

A Tale of Two Houses: Küsnacht and Bollingen

(part 1)

by Pamela Cooper-White, PhD

During Fall and Winter of 2013-14 I had the privilege of receiving a Fulbright grant to do research as the Fulbright-Freud Visiting Scholar of Psychoanalysis at the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, Austria. While there, I made several side trips to lecture and meet colleagues. One of those visits was to Bern, Switzerland, where after a full round of lectures, I was treated by my Swiss host Prof. Isabelle Noth of Bern University to a day trip to Lake Zürich to see Jung's *Wohnhaus* (home) and famous tower at Bollingen.



The *Wohnhaus*, Küsnacht

Thanks to the very thoughtful planning of my good guide, Anja Michel, a doctoral student in pastoral psychology at Bern, we

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traveled by train first to Jung's house in the lakeside Zürich suburb of Küsnacht, and the Jung Institute of Zürich (also in Küsnacht). After a walk from the little train station in Küsnacht, about 1 and 1/3 miles up the busy Seestrasse (known as the "Gold Coast" along the lake), we turned into the entrance at the correct address and found ourselves on this elegant, formal path to Jung's house. The property is mostly hidden from the street by a tile-topped cement wall and tall trees, so the sudden view of the path felt like a revelation. It's a beautiful place, still inhabited by C.G.'s grandson Andreas Jung and family, and another family, and feels full of life and history all at once. Jung's creative imagination and his wife Emma's good taste combined to create a moderately sized house with the aura of a small palace. The long allée of carefully groomed hedges, leading to the main entrance with its classic lines, emphasize its elegance. (One of my historical informants in Vienna also noted that Freud was extremely envious! The class differences between this light-filled patrician home and Freud's dark though professional-class apartments at 19 Berggasse are notable, although both men's families of origin began in poverty.)

For many years Jung had a dream of building a tower as part of his dwelling. While Emma objected to a fantastic medieval castle as their marital home (paid for by her inheritance!), a compromise was reached and above the front door rises an attached tower which houses a spiral staircase – the main staircase of the house. The rest of the house is in a traditional Swiss lakeside style, "modern" for the early 1900's, with elegant proportions and simple, fin-de-siècle style ornamentation.



The inscription carved on the lintel over the main door of the house is well known to Jungian scholars and analysts: "*Vocatus atque non vocatus Deus aderit*" (a quote from the Oracle at Delphi: "Summoned or not summoned, God will be present.") The quotation also appears much later in a carving by an unknown hand at Jung's tower at Bollingen.



The gardens surround the house on both sides, with a spacious lawn in the back running down to the lake, with a charming boathouse.



Upon entering the house, we met Andreas Jung, our personal guide. An architect like his father, Mr. Jung is devoted to the Jung House and was instrumental in its restoration in recent years. He showed us many books and works of art in Jung's library and consulting room. One surprise was the amount of Christian iconography in the house, including reproductions of three medieval stained glass windows depicting the passion of Christ (visible in a famous photo of Jung at his desk), a negative print of the Shroud of Turin (which he kept covered by a green cloth for protection, and which he confessed to a correspondent, Bernhard, was his "source" of power), as well as a Madonna and Child in the entrance hall, and a number of Renaissance and Baroque reproductions. He also had a small Buddha on his desk, and another on the wall in the study.

Emma Jung also saw patients in the house, and used a separate room, the library, for her own psychological writing. In the



Rear gardens of Jung Wohnhaus with Boathouse and Dock, a misty morning on Zürichsee



View of Zürichsee and boats from rear gardens at Jung Wohnhaus



sitting room where Andreas Jung receives visitors, a portrait of Jung is hung where he originally kept a large silk *Bodhisattva* hanging. This is flanked by an oil portrait of Jung's Swiss pastor father, and a smaller painting of his grandfather, a medical doctor. I was moved by the soulful and quite sad face of Jung's father in the portrait (not as severe as I had expected!) Evidence of Jung's respect and even reverence for his family genealogy appears in such paintings in the house, as well as an inscription detailing the male ancestors and heirs which he carved over a fireplace in Bollingen. Mr. Jung shared that Jung's father Paul, a Swiss pastor, was depressed and had doubts about his faith, but felt he could not change his *Berufung* (calling); Jung felt from early childhood that religious experience comes from within. Surrounded by pastors all his life, including both his father's colleagues and pastors on his mother's side of the family, Jung was frustrated with the intellectualization he perceived in their form of religion. All his life sought to find his own experiential way, leading him to a lifelong passion for universal symbols and cultural parallels. C.G. Jung died when Andreas Jung was 19, and was not frequently present with his grandchildren because he was so preoccupied with his work, but Mr. Jung remembers him as "a kind grandfather." His work is admired—and his legacy carefully protected—by the current generation of the family.



Andreas Jung and Pamela Cooper-White

The Jung Institute of Zürich

A mile's walk back toward the train station, on a parallel lane called Hornweg, (Horn Way) is the C.G. Jung Institute of Zürich. Formerly housed (1948-1979) in a castle-like structure in Zürich, the Institute moved in 1979 to its present home in Küsnacht. This lovingly restored 15th century lakeside "*Seehof*," (literally "lake farm") was already a historic site, formerly occupied by the poet Conrad Ferdinand Meyer in 1868-72. In the center of the garden is a statue of a joyful young girl dancing.

Next to the *Seehof* is a 15th century corn barn with a fading exterior fresco of Christian saints visible just below the eaves.



On to Bollingen

After lunch Anja and I began our journey to Jung's famous tower across Lake Zürich at Bollingen. Getting to Jung's tower in the tiny village of Bollingen takes research and effort. We took 2 trains from Zürich to Rapperswil, to the village of Jona, then a previously arranged cab to Oberbollingen, where we walked about a 1/2 mile back along the lake on a mostly gravel bike path to the tower itself. The cab let us off at the beautiful location in this picture, a café and wine garden overlooking a cattle field on the edge of Lake Zürich. The chapel in the distance was the early 13th century hermitage of St. Meinrad. I kept thinking how many parallels there were here to Iona in Scotland—grazing cattle against a backdrop of sea and sky; a village pronounced Yona; another village nearby called Staffa (like the rugged island near Iona); and a beloved early local saint. Oberbollingen is in the Canton of St. Gall, and the very old monastery of St. Gall, first established in the 7th century, is also not too far from here. Holy ground to begin the last steps of our pilgrimage to Bollingen Tower...



I doubt without Anja's planning and continued phone conversations along the way in Swiss German I ever would have found it! Jung's lakeside property on the outskirts of the village

Oberbollingen is not visible from the local highway (the *Seewart*), does not appear on any maps, and has no sign marking its entrance. We followed a dirt path through a chain link gate, and coming around a bend, a plain stone cottage came into view.



Bollingen is as rustic as the Küssnacht house is elegant. This was the house that Jung built for himself, and it is a primitive camp directly on the eastern end of Lake Zürich (north side). Jung would often come here alone to meditate and write. We were greeted by Jost Hörni, the grandson of C.G. Jung and son of Jung's younger daughter Héléne Hörni-Jung (author of books on icons of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and St. Peter).



We entered around the side through a stone arch, to find ourselves in a stone paved inner courtyard, with another stone arch leading to a small sitting area beside the lake. Decorations were few, and all were made of natural materials like hanging bundles of stones. There were many stacks of firewood, and Jung liked to cook (especially meat) over a cast iron range or at the outdoor stove in the courtyard. The place had the feel of a

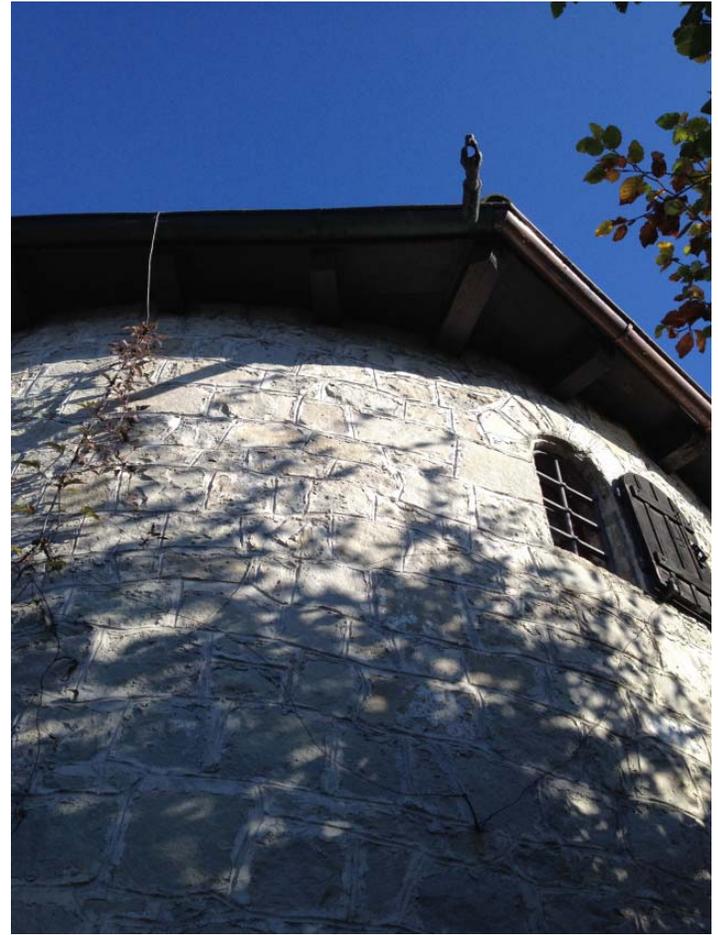
kind of Swiss Walden Pond, with Jung living as naturally as he possibly could, like Thoreau.

Mr. Hörni offered us seats by the lake and gave us some history about Jung and Bollingen. He shared that for several years Jung had been exploring the lake in a small sailboat, and then a larger one with red sails, that he had rigged up so that the sails could fold down to go under a bridge nearby. For several years he rented a small island nearby, and he and Emma would spend the summer there beginning at Easter. They invited family members, and friends, and even the Zürich psychological society to join them there. Jung tried to buy the island, but it was not available for sale, so when this lakeside property became available, he bought it and immediately began making trips in the boat from Friday night to Sunday night weekly to dig the foundation and begin the walls of the tower. Mr. Hörni believes that the legend that Jung built the whole tower by himself cannot be true because it was completed too quickly. Jung built the foundation and a good portion of the walls, and then had builders finish it. It was completed in 1923, shortly after his mother Emilie Preiswerk's death. While we were talking by the side of the lake, two swans came close to the shore—apparently they are common visitors. And then a great white heron flew across the lake like a benediction.



Next to the courtyard where we were sitting was an outdoor stove and sheltered seating area. Jung painted colorful medieval-style paintings on the wood ceiling of the shelter. The bright primary colors, especially blue and yellow, are found also painted on shutters around the buildings, and on a heraldic shield that Jung carved of wood inside the entrance to the tower. The shield is next to a stone carving of a child like figure with the three symbols of cross, star, and grapes. Mr. Hörni said this is a visual pun on a Swiss saying for being drunk! So there are numerous whimsical features to the house—it's not all serious and mysterious. Jung and some of the children found a stone shaped like a man with a funny nose, painted him, and named him "Um." He has pride of place in one of the tower windows.

Children still play here. Mr. Hörni says that there are about 50 members of the family who have use of the property and come for rest and recreation here. His daughter and granddaughter came by and were playing here at the table after a while. The Bollingen property is looked after by a committee of

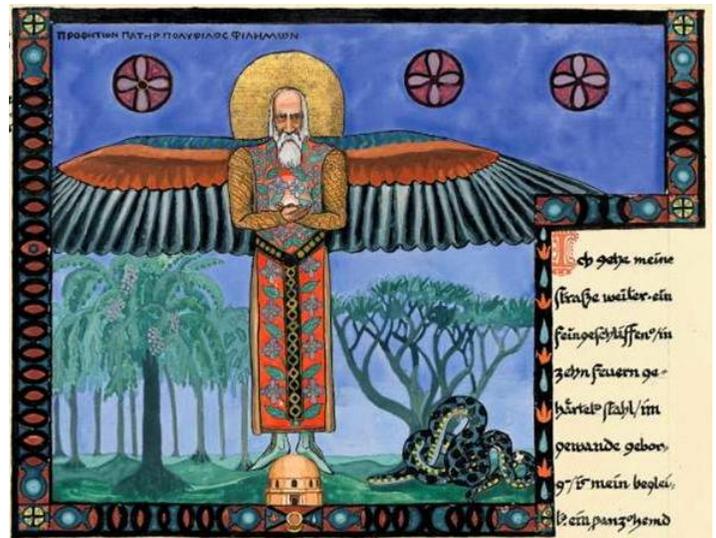


the Stiftung, and Mr. Högni is in his own words both a dedicated “caretaker and care taker” of his grandfather’s legacy here. Inside near this room is a very small interior room with large casement windows, a window seat, and a fireplace over which Jung inscribed a patrilineal genealogy of his fathers and sons in Latin (no mothers or daughters).

The central tower or *Turm*, for which Bollingen is best known, is surprisingly short (two stories) and quite thick. Note the small water spout in the shape of a hand, upper left. While the buildings are mostly unadorned, there are small iron and bronze figures like this, relieving the otherwise very thick and fortress-like structure. Interior photos are not allowed. The ground floor consists of a small circular living area like the inside of a hut, with a rustic wood table and chairs, a cast iron range, some cabinets, and other storage areas with crockery and cast iron cookware and other miscellaneous items, built into the thick walls. The walls are covered with shelves and hooks to hang everything from keys and ropes to battered tin canisters with flour and herbs. Mr. Högni said that once the other buildings were added on, this room was seldom used by the family because it was so dark.

The upper floor of the tower can only be reached by narrow and steep curving stone steps with no railing along one of the walls, and visitors are not normally permitted to go up. Photographs are *streng verboten*. The 2nd floor contains 3 rooms—2 bedrooms for Jung, and for his children, and 1 very small study. The bedrooms contain the famous murals in very close quarters, hovering over the simple wooden beds. Over Jung’s own bed is another nearly floor-to-ceiling mural of a brilliant blue and white mandala, with a piercing white center like the diamond

images in the Red Book, and outer concentric layers of knotlike and mosaic design. The main wall of the children’s room is painted with a nearly floor-to-ceiling mural of Jung’s spirit guide Philemon, along with a prayer for protection in calligraphy. It is very similar to the one in the Red Book, with some variation in the background images, and represents a complete unification of masculine and feminine principles (blue and red), as well as other symbols interpreted by Jung in the Red Book. Jung had “met” Philemon during his process of active imagination, and was devoted to him as a figure of transcendent wisdom. From the Red Book:



NOTES:

- 1) I was asked not to post any detailed photos of the interior of the house. To see a larger image of the living room with Jung's portrait, see Sarah Corbett, "The Holy Grail of the Unconscious," *New York Times*, Magazine, Sept. 16, 2009, online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/magazine/20jung-t.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>. For more images from Jung's library and consulting room, see the book *House of C.G. Jung : the history and restoration of the residence of Emma and Carl Gustav Jung-Rauschenbach*, ed. Andreas Jung and the Stiftung C.G. Jung Küssnacht (U.S. distributor Wilmette, IL: Chiron, 2009). Plans are underway by the Stiftung (private foundation) to publish all the portraits and images associated with the Jung estate and these may appear in a few years.
- 2) For more on the history of this house, see <http://www.junginstitut.ch/english/about/history/>.
- 3) For a summary of the stages of building, see the web site by a Jungian analyst Stephen Parker, PhD: <http://jungcurrents.com/the-stages-of-bollingen/>.

(to be continued...)

July 15

by Grace Barr

In languid mid summer a pair of ardent cats
wakes me with their feral whining.

*Apples dangle from fertile trees,
their corpulent branches bowed.*

*Bees suck pollen from lavender
twined round potted tomatoes
in a fragrant embrace.*

*Cicadas drone without ceasing,
chorusing above morning traffic.*

*Earthworms wiggle to the surface,
teased aloft by saturated ground.*

*Hungry robins touch down in wet grass,
gulp their slippery breakfast.*

*Green pecan nuts fall on metal roofs,
explode like firecrackers.*

*Crimson peonies defy well-ordered borders,
fully flopped open brazen beauties,
their poker stamens tacky with pollen*

*Half-eaten fruit litters the ground,
tossed aside by satiated squirrels.*

Deep in winter,
when the garden slumbers under a frozen blanket,
remember the afterglow of this morning.

Grace Barr is a book editor and freelance writer; her articles have been published in *Southern Living*, *Coastal Living*, and *Southern Accents* magazines. Having journaled all her adult life, several years ago she began crafting free-verse poems from her journal entries. She graduated from Florida State University as an English major. In the 1990s she was introduced to Jung through *Journey Into Wholeness*.