

"One of the most important books I've ever read!" — Alice Walker

THE GREAT COSMIC MOTHER

REDISCOVERING THE
RELIGION OF THE EARTH



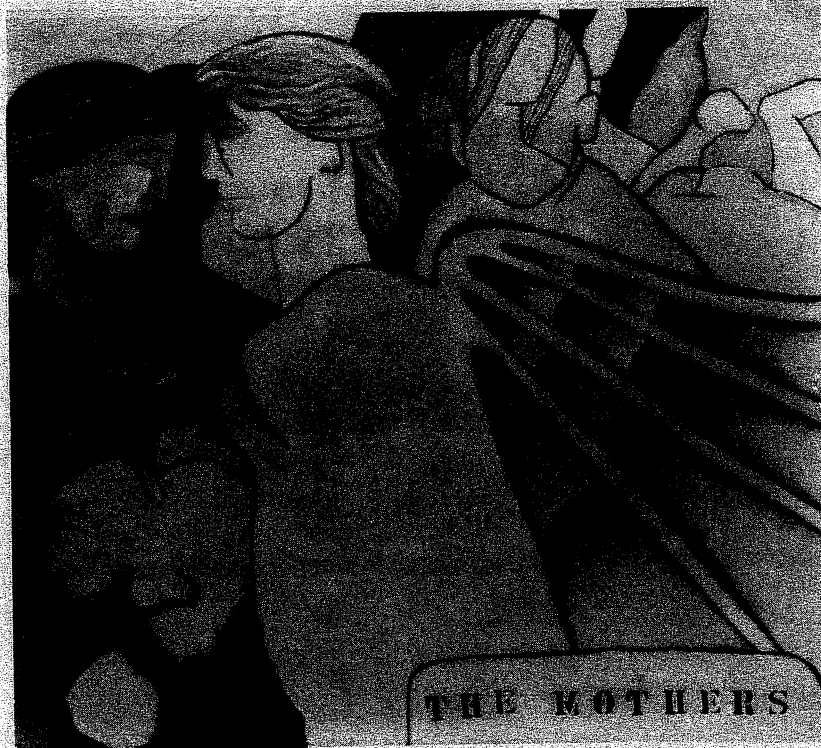
FEATURING A NEW INTRODUCTION
AND NEW COLOR ART

MONICA SJÖÖ & BARBARA MOR

RESPELL THE WORLD

Witches cast spells, not to do evil, but to promote changes of consciousness. Witches cast spells as acts of redefinition. To *respell the world* means to redefine the root of our being. It means to redefine us and therefore change us by returning us to our original consciousness of magical-evolutionary processes. This consciousness is within us, in our biology and in our dreams. It works on subliminal levels, whether or not we are aware of it, because it is the energy of life and imagination. When we are aware of it, it works *for us*, as the energy of destiny. And it is powerful, with the genuine power of biological life and cosmic imagination.

Perhaps ancient women had access to psychic and physical powers we have forgotten. Ancient people of both sexes, living under the Stone Age Great Mother, like those remaining of earth's primal people today, had "magical" powers—of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, teletransportation, of fire-walking and shape-changing, of healing and building—not because such powers were "pagan superstitions" or "of the Devil," but because they are natural powers of the earth. We know that the psychic-physical spinal techniques of illumination used by yogis and mystics, technical powers that lie dormant within all of us, were first developed by women, as natural modes of communication with the larger self, the earth, and the cosmos. During the later Paleolithic and throughout the Neolithic, sexual and spiritual powers were fused through the techniques of meditation, use of natural hallucinogens, and the spiraling, mandalic dances of creation-dissolution within the great caves, labyrinths, and stone circles. The energies generated by these techniques became power used to the benefit of all—which is the only way power can be safely used. Ancient legends speak of "the winged radiance of those who have achieved the dynamic equilibrium, the ecstatic union of the currents"—which is the description of those who have raised evolutionary energy, in the form of *kundalini*, the cosmic serpent, up through the spinal world tree of all manifest being, until it reaches the highest *chakra* of the human mind, becoming winged illumination. These beings were called "the undivided ones," of original gynandrous consciousness. With such powers, perhaps,



The Mothers, Sjöo, 1970

mountains could be moved, truly—great earth mounds could be built, great stones lifted and transported for miles, underground temples carved out of rock without the use of metal tools—i.e., great acts of physical construction could be performed, without force or slave labor, as expressions of a common consciousness and a common will. More important, acts of mental construction were performed which allowed people to live together harmoniously, in meaningful and exciting intercommunication with all the creatures of earth, earth herself, and the energy-beings of moon, sun, planets, and the stars. The time when “the mountains sang and the rivers clapped hands” was perhaps that numinous terrestrial time when all human beings were able to live harmoniously and consciously together as magic children within the living body of the cosmos.

Perhaps. We do not know. We can only look at the evidence, and imagine. We know only what we can imagine. We know only that we can imagine. That we can imagine, as no other creature on earth can do, signifies our uniqueness, both its quality and its purpose. We are the

imagining animals. We are the ones who participate in the earth's evolutionary process of imagination. For what is every manifest life-form and activity on earth if not the product of earth's imagination? Imagination, which is a form of memory moving both forward and backward in time; i.e., the creative process itself.

Perhaps the greatest harm patriarchy has done to us is to stifle, coopt, and deform our powers of imagination. Moralisms, dualistic dogmas, repressive prohibitions block our imagination at its source, which is the fusion of sexual and spiritual energies. Patriarchal religions keep this fusion from happening, imagination dies, and is replaced by mechanical-linear thought patterns, i.e., indoctrination. Human beings crippled in our imaginations, or no longer able to live in the terrain of dreams, are human beings undergoing indoctrination, exploitation, colonization. Soon the only way to get there anymore is via drugs, drunkenness, madness. Or vicariously, through the art and entertainment media. Patriarchy is an anti-evolutionary and an antimagic force; by cutting us off from our long evolutionary history, and in particular by dishonestly teaching us that our prepatriarchal ancestors were "immoral savages" or stupid unrealized beings whose lives were only "nasty, brutish, and short," it blocks our access to our own blood-history—it cuts us off from millions of years of creative evolutionary energy stored up in our genes, our genetic memories, the powerhouses of imagination. It lies to us about who we are by telling us lies about who we were; it changes us from "magical" to "sinful," in order to make us believe we need patriarchy to "save" us from our own selves. By cutting us off from magic as a natural property of earth, as a conscious form of biological energy, patriarchy further tries to make us dependent upon its mechanical systems and definitions as the only modes of life that work. In its denial of magic, patriarchy creates "objectivity" as the only legitimate mode of knowledge. Objectivity, as we've said, is a spectator sport based upon the illusion that the observer is *outside* the phenomenon being observed; the "objective observer" denies his participation in the observed phenomenon by virtually killing it, by making it into a dead thing. Thus all "objective information" is analogous to autopsy studies done on a corpse. Patriarchy has tried to render and redefine the entire earth and all its creatures as dead things, in order to sustain its pretense of possessing "objective information" about all of us. "Objective information," as Foucault has also shown, is merely a tool of control and exploitation; it is one of the modes of illegitimate power, otherwise known as profit.

Subjectivity, we must know, is the only state of experience in the universe. The only state of experienced being is as the subject experiencing itself, and the world, from within. (This includes the self experiencing itself experiencing other subjective beings.) There is no such thing as "object," because there is no thing to experience *itself* as "object." We are only subjects with the illusion of experiencing other subjects as "objects." The "object" exists only, and definitively, as an aspect of the subjective

consciousness; the aspect that defines "me" and "that" and some apprehension of a border between. As quantum physics shows us, this apprehension of a border is a purely subjective one, the kind of border found in cartoons and coloring books, and in the more subtle technology of the human eye. Physically, i.e., in quantum reality, no border exists. No border exists in the reality of the spirit, either, as the spirit is a conscious perception of real energy fields and interactions. The border perception is a function of the individual's experience of evolution through time and space; to initially perceive the reality of ourselves, perhaps, we need the border perception (infants, with immature eyes, don't have it). To begin to define the reality of the world, we need to erase it, to "transcend" it. *Everything touches everything in the real world*, there are no borders—and this is the fact upon which the validity of magic is based. I.e., to "objectify" us, to divide and conquer us, patriarchy needs to insist on the reality of borders while denying the reality of magic. Only in this way can we be perceptually, intellectually, systematically separated and thus weakened, while the great healing power of our common-bondedness remains repressed. This "common bond" is no moral sentiment or humanist ideal, but a biological and quantum fact. Its sheer power, when raised from the subliminal to the conscious level, could generate an energy more than equivalent to all the stored destruction of our bombs—for within us is the stored creativity of billions and billions of atoms, we know this. The thing that keeps us from activating our common creative, evolutionary power is the perceptual and intellectual habit of separateness—i.e., four thousand years of patriarchal ideology.

All patriarchal religions have their mystics, and many of them come forward now to offer humanity a "spiritual solution" to our human crisis. But all these solutions occur within the terms of the problem, i.e., they are more examples of patriarchy perpetuating itself. Male mystics, within patriarchal cultures and systems, can never reach a true fusion, in the depths of their beings, of the sexual and spiritual powers. Patriarchy's pejorative definitions of sexuality, and abstract definitions of spirit, prohibit this fusion. Patriarchal mystics are out of resonance with the earth spirit, with ecstasy, and with the dead. Most of all, they are out of contact with female energy—their patriarchal worldviews are based on a biophobic denial of this creative female energy in both women and men. All of us live in societies constructed out of this denial, societies that have attempted for four millennia to repress and destroy the bisexual nature of us all. In such nihilistic social-energy fields, no real magic can happen; in its place, in the past two decades, we have witnessed, and undergone, many morbid, sad, and narcissistic trips.¹ Mystics, and all religious people within patriarchal systems, must begin to deal honestly with the fact that patriarchy can never, ever be anything other than divided against itself—for this schizoid self-division is the basic ontological act upon which it is built. Union, or fusion, cannot happen within patriarchal terms. It is

patriarchy, after all, which deliberately set out to banish and destroy ecstasy.

What is ecstasy? It is our original state of being. It is the conscious expansion of the universe into a multitude of interconnected dimensions and forms. It is her dance of being, from which all of us were born. Ecstasy is passion self-expressed through form. In the case of earth, human beings and all other creatures and biological and geological activities are the forms, cosmic energy is the passion. Ecstasy is the source and reality of all we feel, see, and are. So then: Why don't human beings exist in a state of constant ecstasy? If ecstasy is the inevitable expression of being a conscious form, or living cell, in a cosmic energy sea, why don't we cognize it or feel it? What obstructs almost all human beings beyond the age of five from knowing this experience which is physically indigenous and ontologically rooted in the very fact of the universe existing at all?

Surely we know the answer! Patriarchal systems tell us that ecstasy is impossible or wrong—except according to its terms, its alienating definitions. But ecstasy, by definition, cannot exist on patriarchal terms. Ecstasy is the complete ontological challenge to patriarchy's "explanation" of life. Where patriarchal religious and social systems cannot wholly repress ecstasy, they demonize it—ecstasy becomes an underground or forbidden activity, most often experienced "privately" accompanied by guilt, rarely in common accompanied by the whole world. But in and with the whole world is where we are supposed to feel it. *In and with and as the whole world is where our human ecstasy is born.* It is the celebration of the recognition that our spirit and flesh are One.

It is the human female who was designed by evolution itself as the *link* between sexuality and spirit, between biological energy and the cosmic soul. It is the human female, as the leading edge of earthly evolution, who was specifically, neurologically structured for the experience of ecstasy. For this reason, the first religions on earth were designed *by women*, for women, and in celebration of femaleness. For this reason, matrifocal cultures had no reason or need to deny "the Other"—for all "otherness" was a part of the Mother. In ecstasy, all "otherness" becomes the self, the One. Ancient women could not have invented, because they had no need for, paranoid divisions between psyche and body, power-hungry manipulations of spirit versus matter, dualistic exploitations of flesh versus soul. They were "the undivided ones," tapping into unhindered flows of ecstatic energy, which is both "spiritual" and "biological," of earthly soil and cosmic thought together. Not needing to tell a lie-at-the-root-of-things about the origin of life—not needing to maintain this lie, by force, day and night, against the urges of all nature and its consciousness towards the truth—women's cultures would not have needed to maintain themselves by energy-repressive systems, by coercive and punitive surveillance systems based on social caste, or economic status, or skin color or eye color or dress . . . nor would there be any need for hierarchic organization, tyrannical terrors, or political frauds. All these patriarchal accoutrements are necessary to enforce a

mechanical order in the absence of organic order. All these patriarchal machineries are necessary to enforce the repression of common ecstasy—an ecstasy indigenous to all cultures that exist to realize, rather than to deny, the One-at-the-heart-of-All.

A "return to the Goddess" is not a backward trip through space or time. The human race cannot really return to infancy; we are too far gone for that. We *return* to the Goddess by *remembering, redefining, respelling*—by turning, as in a dance, away from one gesture and towards another. Patriarchal ontology is based on a three-dimensional reality. Modern physics is showing us that the universe has, not four dimensions, but as many as eleven dimensions.² Perhaps more. The universe is undergoing ecstatic exponential expansion into eleven or more dimensions—surely, three-dimensional religions cannot keep us in touch with such a universe! If we do not want to die, then we must evolve—and that means we must dance, expand exponentially with the dancing cosmos. We return to the cosmos only by becoming lovers of life, rather than life's victims, voyeurs, and policemen. How twisted we have become, within biophobic religions, spending most of our waking hours in grotesque postures of aggression, hurry, hate, self-righteousness, resentment, paranoia, and murderousness. Under the rule of the patriarchal God, we are all gargoyles, characterized by rigid poses that reveal mostly all our terrible fears and greeds, eaten away from inside by cancerous needs. To return to harmony—to return to the Goddess, to become lovers of the Goddess once again—we must realign our gestures into those of dancers. We must become beings who do not wish to control life, but only to listen to its music, and dance it. This is not easy to do, it might be impossible. But it is our only alternative to mass death—whether by war, or by total global mechanization.

The patriarchal God has only one commandment: *Punish life for being what it is*. The Goddess also has only one commandment: *Love life, for it is what it is*.

Women, designed by evolution as the links between spirit and flesh, are perhaps also designed by the cosmos to lead the human world back, now, to the great celebration of the reconciliation of flesh and spirit. Thus, at the very edge of death, we will return to the beginning. That is, at the end of the world (where we must surely be!) we will return to the Goddess, the Great Mother of All Life, as her magic children. In a round world, the only way for human beings to survive the end is to *return* to the beginning. Thus we complete a circle; but on a spiral, we *revolve* to a larger circle.

Now is the time to make again sacred our experience.

Witch power, it is said, cannot truly die, since it is a real power of the real cosmos. It can't die, it can only be forgotten—that means it can also be *re-membered*, as the serpent can be awakened from its tranced sleep at the bottom of the spine and induced to rise, to become again the luminous flying bird of the imagining mind. Once we thoroughly understand how and why patriarchy acquired its power over us—the power of

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an entrenched mistake over the minds and lives of all people—once we understand and feel clearly that the fight of witch women is also the fight of earth's people everywhere against mechanical subjugation and exploitation—once we reestablish the magic link between the individual psyche and the earth's vital energy flow, between all-evolving matter and all-evolving spirit, and learn to encourage and teach others to do the same, *in a loving return to what we always were*—perhaps then, in the final time of crisis, the Serpent Goddess will shake herself loose from her deep exiled sleep in the earth's belly. Perhaps the serpent of life's flowing energy will begin to rise again, all luminous and of the earth, and the children of the Great Mother will rise up with it, and the universe will be our home again, as before. *This flight is not an escape, but a return.*

The only way for human beings to survive the end is to return to the beginning.