

PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

Depth Psychology Program III
Fall 2009

DP-833 Alchemy and the Mystery Traditions (2 units)
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805-892-5151

Office Hours: At lunch and by appointment (Please arrange times with instructor during class breaks, or sign up at the office hours postings in the cafeteria)

COURSE SYLLABUS

Without history there can be no psychology, and certainly no psychology of the unconscious. (C. G. Jung)

I had very soon seen that analytical psychology coincided in a most curious way with alchemy. The experiences of the alchemists were, in a sense, my experiences, and their world was my world. This was, of course, a momentous discovery. (C. G. Jung)

It is too cheap to say that the old alchemist, i.e. the medieval natural scientist of antiquity, projected unconscious images into matter and nowadays we are enlightened and know what the unconscious is, and what matter is, but those poor fellows just did not distinguish between the two, which explains why they were so backward and fantastic and unscientific! The psyche/matter problem has not yet been solved, which is why the basic riddle of alchemy is still not solved. The answer to the question they pursued we have also not discovered. (Marie-Louise von Franz)

A. Course Description

Alchemy is a diverse, multi-cultural tradition that flourished in China and India, as well as in the ancient Greek, Islamic and European Jewish and Christian traditions. Although alchemy has its deepest roots in African and other metallurgical rites and practices most probably dating back to pre-history in which shamans and smiths were considered magical “masters of fire”, it also bears upon the most cutting edge questions in the fields of contemporary depth psychology and quantum physics, including the problem of the relationship between psyche and matter.

Historians of science typically view alchemy as nothing but a superstitious precursor to chemistry. In the twentieth century, however, Jung claimed that alchemy was not just the precursor of chemistry but of depth psychology as well. In Jung’s view alchemical symbols have to do with the confrontation with the shadow, the renewal of consciousness in the unconscious, the ascendancy of the Feminine archetype and the relationship between psyche and matter. This class will explore some of the historical, mythological and symbolic traditions of alchemy as these relate to the field of depth psychology. We will aim towards a contemporary understanding of the relationship between psyche and matter – the central alchemical theme – as it emerges anew in the fields of depth psychology and quantum physics.

B. Course Objectives

The students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the relevance of alchemical symbolism to the cultural and theoretical underpinnings of depth psychology.
- 2) Situate their own ways of knowing, and their own cultural perspectives, in relation to culturally diverse perspectives and practices.
- 3) Demonstrate an ability to distinguish between literal modes of thinking and symbolic/metaphorical consciousness.
- 4) Consider the contemporary extension of depth psychology into its possible relationship with quantum physics.

C. Course Schedule and Reading

Prior to all class sessions please:

- Read the required readings.
- Bring the required readings to class.
- Write a two-page response paper to be handed in during class and graded.
- Be prepared to participate in class discussion

Class I -- Historical and Mythological Background of Alchemy: Ancient Egypt

Required Reading for Class I: (234 pages)

Abt, T. & Hornung, E. (2003). *Knowledge for the afterlife: The Egyptian Amduat – A quest for immortality*. Zurich: Living Human Heritage. *(This book is a short 150 pages as it contains a plethora of imagery; please ponder over the images as well as the text)* (150 pages)

Jung, C. G. (1961). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York: Vintage Books. (Review "Confrontation with the unconscious" pgs. 170-199, and "The work", pp. 200-222) (51 pages)

From DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Note: To access the electronic reserves log onto <http://pacificadocutec.com> and click on **Electronic Reserves and Reserves Pages**. Type in or in the far left box scroll down to **Department** and type **Depth** in the search field. Click on **Search**, or hit the return button. Click on the **course number** next to the name of your class. Type in the password: **alchemy**. Click on the entry. You can print these out if you like.

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Hornung, E. (1986). *The discovery of the unconscious in ancient Egypt*. Spring, Texas: Spring Publications. (10 pages).

Linden, S. (2003). *The alchemy reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (*Please read "Introduction", pp. 1-23*). (23 pages)

Suggested Reading for Class I:

Eliade, M. (1962). *The forge and the crucible: The origins and structures of alchemy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Class II - Transition from the Ancient to the Medieval World: Arabic Alchemy

Required Reading for Class II: (241 pages)

Abt, T. (2003). *The great vision of Muhammad Ibn Umail. Psychological Perspectives, supplement*. Los Angeles: C.G. Jung Institute. (43 pages)

Abt, T. (Ed.) (2007). *The book of pictures: Mushaf as-suwar by Zosimos of Panopolis*. Zurich: Living Human Heritage. (*Please read "Forward" and "Part I: Introduction" pp. 9-71. The remainder of this book is a reproduction of images; please ponder over the imagery.*) (126 pages)

From the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Hillman, J. (1980). *Silver and the white earth part I*. Spring, Dallas: Spring Publications. (27 pages)

Hillman, J. (1981). Silver and the white earth part II. *Spring*. Dallas: Spring Publications. (45 pages)

Suggested Reading for Class II:

From the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Hallum, B. C. (March, 2009). The Tome of images: An Arabic compilation of texts by Zosimos of Panopolis and a source of the turba philosophorum. *Ambix* 56 (1) 76-88. London, UK: Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry. (12 pages)

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Not from the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Abt, T. (Ed.) (2006). *Book of the explanation of the symbols: Kitab hall ar-rumuz by Muhammad Ibn Umail*, Corpus Alchemicum Arabicum Vol. I A. (M.L. von Franz, Commentary). Zurich: Living Human Heritage. (Original work published c. 10th century CE). (Distributed by Daimon Press). (*“Foreward by the editor”, “Forward by Marie-Louise von Franz”, “Part I: Introduction”, and “Part II: Commentary on the Hall ar-Rumuz”, pp. 7-145*) (138 pages)

Corbin, H. (1977). *Spiritual body and celestial earth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C.G. (1966). The psychology of the transference. *The practice of psychotherapy* CW 16. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C.G. (1967). The visions of Zosimos. *Alchemical studies* CW 13. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Class III -- Alchemy as a Myth for Our Time: Contemporary Understandings of the Relationship Between Psyche and Matter

Required Reading for Class III: (368 pages)

Gieser, S. (2005). *The innermost kernel: Depth psychology and quantum physics. Wolfgang Pauli's dialogue with C.G. Jung*. New York: Springer. (349 pages)

From the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Wilbur, K. (2001). *Quantum questions: Mystical writings of the world's greatest physicists*. Boston: Shambala. (Read the article by Sir Arthur Eddington, "Beyond the veil of physics" pp. 179-198). (19 pages)

Suggested Reading for Class III:

From the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Cambray, J. & Carter, L. (Eds.) (2004). *Analytical psychology: Contemporary perspectives in Jungian analysis* (Advancing theory in therapy series, Tudor, K. Series Ed.). New York: Brunner-Routledge. (Chapter 9: "Synchronicity as emergence", pp. 223-248). (25 pages)

Goodchild, V. (2006). *Psychoid, psychophysical, p-subtle! Alchemy and a new worldview. Spring 74*. Texas: Spring Publications. (26 pages)

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Meier, C.A. (Ed.) (2001). *Atom and archetype: The Pauli/Jung letters 1932-1958*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Letter from Pauli to Jung 27 Feb. 1953, pp. 84-97; Letter from Jung to Pauli 7 March 1953, pp. 97-101). (17 pages)

Van Erkelens, H. & Wiegel, F. W. (Winter, 1998-1999). The piano lesson: An active fantasy by Wolfgang Pauli 106-112. *Psychological Perspectives* 38. Los Angeles: C.G. Jung Institute. (6 pages)

Von Franz, M-L. (1980). *Projection and re-collection in Jungian psychology*. Peru, Ill: Open Court. ("Projection and scientific hypotheses", pp. 53-76). (23 pages)

Von Franz, M-L. (1992). *Psyche and matter* Boston & London: Shambhala Publications. ("Psyche and matter in alchemy and modern science", pp. 145-168). (23 pages)

Not from the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Jung, C.G. (1953). *Psychology and alchemy*. CW 12. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Part I and Part II, pp. 1-215) (This book contains Jung's analysis of Pauli's dreams

within the context of alchemical symbolism, as well as an important introduction to the depth psychological interpretation of alchemy)

Jung, C.G. (1963). *Mysterium coniunctionis*. CW 14. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (*Part VI The Conjunction: The third stage, the unus mundus, pp. 533-554*). (21 pages)

Woodman, R. (2008, December). Romanticism, alchemy, and psychology [On-line]. *Romantic Psyche and Psychoanalysis*, A Romantic Circles Praxis Volume (J. Faflak, Ed.). Retrieved Aug. 2, 2009 from <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/psychoanalysis/woodman/woodman.html> (38 pages)

D. Course Requirements

There are two written requirements for this class: 1) A two-page process paper due at the start of each class, 2) a 10-12 page final paper.

1) **Two page process papers**. *For each class, including the first class, please write a two-page, double spaced, typed, process paper to be collected in class and graded.* In this paper you shall discuss themes or images from your dreams, active imagination, or experiences that relate to the themes or images in the class readings. Please bring these papers to each class. I will ask volunteers to read their papers as a basis for discussion.

2) **Final paper**. In this 10-12 page paper you will be expected to reference the class readings, demonstrate a scholarly understanding of them, and apply them. Evaluation of

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the final paper shall be based on the demonstrated ability to :

A) Relate *your experience* of alchemical symbolism/dynamics/process to the historical and contemporary dimensions of depth psychology. *The application of your experience* to the class material is the crucial component here. 50 points.

B) Situate your own ways of knowing in relation to the culturally diverse perspectives and practices studied in class. 20 points.

C) Distinguish between literal modes of thinking and symbolic/metaphorical consciousness. 20 points.

D) Clarity, writing style, and Pacifica/ APA format. 10 points

E. Required Reading for the Course (855 total pages)

Abt, T. (2003). The great vision of Muhammad Ibn Umail. *Psychological Perspectives*, supplement. Los Angeles: C.G. Jung Institute. (43 pages)

Abt, T. & Hornung, E. (2003). *Knowledge for the afterlife: The Egyptian Amduat – A quest for immortality*. Zurich: Living Human Heritage. (150 pages)

Abt, T. (Ed.) (2007). *The book of pictures: Mushaf as-suwar by Zosimos of Panopolis*. Zurich: Living Human Heritage. (126 pages)

Gieser, S. (2005). *The innermost kernel: Depth psychology and quantum physics. Wolfgang Pauli's dialogue with C.G. Jung*. New York: Springer. (349 pages)

Jung, C. G. (1961). *Memories, dreams, reflections* New York: Vintage Books. (*Review "The work", "Confrontation with the unconscious"*) (51 pages)

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Wilbur, K. (2001). Quantum questions: Mystical writings of the world's greatest physicists. Boston: Shambala. (*Sir Arthur Eddington, "Beyond the veil of physics" pp. 179-198*). (19 pages)

F. Suggested Reading for the Course:

From the DP-833 Electronic Course Reserves:

Cambrey, J. & Carter, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Analytical psychology: Contemporary perspectives in Jungian analysis* (Advancing theory in therapy series, Tudor, K. Series Ed.). New York: Brunner-Routledge. (**Chapter 9: "Synchronicity as emergence"**, pp. 223-248). (25 pages)

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Jung, C. G. (1967). The visions of Zosimos. *Alchemical studies*, CW 13. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1968). *Psychology and alchemy*. CW 12. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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H. Assessment

Attendance in class, acknowledgment of starting time, and respect for classmates are all assumed.

Two page papers: 30 points

Final paper: 70 points

Total Points: 100 points

Paper or Request for Incomplete Form is due postmarked on or before postmarked on or before January 5, 2009 (J Track) or January 12, 2009 (K Track) and should be addressed to Thomas Elsner at 2020 Alameda Padre Serra, #103 Santa Barbara CA. 93103. Please be sure to include the course number and group on *both* the title page and the envelope.

Incompletes

Students are allowed four incompletes per academic year. *Students must submit a request for an incomplete on or before the assignment due date.* Incomplete work for this class is due postmarked on or before March 16, 2009 (J Track) or March 23, 2009 (K Track). ***When you complete the paper send it directly to Thomas Elsner and include a Grade Change Form.***

Honesty Policy:

Pacifica expects all students to complete assignments in accordance with the Honesty Policy published in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism from any source (i.e., book, internet, fellow student, newspaper, etc.) is a serious breach of academic honesty, subject to dismissal from Pacifica Graduate Institute. It is assumed that students will do separate written work for each course. If you wish to use similar material for different courses, you must first obtain explicit permission from your instructors.