

# THE PEARL WITHIN

## DISCOVERING THE RICHES OF THE UNDERWORLD

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# Chapter Nine

## Alchemy, Transformation and the Soul

THOMAS MOORE, ELOQUENT WRITER OF THE SOUL, has this to say about the mysteries of alchemy and the psyche:

*A psychological attitude does not come about through escape from the tangles and problems, or the joys and pleasures, of ordinary life. Like the clouds, psyche remains close to earth but not embedded in it. It has the moisture of mist, feeling and passion leading not simply to action but toward deep reflection.*

*Heating, cooking, boiling, and baking are alchemical procedures—literally and figuratively. Dense, solid substance can be cooked with thought and reflection until its subtle elements, trapped within, escape. Under the heat of passion, knotty problems in life rise into consciousness in the forms of images and moods. As a person ‘stews over’ predicaments and plans, life may become less productive but its soul-value deepens. In therapy, or in any psychologically moving situation, what has been stagnant and heavy begins to bubble. Dormant memories of the past rise to the surface, and feelings formerly kept covered and quiet break through. On the ‘hot seat’ of confrontation with formerly neglected issues, memories and feelings begin to loosen and move about. What has been allowed to settle as sediment, causing heaviness and immobility, under the heat of alchemical attention becomes unsettled and unsettling.*

*At various times in psychological life it seems appropriate to boil, bake, roast, fry, or just keep warm. Sometimes a fantasy needs incubation—warmth and containment. The alchemical vessel was seen as both womb and tomb, a place for birth and a place for decay, but always a place for containment. In us the retort is the vessel of memory and imagination, holding events and fantasies where they can be subjected to the heat of passion and feeling or to the simmering of thought and reflection. In this retort, events of life decay, losing their literal form, but they also ferment, acquiring taste, bite, and body. A good cook of the psyche knows the best combinations of temperature and time, when to let things simmer and when to bring them to a boil.<sup>1</sup>*

The “Hymn of the Pearl” is our story which tells how we left our home on a mission while still a child: “When thou goest down into Egypt and bringest the One Pearl which lies in the middle of the sea which is encircled by the snorting serpent, thou shalt put on again thy robe of glory and thy mantle over it and with thy brother our next in rank be heir in our kingdom.”

What is this Pearl, this One Pearl?

On our journey to retrieve the Pearl, we forget who we are while visiting a foreign land (Egypt):

*Egypt as a symbol for the material world is very common in Gnosticism. . . that is, the world of matter, of ignorance, and of perverse religion.<sup>2</sup>*

*At an early stage of development Egypt serves as a nourishing, protective mother. Later she becomes bondage and tyranny from which to escape.<sup>3</sup>*

After journeying “downward,” partaking of the foreign food found there, “I forgot that I was a king’s son and served their king. I forgot the Pearl for which my parents had sent me. Through the heaviness of their nourishment I sank into deep slumber.” Through the partaking of the purely materialistic and literal view of the world, that of Egypt, we have forgotten our royal heritage and mission. We have forgotten the Pearl. A pearl is a precious gem that is formed from layers which grow abnormally because of an irritation. Is our Pearl also grown in this way, and if so, how differently does this portray those irritating facets of personality which trouble us, the very things we wish would go away? We will return to this idea shortly when we take up the alchemical *prima materia* or *massa confusa*.

Because our royal parents have somehow perceived our situation, “. . . they wrote a letter to me, and each of the great ones signed it with his name:

*From thy father the King of Kings, and from thy mother, mistress of the East, and from thy brother, our next in rank, unto thee, our son in Egypt, greeting. Awake and rise up out of thy sleep, and perceive the words of our letter.*

*Remember that thou art a king’s son: behold whom thou hast served in bondage. Be mindful of the Pearl, for whose sake thou hast departed into Egypt.*

*Remember thy robe of glory, recall thy splendid mantle, that thou mayest put them on and deck thyself with them and thy name be read in the book of the heroes and thou become with thy brother, our deputy, heir in our kingdom.*

“Remember that thou art a king’s son or daughter.” Remember that you are descended from royalty, and so your rightful heritage is to rule in your kingdom. You are endowed with the birthright of (co-)rulership over your inner world, on behalf of and in cooperation with your Father and Mother, the mysterious King and Queen who gave birth to you, your Source and Foundation.

“Be mindful of the Pearl.” **“Be mindful of the Pearl.”** This book is about being mindful of the Pearl, the Mystery that must be retrieved and brought Home. It seeks to articulate the relationship available to you with the underworld of the unconscious; its message is like that letter, sent by “the great ones.” It says, “Awake and rise up out of your sleep.” Remember. Remember your robe of glory (“praise, honor, or distinction, a distinguished quality or asset”), this part of you that is your most praiseworthy asset. Your True Self may be covered over with years of conditioning and prejudice, veiled by desire for approval and wealth, but it still remains, waiting like the Pearl to be rescued.

Remember. Be mindful of the Pearl.

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.<sup>4</sup>*

The King and Queen did not send their entire kingdom to retrieve the Pearl, not even the other brother, just the one son whose dharma was to fulfill this mission. Each of us has also been sent here to complete a task; we each may be called.

Try to realize the moment has come to remember, and be mindful. We are here to live a life that has meaning and substance, to embody the best in us (as well as the rest). In our desire to fit in, to be acceptable, we must not lose sight of the core part of our nature that has something unique to offer and which may only be realized through the courage to follow our mission.

Using ideas from the fields of psychology and religion, assuming they are different names for the same thing, we have tried to describe this journey as one in which you recognize and engage with the Mystery under the name “unconscious,” which truly describes nothing other than that which you do not know. To find who you truly are, you must encounter and accept that part of you which has remained in the shadows, and which holds the key.

This is of course a great risk, because you cannot know at the outset what you will find. Not knowing, most do not make the effort, afraid that what they will find will confirm their shameful memories, revealing them

as not worthy. Not worthy of what? What is it that we unconsciously fantasize we will be unworthy of? Isn't it our "robe," our "mantle?" Our heritage and calling? Yet because we remain unconscious of this, we fulfill our fears and doubts. Holding back from we know not what, we ensure that we will in fact not carry out our true calling. The way to break this cycle of failure is to recognize your fears and their source, and to realize that YOU WILL DIE, and are dying.

With the fearlessness of the terminal patient or someone brought back from death, you know you have nothing to lose anymore. Because not risking fulfilling your True Nature is death itself anyway. Bringing yourself to face the true reality that your life will end, may end today, is the way to let go of the provisional "soon," "when I'm ready," "someday" that holds us in prison and keeps us asleep.

*And what shall thy soul say when it wakes and knows  
The work was left undone for which it came?  
Or is this all for thy being born on earth  
Charged with a mandate from eternity,  
A listener to the voices of the years,  
A follower of the footprints of the gods,  
To pass and leave unchanged the old dusty laws?  
Shall there be no new tables, no new Word,  
No greater light come down upon the earth  
Delivering her from her unconsciousness,  
Man's spirit from unalterable fate?  
Can'st thou not down to open the doors of Fate,  
The iron doors that seemed for ever closed,  
And lead man to truth's wide and golden road  
That runs through finite things to eternity?  
Is this then the report that I must make,  
My head bowed with shame before the Eternal's seat, —  
His power he kindled in thy body has failed,  
His labourer returns, her task undone?<sup>5</sup>*

Imagine your funeral, your obituary—not as a morbid exercise, but as an opportunity in fantasy to reconsider your life. Life can only be weighed at the end. Until then, you make it and its worth with your choices and actions.

In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the soul of the dead is brought before the goddess of Justice and Truth, Maat, who wears a feather on her head. Beside her is Ammut, Devourer of the Dead, a beast part crocodile, part lion, and part hippopotamus, ready to destroy the deceased if his heart should be full of sin ("sin" means "missing the mark"). The heart of the deceased is placed on one side of the scales, and the feather of Maat on the other. The truth in the heart, the living of one's truth, is the crucial factor that determines the destiny of the deceased after life.

What if you faced such a weighing of the truth lived in your heart during your life?

We live in a time which is largely neglectful and therefore ignorant of these things. Our education and upbringing offer almost nothing to help us to examine and become familiar with ourselves. We are largely on our own and without support as we try to remember and be mindful. How many of us have even heard the term "mindful" used?

Imagine living in a land where being mindful and living your inner truth were what mattered most.

So the underworld of the unconscious is full of treasures and demons, and we are so strangely without resources to find our way. It is as if we live on the edge of a jungle filled with terrifying and wonderful creatures, but we have no way of knowing their natures and which are which. This leaves us starved for psychology, the modern term for mapping the soul. The psychology of the university is totally unequipped because it only dares to address the quantitative and measurable. The unconscious is treacherous and tricky enough without our having to go into it blindly and unprepared.



Yet go into it we must if we are to recover our Pearl. Our authentic thoughts and feelings emerge from there, our motives and values live there. Even if we are completely programmed since birth as to how to feel and think, what choices are right, then those scripts are in the unconscious. And how can another person, no matter how loving and concerned, ever know with certainty who we are and what we are, and what will fulfill our destiny? How can a church or synagogue, a school or teacher know? *We need to be shown how to find our own way, not which way to follow.*

But lacking this psychological knowledge, our world has no faith in inner guidance, and we stand little chance today of knowing that it is *inside* ourselves that our answers may be found. And even if we intuit this, as many do, there is so little to help us understand how to find them.

We are calling the unconscious part of the “psyche.” We don’t know what this is, nor do we know what the unconscious is. We can only observe its existence from the effects it has upon us by means of dreams, fantasies, symptoms, obsessions, compulsions, passions, mistakes. We know that *something* influences us, often against our will, but lacking any insight into what that “something” is, we may project our fears onto it. Thus people largely imagine the unconscious is something dangerous and destructive, to be walled out and suppressed, avoided at all cost, if they consider it at all. But we avoid it at such a cost! Because it is in there that our soul is at home, and it is from there that our inspirations and longings and callings arise.

The study of the psyche or soul has mainly been for psychologists, philosophers and theologians, and abstract theory and intellectual speculations are poor food for the soul. We are starved, many of us, for soul food, for ideas and images and practical ways to make the journey inward. The “letter” from our royal parents calls upon us to do so.

The soul may be a Mystery, but it does not have to remain out of our reach or out of our minds. If our journey Home means that we must explore the inner world that has largely been taboo for so long, then we must search like the hungry tiger of the I Ching:

*Tiger observing: glaring, glaring. His appetites: pursuing, pursuing. Without fault.*

*Observe: see and inspect carefully; gain knowledge of; compare and imitate. To see an omen, taking account of what you see.*

*Glare: stare intensely. To look and hesitate, staring without acting.*

*Appetite: drives, instinctive craving; wishes, passions, desires, aspirations; long for, seek ardently; covet.*

*Pursue: chase, follow closely, press hard; go, chasing fortune.<sup>6</sup>*

Wherever we can find them, we must covet and hold onto clues and signs about the inner world of soul. There seem to be three main external sources for such insight:

1. The **testimony** of those who have learned from their own explorations;
2. The **myths** that have been imagined from the deeper layers of the unconscious and which have passed down to us through recorded history;
3. The projections of the psyche into dark and obscure areas by the imagination of individuals (much like myths, only individual and on a smaller scale), producing **fantasies**.

Where we lack any clarity or understanding and see only into a void, it is our imagination that fills the empty space. But what is the imagination, if not the image-making capacity of the psyche? So the myths that arose in answer to the questions of how the world was created, why we are here, and so on, were *from the psyche*. They are not ridiculous or unfounded, nor necessarily childish (some are incredibly sophisticated) just because they were imagined. Myths must have something that strikes a chord if they are cherished and repeated by generations of human beings.

The “foolishness” has only been in taking them literally, which must happen if people have no concept of the psyche as a real “thing” which exists in its own “objective” reality. The myths speak from the deeper

collective layers of the unconscious and so resonate in humans. When articulated, they reveal the contents of our collective unconscious, and therefore they reveal our deeper layers to ourselves. So if we don't take a creation myth as literally describing how the world was made, we can still receive it as the psyche symbolically explaining how it—the psyche—was created. It was “as if. . .”

In much the same way, individuals pursuing mysteries will imagine explanations for what they observe. This is how scientists develop hypotheses. This is how the wealth of great imagery known as alchemy was derived. Men in laboratories and in meditation observed behaviors of materials that they could not explain, since chemistry had not yet been born. So they imagined.

Our concern here is not with how true or factual their fantasies were, but with what the fantasies they imagined reveal about the workings of our souls, the unconscious realm where we seek our Home. In familiarizing ourselves with their fantasy images we can develop greater understanding of the hidden Mystery inside of and all around us. We just need to take care not to be literal. If you hear a graduation speech in which the speaker refers to the graduating youth as “seeds” that will grow into “trees,” do you think the speaker a fool: “can't she see these are people and not seeds?”

Metaphor is acceptable as a form of speech. Scientific language strives for literal precision. We are not doing science here, except in the true spirit of the word, (“the state of knowing : knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding; something that may be studied or learned like systematized knowledge or a system of knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws”).

One has to wonder why the word “alchemy” (“a power or process of transforming something common into something special; an inexplicable or mysterious transmuting”) has become so popular in the last few years. It occurs with great frequency in articles, titles, healing techniques, not to mention the number of books recently published on the subject.

Is it possible that this is a sign of the attraction of the unconscious psyche, pushing itself forward so as to gain our attention, inviting us to explore and thus to find our way Home? Is it fantasy to imagine that the unconscious psyche, the place of Mystery, can behave in such a fashion, as a partner or Companion, signaling us, calling to us? This is very much the attitude that can be inferred when we devote ourselves to observing our dreams. The unconscious that is feared, ignored or despised seems to present an unfriendly face, but the inner world that is attended to and observed becomes increasingly helpful.

Three alchemical themes can be relevant for our purposes here:

- The fantasy of the **transformation** of lead or other cheap and base materials into gold or other precious objects, including the “philosopher's stone” or healing elixirs or medicines;
- The composition of the world as having developed from and being composed of the **four elements** (fire, earth, air, water);
- The **processes** by which the transformation from base to precious was accomplished (*putrefactio, mortificatio, calcinatio, solutio, sublimatio, coagulatio*).

## Transformation

What if it really were possible to change the more primitive and objectionable aspects of your personality into something of value? Do you believe that people can change at all? And if people can change, is it because of their efforts or is it something that is conferred by “grace?”

The alchemical point of view—not that it was a uniform code, since the alchemists were isolated individuals and not a group—seems to have been that great effort and concentration, as well as a moral personality, were necessary to accomplish the Work (called the *opus*). But many said that an upstanding character and devotional attitude were not enough; these could only take the practitioner so far. Something else had to

occur outside the control of the alchemist—a kind of “grace” which at least partly depended upon it being the “right” moment. This attitude is descriptive of the approach that seems necessary to reach our Home:

*Therefore if any man desire to reach this great and unspeakable mystery, he must remember that it is obtained not only by the might of man, but by the grace of God, and that not our will or desire, but only the mercy of the Most High, can bestow it upon us. For this reason you must first of all cleanse your heart, lift it to Him alone, and ask of Him this gift in true earnest, and undoubting prayer. He alone can give and bestow it.<sup>7</sup>*

Understanding this, the *opus* was a project demanding the greatest patience, a life project that entailed living one’s life in the spirit of the Work, not a simple task. It really is a partnership between the alchemist and God, or in our terms, between you and the Mystery.

By subjecting the *prima materia*, the messy material one begins with, to the appropriate procedures, one hopes that this matter will transform. The materialist interpretation is that real gold will be produced, leading to great wealth. But many alchemists scorned that goal and those who sought it, saying that this literal reading missed the point. It is the inner soul of the alchemist that is to be transformed, and the procedures were not to be performed literally in the laboratory, but in the inner experience of the alchemist.

The *prima materia* was described in various ways, but it was to be found everywhere in great quantity, was vile and disgusting, multiple yet one, and as a *massa confusa* it threatened one with fragmentation and disintegration. The literal alchemists gathered feces and urine, blood and intestines, filth and rotting flesh. But for our purposes, we can apply this description to the inner world of our own psyche.

The necessary beginning material which we hope to transform (and which we actually *need* if we are to undertake this project) can be found everywhere in our confusion, habits, complexes, moods, errors, and shadow. By accepting this psychological material as our own we begin the transformation process.

Our attitude toward this material is usually one of rejection, disgust or shame. The pieces of personality necessary for the *opus* are felt to be “vile and disgusting,” not desirable or acceptable to the ego, cast off into the “dung heap” of the unconscious. It is exactly this material that Freud believed made the unconscious necessary as a “place” to hold it out of our sight and awareness. Later Jung put forth the argument based on his own work that there was more to the unconscious than just rejected personal material. He claimed that the unconscious also held positive growth potential, undeveloped gifts, and even more, the collective history of the development of our human consciousness.

But we must first encounter and confront the “dweller on the threshold,” as it was called by occult philosophy and mysticism. In order to avail ourselves of the treasures to be found in the deep vault of the unconscious we must first come to terms with the most accessible layer—our own shadow. We are like the fairy tale character who must kiss the ugly face of the toad in order to reveal the handsome prince hidden beneath the repulsive surface.

The multiple nature that was ascribed to the *prima materia* while it was actually also a single “one” reflects our experience in working with the shadow in order to heal the personality and make it whole. At first unwanted traits and shameful characteristics are seen as unrelated and a nuisance, but as we become more familiar with them and begin to accept them as part of who we are, they gradually coalesce into a single shadow—the rejected one, the loser, the Cinderella who is poor and homely.

This *massa confusa* threatens us with disintegration because it represents a split in our nature. We are split from this unwanted self, and it consists of the cast-off halves of the opposites that were refused in our development of personality. So the illusion of unity that defends the ego is of course threatened with fragmentation if we truly face ourselves and have to admit inside our walls the “enemy” that we have projected onto others.

What is the “gold?” The “philosophers’ Stone?” The “elixir” or “tincture” described as the ultimate outcome (if successful) of this work on the *prima materia*?



We do not know. The descriptions are notoriously contradictory and paradoxical. They sound like religious attempts to capture “God” in words: “it is hot, but it is cold; it is love but it is vengeance; it is high but it is low...” This suggests that the goal is indescribable, like our Mystery. But inability to describe it does not make it non-existent nor unworthy. Perhaps the difficulty in articulating the stone or the gold or the tincture is descriptive in itself, because from this process of transformation comes a unity and wholeness which finally embraces the pairs of opposites that have torn us apart. The outcome is “both...and” rather than the “either...or” that we live with as egos. It is a Mystery, but it is also the Home to which we are returning.

## The Elements

Alchemy and most other belief systems (including science) have held that our universe was originally a primary Unity, All One—One substance, One God, one Mind. It is hard not to imagine everything at the earliest point of its origin to have been a single Thing. Many myths attempt to describe this Original Mystery or at least to name It. In some way, aren’t these myths of creation also describing our fantasies of our own beginning? Is there not also some imaginary single state of unity and oneness from which each of us has come forth? Is it in the womb? Or is it the Big Bang? It certainly is the Mystery; it is unconscious, not known to us.

The act of creation is often characterized as the original splitting of the primary Unity into Two: Heaven and Earth, Above and Below, the first pair of opposites from which all other pairs followed. And out of these philosophical prototypes came the foundation of our world, a foundation that seems based on the number four. Our lives are bounded by four seasons, four directions, the four critical points described earlier in our discussion of opposites and cycles (like New Moon, First Quarter, Full Moon and Last Quarter; sunrise, noon, sunset, midnight). Why is it that we cannot as easily describe the lunar cycle as consisting of three or five stages? Why don’t we locate ourselves by three or six directions? Four is mysteriously intrinsic to our everyday experience.

Our world was seen by the alchemists and others as consisting of four primary elements: fire, air, water and earth. This interesting foursome is also fundamental in the subject of astrology. The *prima materia* would therefore be composed of these four elements, as would you or I, and everything else. Fire and water were opposites—one dry and one wet. And air and earth were opposites—air being considered as hot and earth as cold.

In the middle ages character types were described as being based on a dominant element. People were melancholic, phlegmatic, choleric or sanguine (see Shakespeare for example):

| Humor       | Quality     | Element | Personality                                       |
|-------------|-------------|---------|---|
| Sanguine    | hot, moist  | air     | Optimistic, red-cheeked, corpulent, irresponsible |
| Choleric    | hot, dry    | fire    | Short-tempered, red-haired, thin, ambitious       |
| Phlegmatic  | cold, moist | water   | Sluggish, pallid, corpulent, lazy                 |
| Melancholic | cold, dry   | earth   | Introspective, sallow, thin                       |

Figure 2: The Humours<sup>8</sup>

What is of value here for our purposes is the consideration that if the inner world (and outer) can be imagined as consisting of these four elements, then our dreams and fantasies may be communicating with us using this language, and if we are unaware, then we miss the point. These same four elements are very significant in the alchemical procedures we are about to consider.

As the unconscious, or our soul, seeks to aid us in our becoming more aware of ourselves and healing imbalances by confronting and integrating shadow, it frequently will use the symbolism of the elements. It also appears to use the number four to refer to making something complete or whole, like a table needing four legs to be sturdy.

Often dreams and fantasies involve images of height or of depth, crashing to the earth, flying, climbing. These can now be seen as possibly referring to the air and earth elements and their natural opposition to one another. Dreams of water, tidal waves, drowning or bathing, or of fire and burning and heat can be references to the water-fire opposition.

Consider your personality as it presently expresses itself. What “humour” do you see as prevalent in your nature? Are you fiery? Earthy? Moist? Airy? What do you lack?

Someone with a lot of earth and little or no air would be very pragmatic, at home with physical tasks, probably handy with tools, “grounded,” but not very interested or comfortable with abstract ideas or intellectual pursuits. It has nothing to do with being more or less intelligent, but with the kind of aptitude shown. “Can’t see the forest for the trees.”

A watery person needs empathic connections with others and is usually sensitive to feelings. Like water, they often have a lot going on beneath the surface. Fire has enthusiasm and zeal, intuitive ideas for possibilities, and warmth, but is hard to sustain without burning out.

A lack of fire may not be easily stirred. No earth may not attend to practical necessities or be in touch with the body. No water can find it difficult to sympathize or understand another’s feelings.

As a practical matter, if you are out of balance you can find activities that feed the weakest element. You can try gardening or hiking in nature or physical sensuality if lack of earth is indicative of a life not grounded. Certain kinds of music or drama facilitate a watery sensitivity, as does trying to really listen to another. Spicy foods and hot climates are one way to stimulate your fire. Trips to the mountains or open spaces or on an airplane emphasize the air element.

Emphasis of an element may indicate a strength or natural gift, but at the same time it suggests greater possibility for lacking or suppressing its opposite. Fire in its passion and knack for sensing possibilities may easily overlook sensitivity to feeling (water) and empathic connections with others to run roughshod toward its goals. Water’s sympathy and need for closeness can limit individual expression and the capacity for passion and self-dramatization so typical of fire.

Air can get lost in its own world of thought and abstract concepts and forget to pay the rent or buy groceries, while earth may become so immersed in everyday tasks and attention to body and things that thinking for its own sake and for perspective rarely happen.

If you dream of being lost at sea, what might that mean? Is the element of water becoming too much, or is the dream saying you need more water in your life? The intent of the dream may not be obvious, but a little self-assessment may reveal the message. That is why familiarity with the elements and their symbolism can provide one basis for interpreting images from the unconscious.

## Alchemical Operations

As the alchemist described his laboratory work, either literally or as metaphor for inner work, certain “procedures” were followed. These operations struck Jung in his study of alchemy as being identical to what he observed going on in his patients and their dreams during their growth and individuation (“to give individuality to; to form into a distinct entity, i.e., to become who you really are, the True self”). As you seek to become more acquainted with the ways of the unconscious or soul as it partners with you on your journey Home to your True Identity, you will find yourself going through crises of transformation, critical moments in the growth process (see next chapter on **Initiation**), which are uncannily similar to the “chemical” operations described by the alchemists.

Our purpose for this brief examination of alchemical ideas is not to acquire an appearance of “secret” knowledge (which the ego loves) or to get lost in antique philosophy. It is relevant because as we said at the beginning of this chapter, if you seek to follow your inner Partner and to realize who you really are beneath

the conditioning and the need to fit in, then understanding and recognizing the psyche, the soul, the inner “orphan” who has been abandoned and neglected is crucial. The surface world of concrete material objects is part of who you are but not the heart, and it is misleading if it is not seen as the outer appearance of an inner Reality.

Since our conditioning and prevailing cultural attitudes are so estranged from any depth or internal/hidden presence, we are largely naïve and ignorant concerning the ways of our foreign inner “underworld.” The underworld had a primary place in Greek times, as did the world of the “ancestors” in China. We do not have anything like that anymore, any imaginary space which would allow the inhabitants (our “complexes,” subpersonalities, the Mystery) a valid place in our thoughts. The “underworld” has been paved over with concrete (“They paved paradise and put up a parking lot”<sup>9</sup>)—the literal interpretation of all events and experiences as arising from material causes alone.

So recognition of the processes of the psyche, of the ways it appears to operate, in the alchemical laboratory procedures, which were of course intended to produce transformation of lead into gold, provides a rich fantasy language revealing the soul doing its work on its lead, our personality and its densest and most opaque elements.

| Operation                        | Quality                            | Element | Example                   | Experience              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Mortificatio/ Putrefactio</i> | death of form<br>breakdown of form | —<br>—  | Death<br>Decomposition    | Letting go<br>Breakdown |
| <i>Calcinatio</i>                | burning, heating                   | fire    | Baking, cooking           | Desire                  |
| <i>Solutio</i>                   | dissolving                         | water   | Sugar in coffee           | Confusion               |
| <i>Coagulatio</i>                | solidifying                        | earth   | Water into ice            | No escape               |
| <i>Sublimatio</i>                | evaporating                        | air     | Clouds                    | Abstraction             |
| <i>Separatio</i>                 | splitting or dividing              | —       | Cell-splitting            | Separation              |
| <i>Coniunctio</i>                | merging/joining as one             | —       | H <sub>2</sub> +O = Water | Satisfaction            |

Figure 3: Alchemical Operations

These alchemical operations, which occur in no special order, may sometimes be particularly related to one of the four elements, as you will see.

## *Mortificatio, Putrefactio*

*The problem of crucifixion is the beginning of individuation; there is the secret meaning of the Christian symbolism, a path of blood and suffering—like any other step forward on the road of the evolution of human consciousness. Can man stand a further increase of consciousness?... I confess that I submitted to the divine power of this apparently insurmountable problem and I consciously and intentionally made my life miserable, [‘To pay attention to the unconscious does mean to deliberately make oneself miserable in order that the autonomous psyche will be able to function more freely. It has nothing to do with masochism but is rather a conscious participation in the process of actualizing the Deity.’] because I wanted God to be alive and free from the suffering man has put on him by loving his own reason more than God’s secret intentions.<sup>10</sup>*

*Mortificatio* (*mors* = death; *puter* = rotten) is the process of dying, of the breakdown of form and structure, imagined to free the spirit contained within. In our literal world, death is a terrifying prospect because we have no fantasy of any life beyond the physical body. *Mortificatio* is present in these images: corpse, death, exile, mutilation, dismemberment, castration, grave, rotting, excrement, slaying, blackness, defeat, wounding, humiliation, sacrifice, suffering, crow, skull, lameness or sickness.<sup>11</sup>

So when you encounter these images in dreams or fantasies, or in real life, you are experiencing the presence of the *mortificatio*. The first stage of the alchemical process was sometimes called the *nigredo*, or blackening.

*That which does not make black cannot make white, because blackness is the beginning of whiteness, and a sign of putrefaction and alteration, and that the body is now penetrated and mortified.*<sup>12</sup>

The blackness also refers for us to the shadow, its lack of visibility in our awareness, and the *mortificatio* or wounding of the ego image we have of ourselves when we face the actual presence of our shadow side. *Awareness of shadow is wounding to the ego personality.* So if you set out to examine your shadow, or are forced to by the damage resulting from its unconsciousness, you WILL sustain a wound. You may dream of rotting corpses, skulls and graves, or other distasteful images. It helps to know about *mortificatio*.

One of the pieces that make up your shadow is the infantile level of your history. The desire for immediate gratification, power over your environment in order to get your needs met, hunger, greed, or outbursts of primitive emotion are imaged in alchemy often as a *dragon* or *serpent*. Think of the serpent that guards the Pearl in the "Hymn of the Pearl." This dragon ("a personification of the instinctual psyche"<sup>13</sup>) must be slain if we are to bring control of the personality to the ego or even to the Self, because otherwise we are dominated by our instinctual desires and demands, remaining on a primitive level. It is not that our instincts need to be destroyed, but their controlling power over us must be overthrown. When this idea is carried too far, then people DO set out to "kill desire."

*Mortificatio* is nevertheless a powerful form of transformation in which a body is broken down, returning its components to their source. If that "body" is a personality with which you have identified, say as a heroic can-do subpersonality, a victim, or competent expert, and the natural growth process takes you beyond the safe and familiar boundaries of that identity, then you can expect the transformation to lead you into potentially scary territory, the *mortificatio*.

As an example, as a child I was praised for being bright and having the quick answer, but otherwise I was often either ignored or made fun of, making for some humiliating and shameful memories. These painful experiences inflicted what we have called the "primal wound,"<sup>14</sup> in which the environment lacked empathy and safety, and so a "survival personality" formed which organized around the feelings of worth and attention that arose when performing my quick wit.

The feelings of vulnerability and exposure that brought so much pain were split off from this survival personality and avoided and defended against. So any situation in which I might find myself exposed and vulnerable was very threatening. I would tend to try to cope with these situations with the only thing that worked for me as a child: appearing to be knowledgeable and certain, a competent expert. But this subpersonality has very real limitations—as they all do—especially preventing me from learning and growing because all real learning begins in ignorance, and this part of me could not bear to appear as lacking answers.

But life brings us circumstances in which we really do lack experience and knowledge. Something about this situation matters enough that we cannot avoid it. At first I found myself having very intense emotional reactions, as the buried feelings—pain, vulnerability, shame, exposure—started to bubble to the surface, having been triggered by the spot I found myself in. My habitual defenses would mobilize but were just not adequate to protect me, and so they would break down. So did the image of competent expert that had provided me with a cover. It can be very helpful to realize that this uncomfortable experience (or any similar one arising from other different identifications) is finite and will end, and that it is natural and worthy of your submission.

The *mortificatio* of the king (or sun or lion) is another alchemical image portraying the end of the rulership of the ego and its desire for power. This must happen if another center within us is to assume command, the center we are calling Self, the Mystery within. Just as the discovery by Copernicus, that the Earth is not truly the center of our solar system or universe, brought about a revolution in science and our idea of where we stand (not at the center), it foretells a similar inner revolution that must take place when the ego discovers the presence of the mysterious Self which is Who and What you truly are. The ego is not *the* center; it is only the center of your consciousness. When we begin to acknowledge and to respect the hidden world of the unconscious with its mysteries, to see that it is autonomous and purposeful, a new center emerges, one which is both conscious *and* unconscious, and which can integrate and bridge between both.

*Mortificatio* represents the transformative process that must be undergone by these previous defenses, attitudes, and behaviors that have made up your “expert” (or any other) subpersonality. This can be a very painful or fearful experience, and a great deal depends upon how you understand what is happening. As we have been repeating, in our culture, with little or no understanding of inner movement, only the symptoms will be seen, and medication will probably be prescribed to remove or relieve them. By doing so, the opportunity to outgrow a childhood wound and its limiting defenses may be thwarted. In the end, is this a good thing for you? Not likely. Comfort is not the ultimate value, except in a world that knows no better, a world in which infantile desires rule.

But if you understand that growth brings change, and that crises of transformation are *normal* and to be expected—even sought after if you value growth of consciousness—they appear as opportunities to become more fully who you really are and less a fraud hiding behind defenses. You are likely to be more willing to submit, to consent to what is being asked of you as a kind of payment, if you wish to find greater inner peace and fulfillment. In addition, if you have learned not only that these crises are normal opportunities but that the actual experience has been described by the soul in the fantasy of the *mortificatio*, then the fear of being out of control is *somewhat* alleviated because you have a type of map of the territory. Yes, it *is* terrifying and *does* make you feel like you are being crushed or dismembered or dissolved, but you now know somewhere in your mind that this is how it is *supposed to feel*.

If you went to the dentist and had never heard anything about what to expect, then the first time the dentist stuck a novocaine needle into your gums or started to drill would certainly send you right out the door, and you’d probably never go back. But if you have heard it will probably feel like this, and sound like that, and that this is how it is for everyone having dental work done, you have a much greater chance of going through what may still be an unnerving experience. It is the same with the inner process of dying, decomposing, and eventually being resurrected. But what do you have in your education, formal or otherwise, that can prepare you for the inner metamorphoses that are completely natural to the psyche?

These fantasy images from the alchemists are teachings from the soul or psyche about how it works and what you can expect. These images will appear to you in dreams and fantasies, as your inner Companion tries to help you to cooperate with what fate requires if you are to fulfill your destiny. These will foster a cooperative attitude of surrender or consent. How are we to know that this kind of experience is common, has been the lot of human beings for centuries, unless they tell us? And they have, but we don’t read their words or know about their history because it is not considered important enough to be passed on. How can that be?

At the moment when you are deep into the very real struggle to stay with your experience and not run to escapist distractions or regress back to the now outdated defenses that got you here, this information will be like water to the thirsty desert traveler. How sad for us that this kind of nourishment, freely available and freely given, has to be so difficult to find. We have buried the soul and so its treasures are not valued. This is the lost orphan, without parents or protection, without a place in our world, but still there waiting, with so much to offer.

To continue through the *mortificatio* process means to face loss of self, like standing on the edge of a cliff and staring into the void. This moment will come up again in our discussion of **initiation**. In order to pass from one state of being to the next, you have to cross over some kind of initiatory territory and you cannot do so while trying to hold onto what is passing on. Legend says the soul of the dying person cannot go on to the next world if it cannot release its attachment to the living. This is the same theme we are discussing, but it applies to us in other moments besides our physical death at the end of life.

This moment of leaping into the void is full of the Mystery. Understandably, in a world which has no cognizance of this Mystery, it is much more difficult to make such a leap. As a result, you hold on, because the other alternative seems to offer nothing but annihilation. You have no way of knowing that you will survive your leap. To know so, you would need to have had the experience of falling until you hit bottom. That’s the only way to learn that there IS a bottom. At some point in life, you must let go of everything, give up, surrender and jump. Then you will find the bottom, the foundation that holds you even though invisibly. This is the “hitting bottom” spoken of in the AA recovery program. Once you have hit bottom in



your life, you know on some deep level that it will be ok when you have to let go again. This does not mean that it will not be terrifying, only less so.

This is the territory of the *mortificatio*. It is a normal part of living, though we are not told. We are so ill prepared for this. Witness that fact in our collective situation: our culture is unwilling to see the need for change and holds onto unfulfilling activities because we have no picture of the leap of faith anymore. We desperately need to let go and allow ourselves to hit bottom. We don't know what this means—perhaps an economic collapse, environmental catastrophe, or loss of political direction (which we obviously do not have anyway), invasion by aliens from space, a new “plague,” or just the increasing deterioration of respect and safety in our lives. We have only the illusion of political direction created by a mindless reactionary swinging back and forth between the opposites like liberalism and conservatism.

But we will need as a culture to face the same *mortificatio* that the alchemists described, just as we must in our individual lives. Only if you and I go through this necessary initiation in our own lives will the number of people grow to what is necessary to allow us as a society to make the leap. The opportunities to practice for these critical moments are available every day. When you awaken at 4 AM in a sweat, with thoughts about how something in your brain could trigger a stroke in the next moment, or feeling a tightness in the chest, or thinking about someone you know who unexpectedly died recently, what is it that allows you to move on, knowing that each day means one less to live, and that your time is coming, as surely as you breathe one more breath right now?

You have a finite number of breaths in your body, and each one means one less is left. In this realization you will find the courage and consent that allows you to move ahead, even though your ultimate destination has always been known, just not the way there or the schedule. These moments, which we all have in some form or other, if deeply lived and felt, prepare you for the *mortificatio*'s—big and small—so necessary to life.

But what encouragement or examples do you have for living these moments intentionally and voluntarily? Instead you are told it is morbid to think about such things—don't do it. Have a drink, look for some sex, buy another car. Fill that emptiness with something because otherwise it will swallow you up and you will not have the strength to go on. That is what one believes who has not seen the Mystery, who has not hit bottom. When you have, you can say in the face of your death, “I cannot control you, Death, but since I must go with you, I ask for the strength and courage—from my soul, from my ancestors, from the gods—to do it well and with dignity.”

This attitude will take you through the necessary *mortificatio*'s.

What is it going to be? How do you want to live? Do you want to grow to your full potential, to fulfill your destiny? Is life lived in avoidance of the void and of death a real life at all? Is a life of defense and self-protection what you want to model for your children and others? Think about those you have admired. What is it that makes you feel admiration toward them? How do you imagine they faced their *mortificatio* moments?

There *is* a bottom. It *is* ok. You *can* do what is necessary in order to leave behind the safety of your personality built on survival needs, and to really live on the edge.

## *Calcinatio*

*Calcinatio* (*calc* = lime) refers to the image of heating and cooking, transforming through the burning away of moisture, like when you bake a cake. It is present in the imagery of refining, burning, purging, sacrifice, testing, ordeals, judgment, drying, extracting water, hell, cleansing, frustrated desire, purifying by suffering, rage<sup>15</sup>. This would be transformation in the psyche by **fire**.

In the process of slaying the dragon of infantile desires, the *calcinatio* would describe those experiences where you want something so badly, *have to have it*, and cannot. We often experience this ordeal when compelled by sexual desire or romantic love for an unavailable object. The suffering “burns” and if we

endure... and endure... we eventually find ourselves transformed, with a much greater capacity for patience (means "to endure suffering") and acceptance of the things we cannot change (see quote on page 88).

The moisture removed by the purging of fire may represent these infantile desires, or emotions or fantasies. When the ordeal is over, our fantasies of what we want and whether or not we can have it will have changed. This "drying out" process seems necessary for the development of the soul.

Again, this is not a pretty process. It has been described as agony by many writers or artists. But if you find yourself going through a necessary *calcinatio* it sure can help to know it has a purpose and once again is a natural movement that many have gone through before you. It calls for that same attitude discussed above, the ability to consent to the necessity of what you are going through.

## *Solutio*

The *solutio* is change through the element of **water**. While fire burns away moisture in the *calcinatio*, here water dissolves the structure and substance of some aspect of your life. *Solutio* is found in the imagery of melting, floods, the sea, drowning, water, intoxication, dismemberment, devouring, tears, sex, dew.<sup>16</sup>

It becomes apparent that the *calcinatio* and the *solutio* are both variations of the *mortificatio*, because they involve the necessity of letting go of what existed up until now, and passing through a transitional stage until arriving at a new and transformed state. This is the "rebirth" so often mentioned in alchemical texts.

Implicit in alchemy and in the journey to your Home—the True Self you originally were and which it is your destiny ("make firm, establish; place for which one is bound") to be—is the idea of rebirth and renewal. None of these transformative deaths is final. Think of the losses you have experienced in your life: a marriage ending, a career over, a friendship lost, a role finished. You survived them all, even when the letting go experience of the death of what was passing may have felt as if you were being annihilated. It is the nature of the deaths we go through that we cannot see what will come after. If we could we would be reassured. This is where faith comes in.

*Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.*<sup>17</sup>

The message of the soul as reflected in the fantasies of alchemy is a life-affirming one, encouraging us to take the leap by portraying transformation in all its agonies yet promising renewal and rebirth.

*The state of imperfect transformation, merely hoped for and waited for, does not seem to be one of torment only, but of positive, if hidden, happiness. It is the state of someone who, in his wanderings among the mazes of his psychic transformation, comes upon a secret happiness which reconciles him to his apparent loneliness. In communing with himself he finds not deadly boredom and melancholy but an inner partner; more than that, a relationship that seems like the happiness of a secret love, or like a hidden springtime, when the green seed sprouts from the barren earth, holding out the promise of future harvests. It is the alchemical benedicta viriditas, the blessed greenness, signifying on the one hand the "leprosy of the metals" (verdigris), but on the other the secret immanence of the divine spirit of life in all things.*<sup>18</sup>



**Solutio of the King. Background: Drowning King Calling for Help. Foreground: The King Reborn. (Trismosin, *Splendor Solis*, 1582.)**

The fantasy of the *solutio* probably came from the alchemists' observation of what happens when a solid substance dissolves in a liquid, just as their *calcinatio* was derived from perceiving how a solid turned black, or to white ash, or a liquid evaporated when heat was applied.

In your experience of the *solutio* you will find yourself "drowning," or turning to a kind of mush or primary substance like that which the caterpillar becomes before it emerges as a butterfly. This is not a painful burning like the *calcinatio* where desire is frustrated. Instead you feel immersed, in over your head, and like you've lost the feeling of the solid ground under your feet.

Dreams of tidal waves, being at sea, swimming pools, bathtubs, puddles and other liquids may signify the presence of the *solutio* in your life. It is a time when structure dissolves and plans and goals are fluid. This is a good time to make uncertainty your ally. Remember how it is said that when someone is struck blind, their other senses become more acute. Your usual sense of orientation and direction are temporarily submerged as you melt from one form into another, and in this transitional lost space, look for ways to orient yourself other than those you are most accustomed to relying upon.

Once again in this transformation you are called upon to let go, let the waters of change go over your head and to lose your previous sense of self, of identity. Trust in these same waters to bring renewal and rebirth, to wash you clean of your errors and limitations for a fresh start.

## Coagulatio

The *coagulatio* is the materializing process in which something gaseous or liquid becomes dense solid substance. Associated images such as lead, body, clothing, incarnation, binding, being nailed, eating, flesh, imprisonment, weight, earth, house, or crucifixion offer some sense of this procedure.<sup>19</sup> This is the place of the **earth** element.

Many alchemists believed that the soul was imprisoned in the material body, and that their *opus* was to liberate the soul. Other myths and philosophies including Christianity have portrayed human life in a similar way. This fantasy implies that within us is a deeper, subtler and more spiritual aspect of ourselves that has become lost—been forgotten, like the hero of the “Hymn of the Pearl”—in the material world. While other alchemical procedures like *calcinatio*, *solutio*, or *sublimatio* represent the breakdown of the material prison and the escape of our essence, *coagulatio* portrays the process by which something subtle is brought into contact with matter in order to manifest.

In the *calcinatio* desire is thwarted and the resulting frustration raises the psychic heat to a sometimes agonizing level where we can feel like we are “burning up.” But in the *coagulatio* desire is not thwarted; instead it draws us in and leads to our capture. Hindus believe that the real purpose of marriage and family life is to draw the soul down into this world so that it will stay because of its ties to loved ones.

When the unconscious or psyche needs a transformation to occur that will bring greater substance and solidification, the experience of desire—for the richness and sweetness of life, for the satisfaction of appetite—brings the soul into a deeper involvement and grounding, into the earth, which is the element that is the essence of *coagulatio* symbolism. This is so important, because in our current culture where ideas of soul and consciousness and spirituality are allowed, frequently they are one-sided and portray spirit as the opposite of matter and physical life. Thus many seekers of enlightenment are poorly grounded in the routines of daily life and therefore provide a flimsy “house” in which to clothe spirit.

In dreams our clothing, our house, the food we eat and the attraction to an other all may occur during the *coagulatio*. While this process may not sound as difficult as the *calcinatio* or *solutio*, for a person who lacks earth in his or her elemental makeup, it can be terrifying. The desire to stay above, to remain in the noncommittal and abstract world of ideas and free flight, views the *coagulatio* as much like a death as may another, participating in the *calcinatio* or *solutio*.

Here the experience is more related to suffocation, entrapment, being tied down or imprisoned, unable to move. These are all alchemical processes by which the soul is transformed from one state to another, and here the outcome if successful is to be more embodied, to incarnate more fully into the here-and-now life in which we are born. To do so means to suffer grief over the loss of unlimited potential and un-lived possibilities. But without submitting to this process, you will remain above life rather than embedded in it, and when your life is over, you will have escaped the prison of having lived a single committed lifetime, but your life will also have escaped as well, because it remained mostly potential rather than being actualized as THIS ONE specific life, bound to this moment in time and this point in space.

Often the *coagulatio* feels as if you are nailed to the present situation you are in, with no avenue of escape remaining. It is a time for surrender, again with the thought that “here I am, here I find myself, and so I must chose, must consent to be here, and hope only to do what I must as well as I can.”

## Sublimatio

The **air** element and the laboratory image of vapors rising from a flask are indicative of the movement upward called *sublimatio*. Where *coagulatio* moves downward into the earth, *sublimatio* moves upward into the air. Associated images are height, subtlety, powder, distillation, whiteness, purification, air, spirit, mountain, tower, ascent, eternity, stairs, ladders, elevators, flying.<sup>20</sup>



*Sublimatio* appeals to our fantasy of ascending to the heights, rising above our problems into an ethereal realm of pure thoughts and ideas, white, shining and pristine. This transformation releases something from its density and imprisonment, but may also allow it to float away into oblivion. When you are called upon to experience a *sublimatio*, it does not seem to contain the same agonies as the other alchemical procedures of the soul.

But for the earthy person, the *sublimatio* can be quite unsettling. Being released from the security of a solid and seemingly permanent identity or association with others—something that may feel suffocating to the airy type—the earthy person can feel naked, ungrounded, disoriented, quite lost.

## Separatio

In the *separatio*, elements of the personality which have previously been fused or merged become separated. In our discussion of the opposites we explored the dynamic interplay of the pairs, but before that movement can occur, the pair must be separated or driven apart from its original unity. Just as myths portray the creation of the universe as originally a One, then separated into Two, we were apparently once a single “piece,” with no objective awareness of anything else but ourselves. You and the world, you and your mother were one unit, not two beings.

In the beginning, you and your True or Deeper Self were the same. You were the Mystery. Now we feel that we are separate from that Mystery. Yet if the Mystery is Who or What we truly are, then that separation is not real. The ancient Upanishads of India say that “where there is other, there is fear.”<sup>21</sup> Thus before we were divided from our source, there was no fear, because there was no “other” to be afraid of.

Part of the ego’s problem is that it initially was identified with the entire original Self that you are. We can observe this in children before they encounter reality and learn the limits of their power. Conscious and unconscious are fused together, with no recognition of each other. Once we as children start to run into problems, and we see that the world does not conform to our wishes, we have to face the fact increasingly that there is “me,” and there is “not-me.” This is the so-called period of adaptation to reality.

As we mature and if we gain in psychological sophistication, we begin to see that as St. Paul said,

*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*<sup>22</sup>

Here is the struggle of the human will against forces that he calls “evil,” which refuse to submit to our wishes. We are unable to carry out our will, and we are unable to prevent ourselves from doing things we believe we do not wish to do. Leaving aside the judgment as to whether such opposition is “evil,” it certainly brings home the realization that we are not one single person, but that there exists opposition—one or multiple—within us. This is the experience of the *separatio*. We go from believing we are one to more than one.

Only when this has been realized do we then have the opportunity to become aware of exactly what or who it is that opposes us. For our discussion, we have refrained from any clear definition or value judgment, and been content to call it the unconscious, using psychological terms rather than theological ones. When you have been forced by defeat or symptom or obsession to acknowledge the presence of an “other” occupying your mind, it is of course a shock to the system. It is not unreasonable to feel fear or anxiety, because the illusion of control has been shattered.

But this is also the beginning of the journey Home to your True Self, because that Self must include that of which you are unconscious, as well as what you know. If you persist in your encounter with the unconscious and do not try to banish it, it becomes more than just a hidden opposition; it becomes your partner, your



Companion. It wants to lead you Home, but in order to do so, you must release your fear and mistrust of it. It is like learning to dance, only you are not the one who leads.

Only by becoming separated, by first breaking up into pieces and feeling your brokenness are you capable of reuniting in a greater Whole. The earlier false sense of unity must be undone so that the opposites can be recognized, including the oppositions of ego and shadow, and of conscious will and unconscious will, what some might call the Will of God: "Not my will, but thy will be done."

But the fear of disintegration, the loss of a solid sense of center, leads us to resist this encounter. Mistaking our partial center—the ego—for our true center, because we mistake our conscious self for the entirety of who we are, makes necessary the overthrow of the ego's rulership. We have been speaking throughout this book about the opportunity that symptom, defeat, compulsion or catastrophe brings. The encounter with the Self is a defeat for the ego, Jung said.

## *Coniunctio*

The *coniunctio* is the merging, the bringing together of the separate halves into one single whole. It is an image for the imagined outcome of the human evolutionary process, for the goal of the alchemical *opus*. It is another representation of the gold, the philosophers' stone, or the elixir. The marriage of the Sun and Moon is another frequent likeness in alchemical art symbolizing this paradoxical union, which in its contradictions reminds us of the descriptions of the stone or of deity: high *and* low, hot *and* cold, male *and* female, both at the same time.

This deep and unconscious drive within us pushes us to our fulfillment, though resisting it and the recognition of the unconscious Other in us can force it into the same distorted and literal expressions as the other denied needs of the soul.

We will leave our discussion of the *coniunctio* for our final chapter, **Sex: The *Coniunctio***.

## Notes

- 1 Thomas Moore, *The Planets Within*, (Lindisfarne Books, 1986), pp.71-72.
- 2 Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, (Beacon Press, 2001), p. 118.
- 3 Edward Edinger, *The Bible and the Psyche* (Toronto: Spring Publications, 1986), p. 43.
- 4 Matthew 13:45-46.
- 5 Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1973), pp. 475-476.
- 6 Ritsema & Karcher, *op. Cit.*, p. 333.
- 7 A.E. Waite, *The Hermetic Museum*, (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1999), 1:127.
- 8 [web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/](http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/) © Internet Shakespeare Editions 1996-2000
- 9 Joni Mitchell
- 10 C. G. Jung, unpublished letter, insertion by E. Edinger, *Anatomy of the Psyche*, (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1985), p. 178
- 11 See Edinger, *Anatomy*, ch. 6.
- 12 Arthur Edward Waite, *Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers*, p. 145.
- 13 C. G. Jung, *CW14*, par. 548.
- 14 Firman & Gila, *op. cit.*
- 15 See Edinger, *Anatomy*, ch. 2.
- 16 See Edinger, *Anatomy*, ch. 3.
- 17 Hebrews 11:1.
- 18 C. G. Jung, *CW14*, par. 623.
- 19 See Edinger, *Anatomy*, ch. 4.
- 20 See Edinger, *Anatomy*, ch. 5.
- 21 Upanishad quote from Ken Wilber, *The Atman Project* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980)
- 22 Romans, 7:19-24.