Edward C. Whitmont
The Alchemy of Healing

Extrait du livre

The Alchemy of Healing
de Edward C. Whitmont
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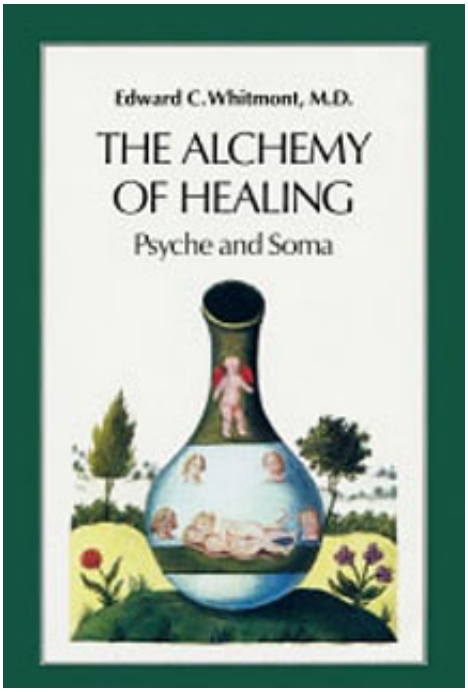

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Chapter 8

HEALING

Selige Sehnsucht	**Blissful Longing**
Sagt es niemand, nur den Weisen Weil die Menge leicht verhöhnet Das Lebendge will ich preisen Das nach Flammentod sich sehnet.	Tell it to no one but to sages For the crowd spurns the desire I extol what through the ages Has aspired to death in fire.
In der Liebesnachte Kühlung Die dich zeugte, wo Du zeugtest Überfällt Dich fremde Fühlung Wenn die stille Kerze leuchtet.	In the glow of nights of loving Procreated, procreating You are gripped by foreign longing Guarded limits permeating.
Nicht mehr bleibest du umfangen In der Finsternis Beschattung Und dich reisset neu Verlangen Auf zu höherer Begattung.	No more will you stay confined Darkness' shadows still abetting. New-flamed light afar now shineth Calls for higher life's begetting.
Keine Ferne macht dich schwierig Kommst geflogen und gebannt Und zuletzt des Lichts begierig Bist du Schmetterling verbrannt	Holding limits are transcended Separate being is removed In the fire thus befriended Like a moth you are consumed.
Und solang du das nicht hast, Dieses: Stirb und werde Bist du nur ein trüber Gast Auf der dunklen Erde	And unless your life contain Dying and rebirth You are but a cloudy guest Upon this dark earth.

(J.W. Goethe, *West-OstlicherDivan*, author's translation)

"Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned against you; pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live." (Numbers 21:6-9)

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Death and Sacrifice

Our narrative "Godfather Death" (Chapter 7) presents us with a number of surprises, both in respect to healing itself and in regard to the stance it requires from the healer.

Individual lives are represented as candles, the flickerings of lights. These lives manifest as entities of consciousness (light), not of body or substance. (This idea is also expressed in the German word *Lebenslicht*, "light of life," as a synonym for the life spirit.) These life-consciousness entities reside in the interior of the earth, as though they were cells or organs of an earth organism. They are presided over by a guardian spirit called Death who is Lord of illness and healing and regulates extinction and regeneration in a way analogous to the cycles of generation, destruction and regeneration of individual cells in the living organisms.

Extinction of the flame of life is presented as a function of renewal and renewal as a function of death. For a new light to be kindled an old one must go out. Earthly structuring is shown to fluctuate in a process of dissolution and creation; both are aspects of archetypal creativity.

The dramatic illness-impasse is presented as an aspect of a death-life process. Its outcome depends upon the relative positioning of Death, who always is present, at the head or feet of a patient. Every overcoming of illness then involves a dying, one way or another, whether we see it as a healing or an actual physical dying. The old must be offered up for the new possibilities to enter. The ill person needs to surrender to the archetypal energy that tries to reach him and demands that something "die." Psychologically this partial dying may happen by dint of yielding and giving up one's resistance to the new, or physically, in allowing the "spirit" of the illness to enter through the similar substance potency (in homeopathy) or the arousal of the critical points, meridians or spinal areas (in acupuncture or manipulative techniques). Often, quite intense temporary aggravation—intensification of crisis rather than immediate relief of the existing stress—is risked thereby. The acceptance of such a crisis amounts to a creative sacrifice. We are reminded of the mythologem of creation through the self-sacrifice of the deity.

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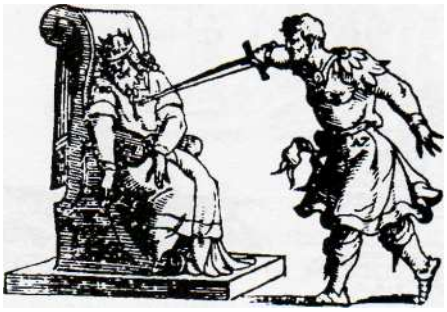
An interesting corroboration of the idea that healing occurs through seemingly destructive transformation is provided by an Alchemistic image series depicting the transformation sequence leading to the *"lapis"* (the philosopher's stone) and to the "pure gold." The process is represented in terms of the Old King (the status quo) not paying attention to the entreaties of his son and his five servants (the new potentialities). Thereupon, the king is stabbed to death by his son, who is now made to join the father in his grave. The grave becomes an incubation chamber in which they are both burned and dissolved. By the intervention of the angel (the healer archetype), their residues are distilled and spiritualized and, aided by the prayers of the helpers, die new king rises from the tomb ... "full of the grace of God.... His body is wholly spiritual and built on heavenly fires; he has the power to make all his servants kings." (Janus Lacinius Therapus, 'The Calabrian: A Form and Method of Perfecting Base Metals." In *The Alchemical Tradition in the Late Twentieth Century,* ed. Richard Grossinger, Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1979, pp. 69-74.)



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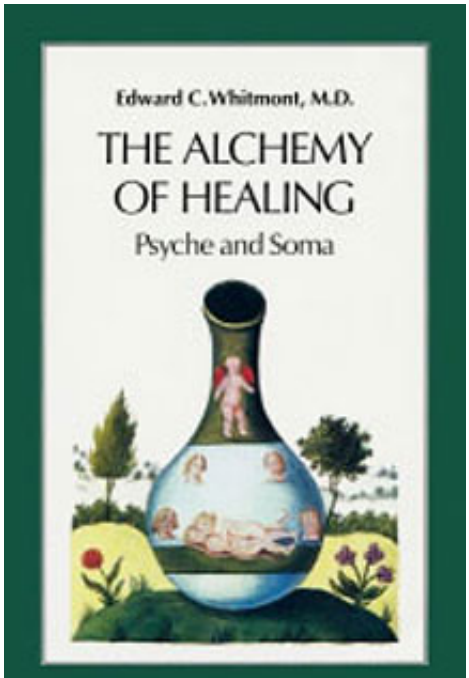

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Psyche and Soma

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