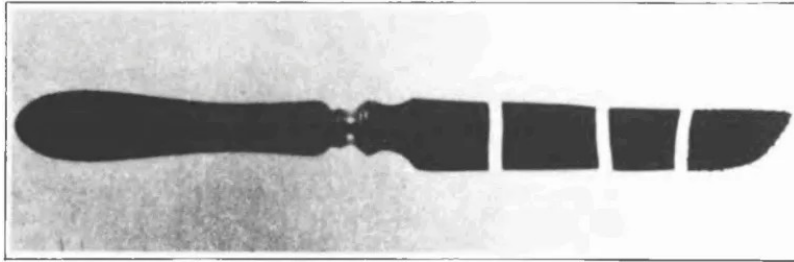
The first account goes like this:

Jung's doctoral dissertation

“During the summer holidays, however, something happened that was destined to influence me profoundly. One day I was sitting in my room, studying my textbooks. In the adjoining room, the door to which stood ajar, my mother was knitting. That was our dining room, where the round walnut dining table stood. The table had come from the dowry of my paternal grandmother, and was at this time about seventy years old. My mother was sitting by the window, about a yard away from the table. My sister was at school and our maid in the kitchen. Suddenly there sounded a report like a pistol shot. I jumped up and rushed into the room from which the noise of the explosion had come. My mother was sitting flabbergasted in her armchair, the knitting fallen from her hands. She stammered out, “W-w-what’s happened? It was right beside me” and stared at the table. Following her eyes, I saw what had happened. The table top had split from the rim to beyond the center, and not along any joint; the split ran right through the solid wood. I was thunderstruck. How could such a thing happen? A table of solid walnut that had dried out for seventy years—how could it split on a summer day in the relatively high degree of humidity characteristic of our climate? If it had stood next to a heated stove on a cold, dry winter day, then it might have been conceivable. What in the world could have caused such an explosion? “There certainly are curious accidents,” I thought. My mother nodded darkly. “Yes, yes,” she said in her No. 2 voice, “that means something.” Against my will I was impressed and annoyed with myself for not finding anything to say.

Some two weeks later I came home at six o’clock in the evening and found the household—my mother, my fourteen-year-old sister, and the maid—in a great state of agitation. About an hour earlier there had been another deafening report. This time it was not the already damaged table; the noise had come from the direction of the sideboard, a heavy piece of furniture dating from the early nineteenth century. They had already looked all over it, but had found no trace of a split. I immediately began examining the sideboard and the entire surrounding area, but just as fruitlessly.

Then I began on the interior of the sideboard. In the cupboard containing the bread basket I found a loaf of bread, and, beside it, the bread knife. The greater part of the blade had snapped off in several pieces. The handle lay in one corner of the rectangular basket, and in each of the other corners lay a piece of the blade.



The shattered breadknife

The knife had been used shortly before, at four-o'clock tea, and afterward put away. Since then, no one had gone to the sideboard. The next day I took the shattered knife to one of the best cutlers in the town. He examined the fractures with a magnifying glass, and shook his head. "This knife is perfectly sound," he said. "There is no fault in the steel. Someone must have deliberately broken it piece by piece. It could be done, for instance, by sticking the blade into the crack of the drawer and – breaking off a piece at a time. Or else it might have been dropped on stone from a great height. But good steel can't explode. Someone has been pulling your leg." I have carefully kept the pieces of the knife to this day. My mother and my sister had been in the room when the sudden report made them jump. My mother's No. 2 looked at me meaningfully, but I could find nothing to say. I was completely at a loss and could offer no explanation of what had happened, and this was all the more annoying as I had to admit that I was profoundly impressed. Why and how had the table split and the knife shattered? The hypothesis that it was just a coincidence, went much too far. It seemed highly improbable to me that the Rhine would flow backward just once, by mere chance—and all other possible explanations were automatically ruled out. So, what was it?

The telekinetic incident at Freud's office in Vienna.

"After all, there was nothing preposterous or world-shaking in the idea that there might be events which overstepped the limited categories of space, time, and

causality. Animals were known to sense beforehand storms and earthquakes. There were dreams which foresaw the death of certain persons, clocks which stopped at the moment of death, glasses which shattered at the critical moment.⁵

Memories, Dreams, Reflections

Jung was interested to hear Freud's views on precognition and on parapsychology in general. In a visit at Freud's office in 1909 he asked him what he thought on these matters. He bluntly rejected those issues as nonsense. At this moment:

"I had a curious sensation. It was as if my diaphragm were made of iron and were becoming red-hot – a glowing vault. And at that moment there was such a loud report in the bookcase, which stood right next to us, that we both started up in alarm, fearing that the things was going to topple over on us. I said to Freud: "There, that is an example of a so-called catalytic exteriorization phenomenon."⁶

'Oh come, 'he exclaimed. 'That is sheer bosh.'

'It is not, 'I replied. 'You are mistaken, Herr Professor. And to prove my point I now predict that in a moment there will be another loud report! 'Sure enough, no sooner had I said the words than the same detonation went off in the bookcase.⁶

Jung's daughters sense presence of lingering spirits.

When Jung was writing the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (The Seven Sermons to the Dead) he felt that a restlessness and an ominous atmosphere felt as if his house was filled with ghostly entities. "My eldest daughter saw a white figure passing through the room. My second daughter, independently of her elder sister, related that twice in the night her blanket had been snatched away; and at the same time my nine-year-old son had an anxiety dream.⁶ In that dream the young boy saw a fisherman whose head was a a smoking chimney to have caught a fish with his fishing rod. From the other side of the river the devil was flying over and cursing about his stolen fish. But above the fisherman was an angel who warned the devil that there is nothing he can do to the

fisherman because he only catches bad fish. All these were drawn on a picture on a Sunday morning.

The doorbell at Jung's house.

At the same period around five o'clock in the afternoon the front door began ringing frantically. "It was a bright summer day; the two maids were in the kitchen, from which the open square outside the front door could be seen. Everyone immediately looked to see who was there, but there was no one in sight. I was sitting near the door bell, and only heard it but saw it moving. We all simply stared at one another. The atmosphere was thick, believe me!... The whole house was filled as if there were a crowd present, crammed full of spirits.² Then Jung took up the pen and a flow of material was expressed through him for three evenings. When that was done the 'ghostly assemblage evaporated. The haunting was over.²

The ghostly crowd in Bollingen.

"It is also possible that I had been so much sensitized by the solitude that I was able to perceive the procession of 'departed folk 'who passed by:'

Memories, Dreams, Reflections



The Tower of Bollingen

After his mother's death Jung wanted to isolate himself on the upper part of lake Zürich and thus bought some land there and started building his first tower at Bollingen. It is amazing that after the instructions given to him by two local builders, he concluded the building of this house all by himself.

It was spring of 1924 when he awoke by footsteps going round the Tower. Distant music sounded coming closer and closer and he heard laughs and people talking. When he opened the window shutters there was nothing to be seen or heard. Everything stopped. He mulled at himself thinking he had dreamt all this, went back to bed and tried to sleep once more. As soon as he fell asleep the same experience continued. Footsteps, talk, laughter music. As he says:

"At the same time, I had a visual image of several hundred dark-clad figures, possibly peasant boys in their Sunday clothes, who had come down from the mountains and were pouring in around the Tower, on both sides, with a great deal of loud trampling, laughing, singing, and playing of accordions. Irritably, I thought, "this is really the limit! I thought it was a dream and now it turns out to be reality!"

At this point Jung woke up and looked out the window only to find that there was nothing out there. He concluded that this experience was probably a haunting. This sort of dream had never before or after occurred to Jung. Later on, he explained it away when he read an account by a 17th century Swiss chronicler who said that he had also witnessed a procession of men who poured past his hut on both sides, playing music and singing...The local herdsman told him that they are the departed folk. It was Wotan's army of departed souls.

Was it a time slip or a space slip in Ravenna?

"The experience in Ravenna is among the most curious events in my life:"



The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna

In 1933 Jung visited Galla Placidia for the second time in his life along with a friend and with embarrassment he discovered that in the place of the windows he had seen during his first visit there were now four mosaic frescoes of incredible beauty which, it seemed, he had entirely forgotten. The mosaic on the south side represented the baptism in the Jordan river. At the north was the passage of the children of Israel; the third faded from his memory but it might have shown Naaman being cleansed from leprosy in the Jordan river; the mosaic at the west side it was Christ holding out his hand to Peter, who was sinking beneath the waves. They studied these frescoes for at least twenty minutes. And Jung continues:

“When we left the baptistery, I went promptly to Alinari to buy photographs of the mosaics, but could not find any. Time was pressing -this was only a short visit – and so I postponed the purchase until later. I thought I might order the pictures from Zürich. When I was back home, I asked an acquaintance who was going to Ravenna to obtain the pictures for me. He could not locate them, for he discovered that the mosaics I had described did not exist... The lady who had been with me long refused to believe that what we had ‘seen with her own eyes ’had not existed.

Jung took the trouble to ascertain that at least the main features of what they both saw had been the same.

Jung's Near-Death Experience.

"This spectacle of old age would be unendurable did we not know that our psyche reaches into a region held captive neither by change in time nor by limitation of place. In that form of being our birth is a death and our death a birth. The scales of the whole hang balanced."

Letter December, 23 1950

In 1944 Carl Jung after he broke his foot had a massive heart attack. He experienced deliriums and visions which must have begun when he hung on the edge of death. The nurse testified to him that he was surrounded by a bright glow, a phenomenon she had witnessed sometimes with the dying. Extremely strange things happened to him. As he says, "It seemed to me that I was high up in space. Far below I saw the globe of Earth, bathed in gloriously blue light. I saw the deep blue sea and the continents." He then goes on to describe the parts of the planet he is looking from Ceylon and the Himalayas to the Sahara Desert, and the Mediterranean. As he was floating around, he saw a huge rock floating around right behind him. He found an opening there and someone who looked like a Hindu with a white gown seemed to be expecting him. Jung describes this in detail:

"As I approached the steps leading up to the entrance into the rock, a strange thing happened; I had the feeling that everything was being sloughed away; everything I aimed at or wished for or thought, the whole phantasmagoria of earthly existence, fell away or was stripped from me – an extremely painful process. Nevertheless, something remained; it was as if I now carried along with me everything I had ever experienced or done, everything that had happened around me. I might also say: it was with me, and I was it. I consisted of all that, so to speak. I consisted of my own history, and I felt with great certainty: this is what I am. 'I am a bundle of what has been, and has been accomplished.' This experience gave me a feeling of extreme poverty, but at the same time of great fullness. There was no longer anything I wanted or desired. I existed in an objective form; I was what I had been and lived."

As he approached the temple, he was certain that he would meet all those people that he belonged to in reality. He knew what had existed before him, why he came into being, and where was his life heading. As he said, “my life seemed to have been snipped out of a long chain of events and many questions had remained unanswered. Why had it taken this course? Why had I brought these particular assumptions with me? What would follow?”

As he was thinking all these matters his attention was diverted to a figure that floated up from the earth to his direction. It was his physician wearing a golden chain or a golden laurel wreath. But he saw him in his imagination as the *basileus* (king) of Kos. He appeared “as the temporal embodiment of the primal form. Dr H. had been delegated by the earth to deliver a message to me, to tell me that there was a protest against my going away...The moment I heard that the vision ceased.”

This coming back to earth life was a very painful procedure for him and all kinds of thoughts prevailed in his mind. He thought as if he was imprisoned and the reconciliation with his own body took more than three weeks. Then an interesting twist came in Jung’s mind. If Dr H. had appeared in his primal form, it meant that he was going to die since he belonged to the “greater company”. “Suddenly the terrifying thought came to me that Dr. H. would have to die in my stead.” Despite Jung’s efforts to warn his doctor that is what happened:

“In actual fact I was his last patient. On 4th April, 1944 – I still remember the exact date – I was allowed to sit up on the edge of my bed for the first time since the beginning of my illness, and on this same day Dr. H. took to his bed and did not leave it again. I heard that he was having intermittent attacks of fever. Soon afterwards he died of septicaemia.”

One can only wonder if such a death swap can take place...

The dead neighbor’s beckoning.

One night after a neighbor's funeral Jung was resting when he felt his dead friend's presence. It seemed as if he was standing at the foot of Jung's bed and was asking him to follow him. Jung did not feel that this was an apparition. It was more like an inner visual image that was like a fantasy. After the internal mental struggle Jung decided to follow him with his imagination. So let us here the story from Jung himself:

He led me out of the house, into the garden, out to the road, and finally to his house. I went in and he conducted me into his study. He climbed on a stool and showed me the second of five books with red bindings which stood on the second shelf from the top. Then the vision broke off. I was not acquainted with his library and did not know what books he owned. Certainly, I could never have made out from below the titles of the books he had pointed out to me on the second shelf from the top... The next morning, I went to his widow and asked whether I could look up something in my friend's library. Sure enough, there was a stool standing under the bookcase I had seen in my vision, and even before I came closer. I could see the five books with the red bindings. I stepped on the stool so as to be able to read the titles. They were translations of the novels of Emil Zola. The title of the second volume read: 'The Legacy of the Dead.' The contents seemed to me of no interest. Only the title was extremely significant in connection with this experience.

We have to be open to reconsider and always see with new eyes, revisit past axioms and ideas. As Jung said:

When Galileo discovered the moons of Jupiter with his telescope he immediately came into head-on collision with the prejudices of his learned contemporaries. Nobody knew what a telescope was and what it could do. Never before had anyone talked of the moons of Jupiter. Naturally every age thinks that all ages before it, were prejudiced, and today we think this more than ever and are just as wrong as all previous ages that thought so. How often have we not seen the truth condemned! It is sad but unfortunately true that man learns nothing from history. This melancholy fact will present us with the greatest difficulties as soon as we set about collecting empirical material that

would throw a little light on this dark subject, *for we shall be quite certain to find it where all the authorities have assured us that nothing is to be found.* [emphasis mine] (Jung, 1960)