

Mother Nature Speaks

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Jung, the mastermind of archetypes and their influence, wrote of the:

well-known image of the mother which has been glorified in all ages and all tongues... Intimately known and yet strange like Nature, lovingly tender and yet cruel like fate, joyous and untiring giver of life... so deserving of love, indulgence, understanding, and forgiveness... the mother carries for us that inborn image of the mater natura and mater spiritualis, of the totality of life of which we are a small and helpless part.

(The Mother Archetype, in *The Collected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 92, 1929).

Jung's Ideas

Jung understood, better than most of us do, that below the surface of our conscious alertness lies a potent mix of instincts, fragmented memories, unsorted and unarticulated experiences, unresolved dilemmas, socially unacceptable and personally shy and shameful thoughts, and so on, the stuff of dreams¹ and Freudian slips, and available for our use. It is a cellar of the mind; a place for storing conflicts, contradictions, postponed 'too-hard-for me' now problems. For example 'We were asked to the wedding on the understanding we would not go, but we could go and be formally polite, but really distant, haughty and sullen. We can decide later'. It is the place for unsaid things; when we have to swallow instead of speaking, and keep to our self both the very wise, appreciative, encouraging, warmly curious and sympathetic, and the very unwise, hurtful, tactless, inflammatory or coarse. It keeps in invisible boxes what we re-hearsed saying—and thought better of—as well as what we thought of too late to say genuinely.

The fertile region of the unconscious is hidden, as are our internal organs. It is a source of unremitting energy, a sort of portable sun. We cannot stop thinking, except during sleep when the mind idles for a while. All we can do is direct the traffic of our thoughts. Sleep is a marvellous way to resolve the day's thought traffic jams. We can decide

¹ 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep'. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV Scene 1, line 148

substantially, but imperfectly, what we think about, but not whether we think at all.

From our unconscious there emerge, in ways we will never fully understand, fresh and unexpected understandings and articulations. It is our indispensable spring of ideas. This miraculous process is improved by hiving away truths we have found significant for us in our efforts to cope each day. Valuable intuitions can be drawn from this granary, as it were, to feed and nourish our explicitly educated tuitions. We can outsource our mental tasks, anxieties and problems to our unconscious mind, and, if we listen with our inner watchfulness, it will respond with imaginative insights and symbols conveniently condensing and parceling our inchoate ideas.

The Idle Unconscious

If I don't set my unconscious worthwhile tasks it tends to gnaw away at needless worries and create anxieties out of very little, or it tries to solve other people's problems, mostly ones I have attributed to them, which is seldom fruitful and often worse than futile. My unconscious works to best advantage if I deliberately and persistently hand feed it tasks, but it does come up with surprising things after respite from my directing influence.

Our unconscious is a sort of pantry of hidden but accessible resources, from which we can choose to get help in coping with the forces of life and with the challenges necessary for our personal growth. It is remarkable how analogically alike this help can be with what others in the same culture come up with, as if our unconscious were a store we shared with others, in a sort of communal unconscious mind.

Using the Unconscious

The unconscious has a life of its own. It is headstrong and plays its own games. It is, like everything else in nature, resilient to a point, but fragile and liable to fragment if treated badly. I can mess up my unconscious in lots of ways. For example, I can:

- choke it with guilt and shame by defying my best self, so I can't sleep soundly;
- fill it with negative thoughts, regrets, recriminations, jealousies etc., so it responds by making me depressed;
- repeatedly submit myself to extreme danger and violence so I have no chance to cope; and am deprived of my sanity, as happened with shell-shocked soldiers in World War I.

- take mind-altering drugs, like marihuana and LSD, so I get hallucinations or schizophrenic voices; and.
- watch so much violence on TV and in movies that I have nightmares.

My unconscious can be partially damaged or disabled by bad experiences. For example :

- one strong feeling of terror at the possibility of drowning can sometimes never be overcome sufficiently to enable the person to learn to swim.
- early physical or sexual abuse by a parent or other trusted person can cause lasting recriminations and chronic suspicions and doubts in intimate relationships, and.
- many other bad experiences can have negative after-effects; parents fighting, teachers' bad treatment, deep embarrassment or failures and so on.

We all, I think, have some of these amongst our mental impedimenta.

Mother Nature can Usefully be Thought of as a Person.

'Mother' is one of our basic intuitive symbols. Mother is our model of unconditional reciprocal love, fecundity and forgivable fallibility. Mothers, with their feminine mystique, are unfathomable and infinitely intriguing. Mother Nature is a powerful, familiar and congenial concept. We can, with a little effort, become more at home with Nature through the notion of Mother Nature; by treating her as if she were a person, and attending to what she has to say.

The personification of Nature creates a sort of lookout tower from which we have a fresh, broader and more perceptive view of her. This helps, much as it does to half close our eyes for more meaningful observing, and reduce our conscious alertness to be more receptive to the awesome, reverential and numinous. The meditation dimmer-switch distances us from external urgencies and allows a warmer glow to illuminate our thoughts. Mother Nature is an uplifting metaphor.

The personification of our image of Mother Nature provides a portable, capacious, workable and satisfying means of better relating to what we casually call 'our environment', in a positive, respectful, and wholesome way. The use of metaphors is both natural and helpful as these three observations confirm better than I can.

A man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image, more or less luminous, arises in his mind,

contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This image is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. R.W. Emerson, *Nature*, 1836.

The intellect is stimulated by the statement of truth in a trope, and the will by clothing the laws of life in illusions. (R.W. Emerson, *Illusions*, 1860).

It is as though the ability to comprehend experience through metaphor were a sense, like seeing or touching or hearing, with metaphors providing the only ways to perceive and experience much of the world. (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 239).

The Inherent Centrality of Mothering

We all have a special love and regard for our mother. A mother's role is crucial in the growth of every child. Surely the mothering imperative and impulse to love and care for children is one of nature's greatest and most valuable mysteries.

'In each personal life the growth of love is the root of our personal stability and is interwoven with the growth of our capacity to deal with reality.' (David Holbrook, *The Quest for Love*, 1964, p. 13).

'Families are the most beautiful things in the world.' (Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*, 1869).

Mothers, with help from fathers, impart the most lasting things to their children; how to care deeply about the welfare of another person, the centrality of telling the truth and self-honesty, and the satisfaction and contentment from habitually following the promptings of our best self in doing what we know we should.

A good metaphor is a probing balloon that can expand the narrow arteries of conventional unpoetic prose. It can enlarge the possibility of explorable insights and subtly influence our attitudes. Mother Nature, I suggest, does both these things. Surely we would more reliably and lastingly reduce our carbon emissions from the satisfactions of maternal loyalty of a grateful dependent, than from the material trade-offs of a greedy capitalist.

Mother Nature's Personality Profile

My aim is to arouse interest in Nature's basic characteristics, or default settings, by sketching her personality profile, and in doing so to bring a fresh vision, so we may not take Mother Nature so much for granted. Nature may be beyond criticism, but she is not beyond characterizing.

What follows is a rough outline of an image of nature as a mother. My aim is to unite the contrasting views we have of nature as wholesome, or as our main antagonist. Having one image would help to lift us above our human-centred view for long enough to appreciate nature's real qualities, and to keep us as close to observable and familiar facts about nature as possible.

In 1979 James Lovelock wrote his famous book *Gaia: A new Look at Life on Earth*, (OUP), with his hypothesis that the earth is one huge organism. Since then he has followed this with numerous other books, mainly about the scientific testing of his theory. His proposition is consistent with the image of Mother Nature, but his writings have not influenced this paper, which is concerned not with proving an intriguing scientific conjecture, but with finding a deeply congenial way of reviving our dormant feelings of a close affinity with Nature.

We have many hazards and risks to cope with in life, including illnesses, accidents, ageing, the weather, environment deterioration, etc. We need a sound set of attitudes to these vicissitudes of life to enable us to cope with them. These attitudes need to be as close as possible to things as they really are. Only in this way will our acceptance of fate and necessity, and our determination to improve what we can, be based on reason and reality.

We need the means of having a closer, more considerate, relationship with nature, while staying realistic and objective. I want to suggest and explore one way of achieving a fresh and practical proximity to nature.

Our image of Nature influences the way we think of our health, the ills of indolence, our environment and pollution, accidents and their prevention, the weather and the extent of our responsibility for its excesses.

'Tis said that the views of nature held by any peoples determine all their institutions.' (R.W. Emerson, *English Traits*, 1856, OUP, *The World's Classics*, 1903, p. 28).

Mother Nature Speaks

Here is some of what Mother Nature has to say:

1. I am the whole of things. My indispensable mate from the beginning has been Old Father Time. He can tell his own story.
2. My genius is to generate life. That is my imperative. Reproduction is my relentless aim. I have a mania for multiplying. Fecundity is my forte. I am the universal mother. I ensure that living things inhabit every part of me that can support life, from sperm whales in the oceans, to bacteria in the minute spaces between teeth.
3. I am the life force. I am incorrigible in my fixed and relentless purpose of generating life. I ensure that whatever can grow does grow and that it multiplies and passes on its genes. At my bidding creatures stir. My favourite places and activities include seeds and semen, eggs, loins, flowers and fertilizing. I am the mainspring of every beating heart. I am present at every coupling, supplying the necessary instinct and energy. I am the original mid-wife. I assist at every birth. I am your most genuinely heart-felt feelings, and the quiet prompting voice of your conscience. I keep all living things wanting to live, and going on until they can go on no longer. In spite of despair, disabilities, disease, illness, injuries, grief, and all the other trials and vicissitudes of living, I am there to pick you up and revive hopes and restore equanimity. I am the agent of urgency and necessity. There is no stopping for a break from living; there is only living and responding, even if it is minimal, as in a coma, or there is death. Sleep is an illusory intermission.
4. This prime imperative has a lot of consequences. It means that I must compromise my other aims, like perfection and beauty, and developing and maintaining species. All my other activities are subsidiary to my inexorable life-generating, and regenerating, mission.
5. For me, perfection and beauty are secondary to generating life and ensuring variety. So there is no one perfect set of genes for a human, and each of you is not quite right or good, and not quite wrong or bad. Every one of you has a problem. It may be only baldness, in-growing toenails, prominent ears, nose or whatever, or more seriously, a tendency to heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer, dementia, autism, asthma, crooked teeth and so on. Your upbringings are similarly inevitably imperfect from the dynamic pressures of parenting, schooling, and maturing. You all want to be good and right, as a hen egg wants to be a sphere, but my forces result in oval hen eggs, and adults with some oddity or obsession.

This is all a part of my pattern in evolving by conflicts. For example, insects are both essential for much pollination of plants, and a vital food source for many bird species, but, on the other hand, they can decimate foliage and devour seeds. I am sometimes partly self-destructive only so I can get on with the major task of incremental

overall construction. Similarly you educate and discipline children so they can cope better as adults and you take one step backwards with medications in order to take two steps forward. The merchants amongst you like to talk of these things as trade-offs, in which something is conceded for a greater gain. Chess players refer to gambits. My seemingly somnolent and barren Winter crouches to leap into exuberantly sprouting Spring. I am beneficent and merciless, comforting and threatening, finite and immeasurable. I provide ample for your needs to live a healthy and rewarding life, but at the same time I make you work for, and earn, your survival and contentment. I reckon you appreciate my bounty more when you have done something to deserve it. 'A stern discipline pervades all nature, which is a little cruel that it may be very kind.' Edmund Spenser, 1552(?) - 1599.

6. Each of my living things has an affinity with every other living thing, as they all have the same basic structure, DNA, the brain which determines all their attributes. Every living thing is a unified whole, dynamically balancing internal and external pressures, determined to survive as long as possible, and to reproduce, if practically possible. So, all my living things have at least these things in common.
7. Variety is my way of ensuring healthy, stable, living communities; ecosystems as you call them. I do have some plant infestations, but mostly my plants are companionable so I defy you to plant a single species crop without some of their friends arriving to keep them company. In plant fertilisings I spin the roulette wheel in the endless game of genetic change. In every coupling I roll the double dice of diversity. Every offspring is a mixture of the genes of the two parents. I take risks, and take the bad with the good – a Mozart or Einstein or Hitler or Mugabe. You must, and do, hybridise for healthy offspring.
8. Any perfections I create are transient. A smile is perfect for only a few seconds. A sunset or pleasing cloud formation is perfect for only a few minutes. Weather may be perfect for a few days. A season may be nearly perfect for a few months, and so on. All my living creatures are tidy, discreet units, but become messy when they die and decay. My 'mess', however, like many of yours, precedes new growth.
9. To maintain all my living systems I have to care more about species than about individuals. In the dynamics of ecosystems, individual plants and animals make way for species.
10. I give every living thing a strong desire and will to live, and then I leave it to look after itself without any special protections or exemptions from my imperatives. I have no favourites. I have only a rough justice; that those thrive who work at thriving and earn a long and healthy life. My system of rewards and punishments is only

approximate, like yours. I have no system of concessions for the aged and indolent as you do. I ensure that you all want to keep living, and leave you to work at living as best you can.

11. You are part of me, so it is not surprising that I behave in many ways just like you. For example, I make mistakes. My genes sometimes misconnect, and result in what you call an unfortunate mutation. I behave perversely, sometimes acting against my own best interests, just as you do when you are too lazy for your own good, smoke, and so on. I hail destructively on my own plants, birds and animals, and am self-destructive with plagues, (of locusts, rats, mice, and so on), plant diseases, epidemics of humans and other animals, droughts, floods, storms, and so on. I overdo some things some of the time, for example in plagues, epidemics, floods, droughts, fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, typhoons and so on. I am profligate, rather than parsimonious, in propagating and proliferating life; in making and spreading seeds and in the reproductive urge generally.

I could make a long list of all the things you overdo. You mostly do what's convenient, easy and fashionable, rather than what is considerate, stoical and non-polluting. So you make avarice, acquiring goods and consuming them a way of life, and euphemistically justify it as your capitalist system. Competition does motivate, as pepper enlivens a main meal, but no one eats a meal of pepper alone. Competition is overdone when it impedes co-operation. You are greedy, aggressive, and absurdly biased to money considerations, and then clever at justifying and rationalizing these grubby activities and faulty tests. Your shallow conventionality could, with a little bold resourcefulness and unselfishness, be changed into a rewarding use of your powers for the common good.

12. I am inexorable, but not infallible. I am consistent, but not precisely predictable. I am, after all, both the weather and the climate. I am enigmatic. You will never discover all my secrets. I am paradoxical. I have my tipping points: water freezes, ice melts, water boils and vaporizes, and falls as rain. Land denuded of vegetation often becomes unproductive desert. I respond rebelliously to unnatural assaults, with cancer and other diseases and sicknesses, and with global warming.
13. I have an imperfect system of healing wounds and restoring damaged living things to health and wholeness.
14. I experiment and explore improvements in how living things can better thrive, through behaviour changes and reproductive mistakes which become viable adaptations. In spite of your evolutionary theorists assuming that everything I do has a practical purpose, I am sometimes simply exuberant with diversity, and showing off my love

of variety, as I do in flower and leaf colours and shapes. I am the master of design and construction, which you copy and improve in some ways. Surely I deserve some respect for these borrowings for which I don't receive any royalties for copyright or patents?

15. I am both change and constancy. For example, no pattern of clouds or ocean waves is ever exactly repeated, but all the patterns are recognizably similar and familiar. Skies, beaches and landscapes have character, much as human faces do with their smiles and grimaces.
16. My mantra is 'Unity without uniformity', and my creed is 'Life above all.' I am life's energy and urgency, its myriad forms and manifestations. I am always on the move. Babies are innocent, and later acquire wisdom from experience. Flowers bloom and fade. Mushrooms spring up and deliquesce. Beautiful sunsets melt into darkness. I am green growth and flowers in spring, and fruit and grain in autumn. I am in every excited copulation, and I am at every amazing birth. I am the systole and diastole of the seasons, the reliable brightness of day and darkness of the night, the moon's fullness and its waning, the restlessness of being awake, and the welcome rest in sleeping. I am omnipotent, ubiquitous, persistent and inescapable. As you say with a mixture of admiration and fear, I bat last. I give you something vast and immediate to use, fight and revere. I am continuous creation; relentlessly remaking myself. I am the rapture and rhapsody of being alive.
17. I coquettishly defy all attempts you make to know me completely. I have my ecosystems, but I am not a mere machine. All my living creatures have cycles but none are metronomic. I have my seasons, but they are not infallibly regular, and neither are my moods, as expressed in the weather. I am superior to Houdini in escaping containment in a formula or an algorithm. I am inexhaustibly interesting. I tempt your conjectures about how I work, taunt you with exceptions and negative instances, and tease you with doubts. Many of you are slow to accept that to come near to cracking my codes you need your imagination as well as your reasoning, your poetry as well as your science, your Shakespeares as well as your Einsteins.

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Some Loves

1. The Sphere, and Other Shapes and Forms.

My first love is spheres; the sun, planets, eyeballs, oranges, passion fruit, grapes, macadamia nuts, egg yolks, bubbles, dew drops, blood cells, and so on. The sphere maximizes strength, and minimizes surface area.

Nature is an infinite sphere of which the centre is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. (Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, 1670).

Line in Nature is not found;
Unit and universe are round.
(R W Emerson's poem, 'Uriel').

I also like:

- tubes; trunks, branches twigs, stems, stamens, blood vessels, bird bones, etc.
- cones; most volcanoes and many flowers.
- hexagons; bee cells, crystalline basalt, etc., which tessellate neatly.
- ovals; eggs which would like to be spheres if they could, the red corpuscles in camel blood, etc.
- spirals; many shells, growing ferns, arrangements of branches from a stem, the pattern Mallee Fowls use to lay eggs in a hole in the ground to enable chicks to struggle out without killing their siblings, etc.
- two intertwining spirals, the double helix of DNA
- parabolas, curves, in rainbows flowers, bosoms trajectories and so on.
- the Fibonacci series: 1,1,2,3,5,8,13, each number being the sum of the previous two, as in the patterns on pineapples, pine cones, sunflowers etc., and the related 'Golden Section' is one of my favourite ratios in designing, including 'Golden rectangles'.
- squares, as in the force of gravity between two objects being inversely proportionate to square of the distance between them and proportionate to the product of their masses, and in $E=mc^2$.

Above all geometric shapes, I love organic wholes, and of course, necessity, so I adapt the sphere for ball joints throughout bodies with bones, eggs to ovals, but not yolks, and so on.

2. Colours.

I love the greens of plants from photosynthesis, the blues of the skies, the blue-greens of the sea, the reds of blood, flames and sunsets, and the browns of soils. I also love all the colours I proudly display on the pallet of my rainbow, and use to paint the flowers, birds, fish, coral, and so on. I also love white, which embodies, and mysteriously splits into all the other colours for spectrums and rainbows. There are whites of eyes, teeth and bones, milk, potatoes, boiled hens eggs, spiders' egg sacs, clouds, hail, ice and snow, and many flowers, snowballs, lilies, some roses etc.

Nature, that washed her hands in milk
And had forgot to dry them
Instead of earth took snow and silk
At Love's request to try them
If she a mistress could compose
To please Love's fancy out of those.
(Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618, 1st verse of 'Nature that washed her
hands in milk.')

A Proposed Reconciliation

I am wistful to be reconciled with you. I know you want to feel closer to me, and you can if you try. I have five tips for you to achieve this: -

- i) Think of me as your mother. Get to know me better, and observe me closely and with sympathetic and imaginative understanding.
- ii) Accept my imperative of generating and promoting life, and my other virtues and understandable faults flowing from this.
- iii) Realise that I am more beautiful than useful, and have much more to do than to service your convenience.
- iv) Appreciate and respect me more, as I am indispensable to your welfare. I am not some detested step-mother, or intrusive mother-in-law. I am an amiable and fertile young mother who is not indifferent to considerate attentions, and repays them with added productivity. Mother love is the most profound authentic, enduring and selfless sort, and thrives on appreciation. I don't expect every day to be Mother Nature's Day, but you could more deliberately enjoy my company, and stay in touch with me, as most of you do with your own mother.
- v) Love me, if you can, for what I really am, and not just for some benefit that suits your present pressing needs, like providing renewable energy to keep you comfortable and mobile. Take special care of my thin and fragile coating of breathable air. If my climate heats up by a few degrees, I am sick with a fever, just as you are if your temperature rises much above 37 degrees Celsius. In fact I am becoming sick now from your pollution. I am your ultimate provider of life and sustenance.

My faults mirror yours. You say that I know best. That is not true, but I am worth listening to. You impute indifference to me, but you forget that you are my chosen and privileged bearers of caring and conscience. I have trusted you and favoured you in many ways. You have my welfare in your hands. You have both instinct and freedom of choice. You can choose hedonism or stoicism. You can choose to see all of me as awesome, or only parts of me, or none of me. You can be more savage than any other animal, and more self-sacrificing and noble than any other

animal. You can breed like rabbits, and behave like grizzly bears. Your power has a mortgage of responsibility for my welfare.

All my creatures love being alive and many are loving and caring for each other, including companion plants, but you alone have the capacity to wonder, to be curious, compassionate, consciously understanding and appreciative of my continuous creation of life, and how uniquely suited my exceptionally favoured planet earth is for this. Surely your responsibilities to me are commensurate with my favours to you. You achieve a sense of purpose and 'reason for existence', as you put it, by sharing my creation with other human beings who also appreciate and understand it.

In my evolution I have blundered, but the fittest survive. I hope you are disciplined enough to survive the harm you have done to my climate systems. Otherwise I will have to make a fresh start with a creature who is disciplined enough. You have in recent times become, in your hedonistic greed, grossly inconsiderate and even hostile; possibly terminally dangerous both to yourself and to me.

I make life, so reverence me;
Is there any greater mystery?

Desire and the means of reproduction I proliferate;
Droughts and floods, feasts and famines, I randomly rotate.

I keep my big patterns, like climates, pretty steady and reliable,
So I can evolve life incrementally, keeping it variable.

Whatever I proudly do regularly,
I reliably do the opposite, irregularly!

You are highly ingenious with drugs from the dispensary,
But the basic, long-term healing is up to me.

I'm a wondrous pale blue spinning ball, seen from space,
And even your least appreciative, treasure some special place.

My curvaceous waves peak and fall, with ease and grace,
And every season and locality has some lovely face.

My first and fair duty, is to all forms of life,
To have any favourite, would get my unity in strife.

I made the large landscapes; hills, valleys and caves,
And I sculpture the beaches with sand, wind and waves.

I am ideally suited, for your enjoyment and admiration,
So why let your use of me, cause my deterioration?

My hardware may be fixed and constant,

But my software is an inspirational intoxicant.

I am opportunity, community, vitality and purity;
My infinite analogies and symbols ameliorate your insecurity.

In proliferation there's perpetuity, more than economy,
And an endless task for you, in the study of taxonomy.

My patterns, habits and tendencies, which you call laws,
Are often hard to find and fathom, just like yours!

Water invisibly vapourises, and falls as beneficent rain;
Thus I ablate the earth, again, and again, and again.

I make all life possible, with my stealthy circuitry;
I am the cosmic cleaner, fastidious in my toiletry.

I distilled carbon into plants, and buried them;
Now your rate of burning them, my skies condemn.

You learnt only slowly, smoking ruins your health;
Now your use of fossil fuels, is ruining mine by stealth.

My complex ecosystems evolved to self-sustain and thrive,
So you substitute simple monocultures, and battle to keep them alive!

I ensure all living things, survive as they deserve,
As fairness is a part, of the balance I preserve.

My mysteries are inexhaustible; there's always more to inspect:
Surely my energies, ardours, and bounty, deserve more of your respect.

Serenity follows suffering, almost as night follows day,
And drug addicts, who cheat for pleasure, soon find they have to pay.

There's no calculating my compensations, on this earth storm-tossed;
Your justice rewards and blames, but my love doesn't count the cost.

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Nature's integration in one whole ecology is miraculous when you think about it. Every living thing is for itself in its joint aims of surviving and reproducing, and yet, at the same time, it both helps and is helped by other living things in its community. Ecology is an awesome system of mutual interdependency and collateral advantage. While each is basically concerned for itself, the whole is a functioning community. And our society works in a similar way. So when we humanize Mother Nature, and care for her welfare, we somehow re-enchant our own lives.

Surely our way forward as contented creatures is to appreciate Mother Nature and live sustainably and in harmony with her bounty and her ways.

Mother Nature's fertility is unique in the universe;
 To treat your mother badly; is there anything worse?
 We are destroying her in our ruthless urgency to consume;
 While she dearly wants to be restored to her former bloom.

Henry David Thoreau asked rhetorically and accusingly what we should ask ourselves constantly: 'When Nature ceases to be supernatural to a man, what will he do then?' *Journal*, 2 November 1843.

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In 1989 Dr W.S. Ramson published in the *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 9:1, pp. 73-83, an article entitled 'Regionalism in Australian English: The Value of Newspaper Evidence', a study that showed characteristics of smaller regions in both editorial preferences, and in the degree of effort put into getting technical vocabulary glossed/ used in appropriate fashion. When the same scholar had been working for the *Australian National Dictionary* there had been an effort to scan the regional papers up to 1850, but this was not deemed to be so practical in and for the next period. Since then, however, efforts were made to ascertain a regional corpus, especially for mining, or dried fruit industries, for example.

Interestingly one of the richest fields was, from Tasmania, the vocabulary used for the apple industry, as in *Apple bin, apple carver; apple country, apple grader; apple tipper; factory apple; fruit bag* (for picking), *powdery mildew* (etc.), and like patches of lexis for fishing and forestry. Like clusters of words were identified for the wood-chopping activity and sport.

From Victoria there had been a marked vocabulary for the fruit industry, as in *fruit grower, pickers; cartmen; dip tins*; and a considerable range based on the tin as the appropriate collecting utensil. Various clusters of words and phrases indicated the outdoor life, as in the *verandah sale*, while the outdoor life was indicated as were the differing flora and fauna, as with *banana prawns, king prawns*, and *coral prawns*. Also there *border nurses* and a mining vocabulary of distinctiveness.

Perhaps the moral of all of this work is that the only genuine 'distinct' small areas are to be found in the manuscripts of the regions, especially when these were voluminous, and they were able to catch the settler's background, his fascination with the new, and the difficulty for lexicographers to capture the fine detail that is possible with greater literacy, more sources, and writers for a sharp ear to discern the nuances in the idiom.

JSR