



# Alchemy and the Transformation of Psyche

Part 1: Solutio, Coagulatio, Mortificatio

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Praktijk voor Psychoanalyse (C.G. Jung) en Executive Coaching

✧ Part 1: Solutio, Coagulatio and Morteificatio

- **Alchemy as a Metaphor for Psyche**
- Individuation and Analysis
- Solutio
- Coagulatio

✧ Part 2: Transference, Countertransference and the Coniunctio

- Nature of Coniunctio
- Rosarium Woodcuts



## We need a framework beyond the literal for being with deeper psychological transformation

- ✧ Analysis involves transformation
- ✧ not as in many other psychotherapies: cognitive thoughts and conscious behavior
- ✧ cognition is only a very small part of psyche and sustainable transformation requires working beyond the CBT
- ✧ Words narrow:
  - words lead to loss of instinct
  - a poem is a silent picture, a picture is a silent poem
  - the unconscious is a poet
  - Jung: transformation should never be given names CW2
  - every speech act is a psychic event
  - language is dramatization
  - Defensive knowingness is the disease

## Alchemy was Jung's main metaphor for psyche

- \* Rooted in his work with Psychiatric Patients in the Burgholzli Clinic
- \* Jung recognized the Reality of the Psyche,
- \* started a life long phenomenological exploration of the Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche,
- \* As physicists need Mathematics to frame the laws of Physics, so depth-psychology needs a Framework to frame the laws world of Psyche
- \* Initially both Jung and Freud used Mythology, Religion, Fairy Tales etc.
- \* Then the Active Imagination and the Red Book
- \* Until Jung discovered Alchemy as the finest Metaphorical Imagery/Language
- \* Alchemy as Objective Psyche projected



## Alchemy was Jung's main metaphor for psyche

“... the investigator must turn back to those periods in human history when symbol formation still went on unimpeded, that is, when there was still no epistemological criticism of the formation of images, and when, in consequence, facts that in themselves were unknown could be expressed in definite form. The period of this kind closest to us is that of medieval natural philosophy, which reached its zenith in the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century gradually left the field to science. It attained its most significant development in alchemy and Hermetic philosophy. ....”

CG Jung CW13 par 353

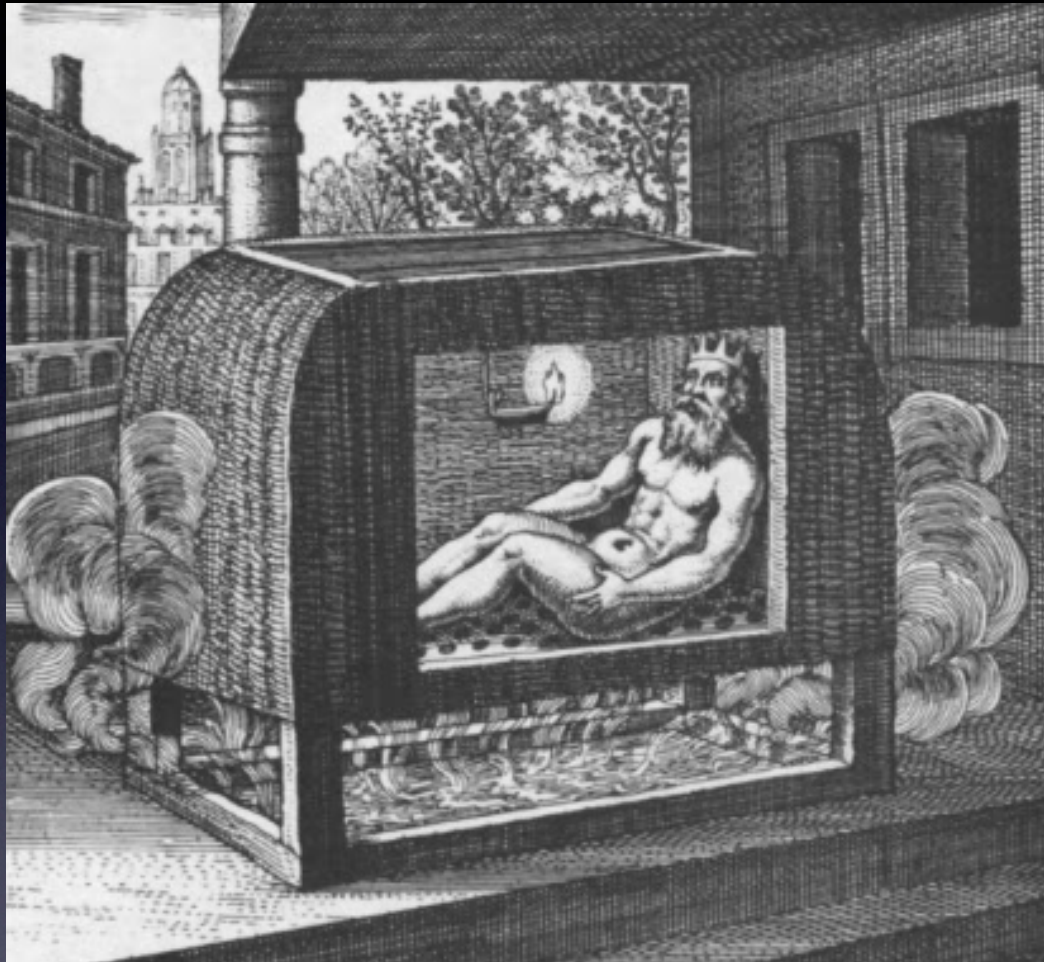
## Alchemy is transformation



- \* Solutio
- \* Seperatio
- \* Coagulatio
- \* Morteficatio
- \* Putrefactio
- \* Calcinatio
- \* Sublimatio
- \* Coniunctio

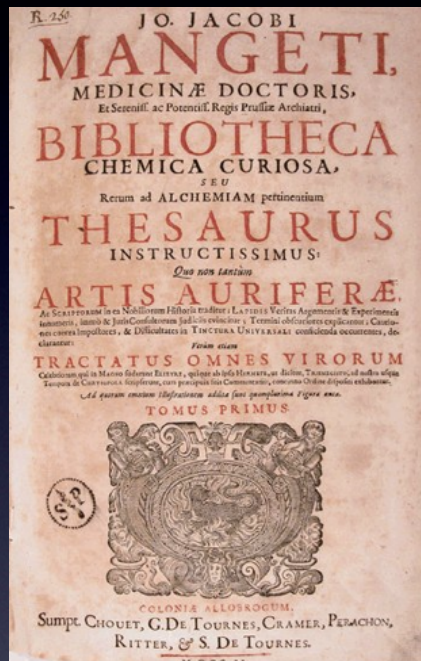


## Alchemy: seemingly bizarre images ...



Embleem 28 uit Michael Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens*, Oppenheim 1618

## Alchemy: seemingly bizarre texts ...



*Preparang the King for the battle :*

King ...“I demand water, closest to my heart, loving me more than anything else .....” ...

He drank ... till all his limbs and veins were full and swollen and his colour changed .....  
the King seemed to be dying and his doctors but him in a hot chamber ....

the doctors took his body and ground it to pulver, dried it thoroughly and mixed it with one  
part ammonia and two parts of Alexandrian nitrate.....

then an hour in a clean crucible until everything was molten ..... and the king rose again .....

Merlini-Allegoria, profundissimum Philosophici Lapidis Arcanum perfecte continens', (Artis Auriferae, I, 420-424, (Basel, 1593)



## What are we looking at here?...







✧ Part I: Solutio, Coagulatio and Morteficatio

- Alchemy as a Metaphor for Psyche
- **Individuation and Analysis**
- Solutio
- Coagulatio
- Morteficatio





And here ...





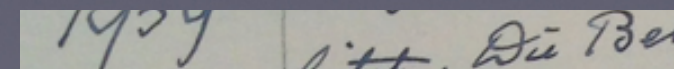
## Solutio images





## Solutio in Analysis

- ✧ To start any transformation of the personality: all assumed rigid ego structures should be dissolved into *prima materia*
- ✧ Solve et coagule, Solving a problem
  - Static, rigid aspects of the personality are not allowed to change
  - the ideas a person has about himself are certain and they are sure of themselves:
  - I am: guilty, evil, unreliable, brilliant, weak, problematic etc etc.
- ✧ The dissolving agent will be a more comprehensive viewpoint
- ✧ Dreamwork
  - shower, pool, jacuzzi dreams
  - flooding, leaking roofs
  - baptism, initiation symbols



## The Secret Book of Artephius: Example of Alchemical Text on Solutio

- ✧ *“Dissolve then sol and luna in our dissolving water, which is familiar and friendly, and next in nature to them; and is also sweet and pleasant to them, and as it were a womb, a mother, an original, the beginning and the end of their life. That is the reason why they are meliorated or amended in this water, because like nature, rejoices in like nature, and like nature retains like nature, being joined the one to the other, in a true marriage, by which they are made one nature, one new body, raised again from the dead, and immortal. ...”*



## The Secret Book of Artephius: Example of Alchemical Text on Solutio

- ✧ Mercury dissolves Gold and Silver
- ✧ Sol symbolizes ego, masculine principle, Luna unconscious, feminine principle, anima
- ✧ Ego might experience solutio as a certain death, the snake, the drowning king,
- ✧ Uroboric return to the great mother: Liebestod, le petit mort
- ✧ Dissolving next in “friendly water” (maternal womb), prima materia

Dissolve then sol and luna in our dissolving water, which is familiar and friendly





Ego might experience solutio as a certain death, the snake Uroboric return to the great mother





## Ego might experience solutio as a certain death: the drowning king,

- The king drowns in his own swollen-ness. Solutio assimilates anything of a lower class to its own essence.
- Hence, the Sweatbox





## Prima Materia: pure Psyche ante logos



- Prima Materia is ter *increatedum*, de chaos preceding the world creating *logos*
- The reality of Psyche without any identification, pure phenomenology
- This Matter lies before the eyes of all; everybody sees it, touches it, loves it, but knows it not. It is glorious and vile, precious and of small account, and is found everywhere. To be brief, our Matter has as many names as there are things in the world; that is why the foolish know it not. The hermetic Museum 1:13

✧ Part 1: Solutio, Coagulatio and Mortificatio

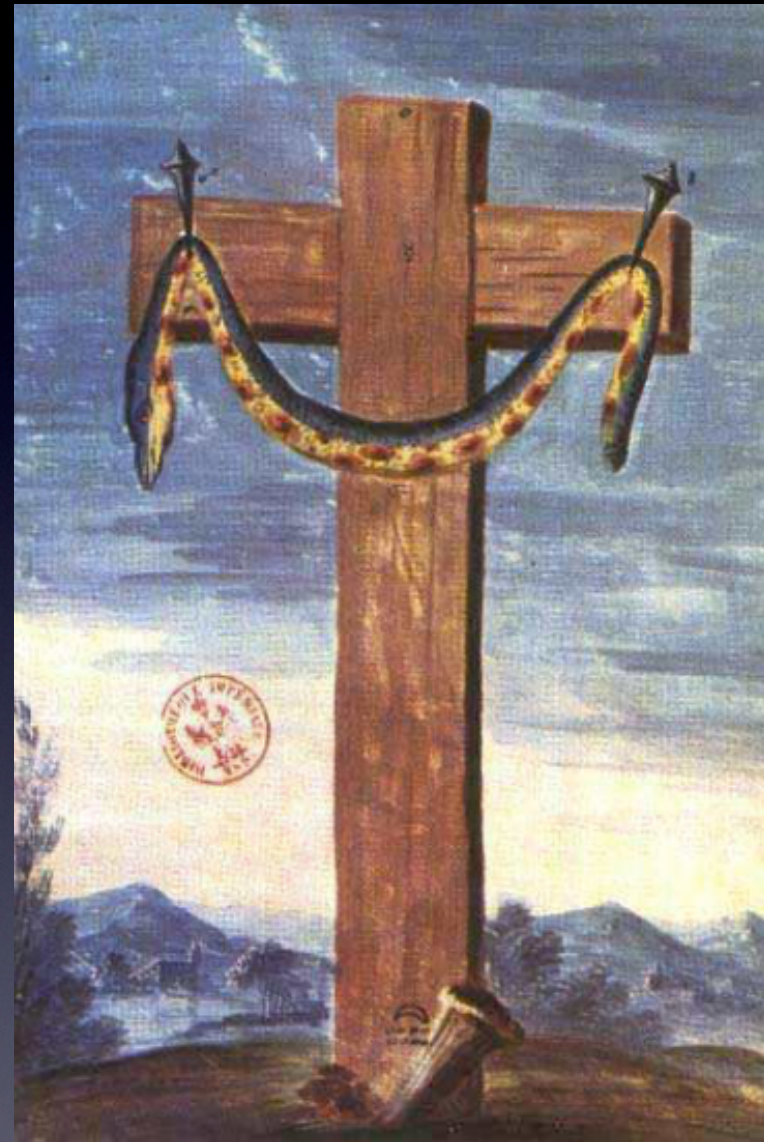
- Alchemy as a Metaphor for Psyche
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- **Coagulatio**

✧ Part 2: Transference, Countertransference and the Coniunctio

- Nature of Coniunctio
- Rosarium Woodcuts

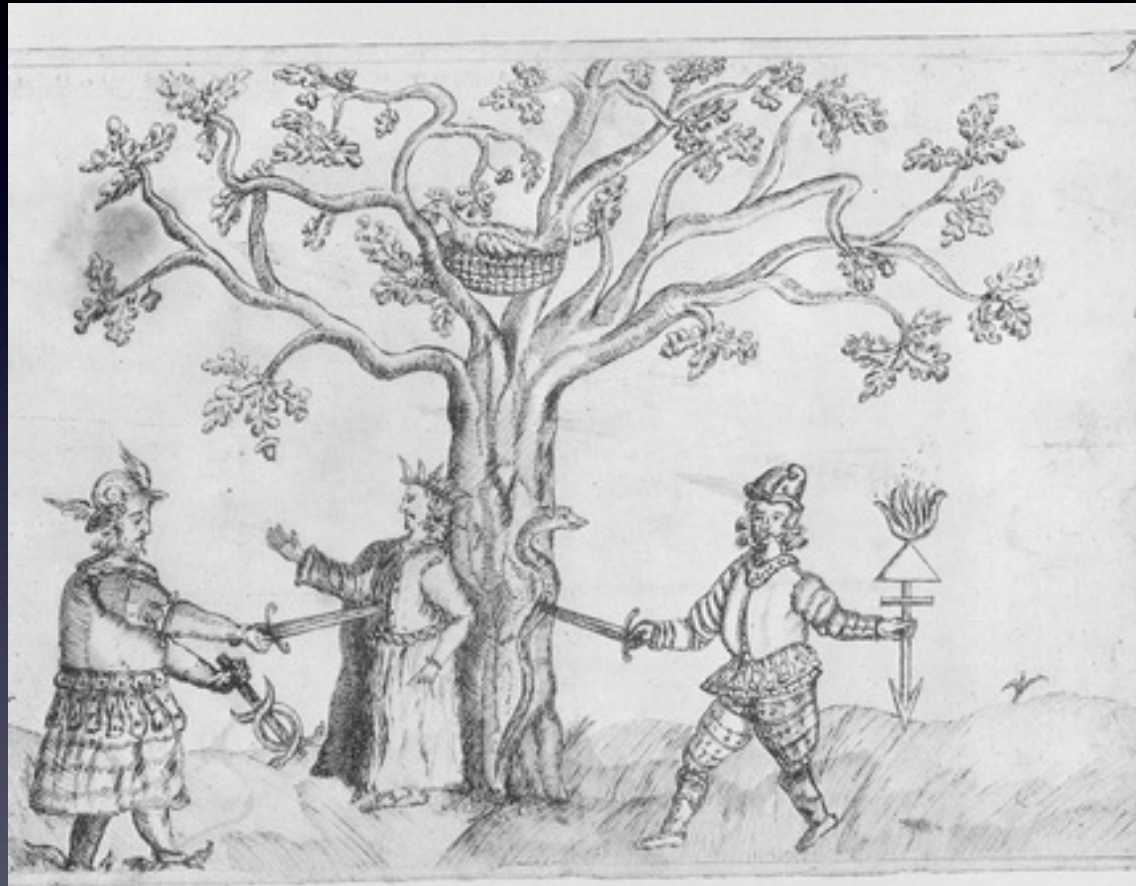


## Mercurial Serpent



The Mercurial Serpent Crucified  
(Alchimie de Flamel, MS. Francais 14765, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale,

## Mercurial Serpent



Transfixion of the Mercurial Serpent and the King  
(*Speculum Veritatis*", in Cod Vaticanus Latinus 7286,  
17th cent, Bibliotheca Vaticana



## Coagulatio

- \* if Solutio water, Coagulatio is earth
- \* Frying an egg
- \* the rise of ego from the soup of the objective psyche
- \* 100% lack of coagulation is psychosis. Ego is coagulated
- \* crystallization of the archetype
- \* dreams are coagulations
- \* an idea thought and an idea spoken
- \* making substantial ego, self, shadow, anima
- \* coagulation of true Self

## Coagulatio Cont'd

- ✧ Concepts and abstractions don't coagulate: they make air, no earth
- ✧ False Self is also coagulated
- ✧ Moods and feelings toss around in us until they coagulate to something tangible, then we can handle it objectively
- ✧ Cloths in dreams: modalities of coagulatio
- ✧ Eating something in dreams: something is ready for coagulation
- ✧ The assimilation of a complex is a contribution to the coagulation of the Self
- ✧ Ultimately coagulatio is the immortal body, the philosophers stone stone, the white foliated earth



## Coagulatio in the Turba Philosophorum

- ✧ The Turba Philosophorum, also known as Assembly of the Philosophers, is one of the oldest European alchemy texts, translated from the Arabic. It is considered to have been written c. 900 A.D.
- ✧ Dictum I I: “Take quicksilver, coagulate in the body of magnesia, in Kuhul (lead) or in Sulphur which does not burn, etc.”
- ✧ Quicksilver is the Spirit Mercurius about which Jung has written extensively (Alch Studies CW 13 pars. 239 ff) . Essentially it is the autonomous spirit of the archetypal psyche.
- ✧ Coagulating the free autonomous spirit with lead, lead is heavy, dull, burdensome, Saturn, melancholy, depression; i.e. the troubled shadowy parts of life
- ✧ Coagulatio with Sulphur: S= free will concretisation, S= desire, compulsion: getting a grip on it (my view differing from Ed and Jung)
- ✧ Subjecting the Spirit Mercurius to coagulation means nothing less than the connection of the airy ego/ free spirit with different element of the Self, towards fulfillment of individuation.



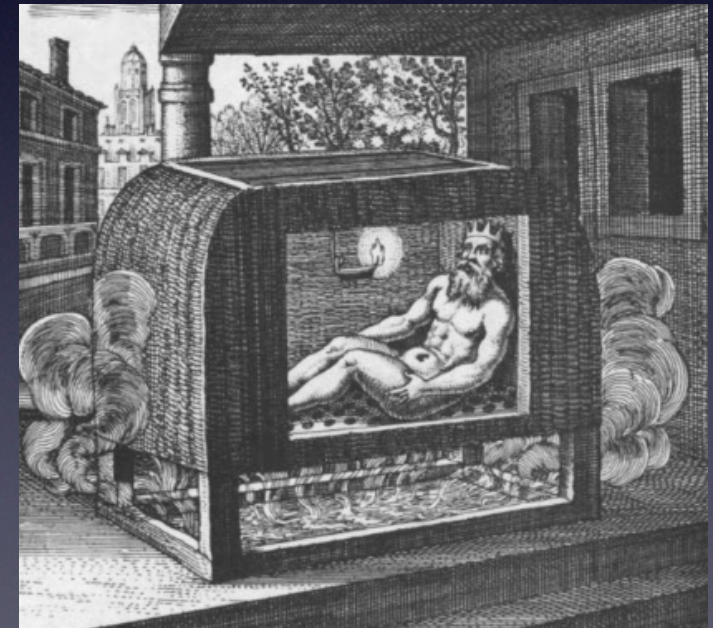
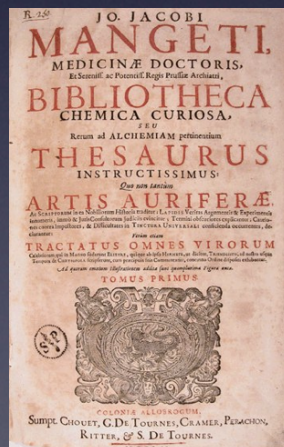
✧ **Part 2: Transference, Countertransference and the Coniunctio**

- Summary of previous Workshop
- the Essence of Transference
- Rosarium Woodcuts



## Main points from the previous workshop: Alchemy in Analysis

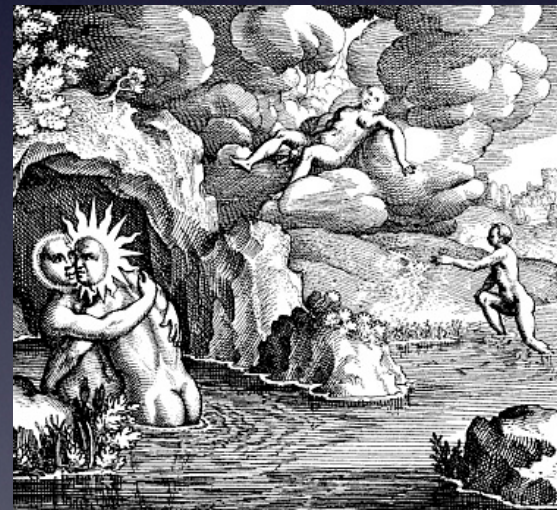
- ✧ Rooted in Jung's work with Psychiatric Patients in the Burgholzli Clinic
- ✧ Jung phenomenological approach: the Reality of the Psyche,
- ✧ Initially both Jung and Freud used Mythology, Religion, Fairy Tales etc. until Jung discovered Alchemy as the finest Metaphorical Imagery/Language
- ✧ Alchemy: bizar texts and images: the Objective Psyche projected





## Main points from the previous workshop: Solutio

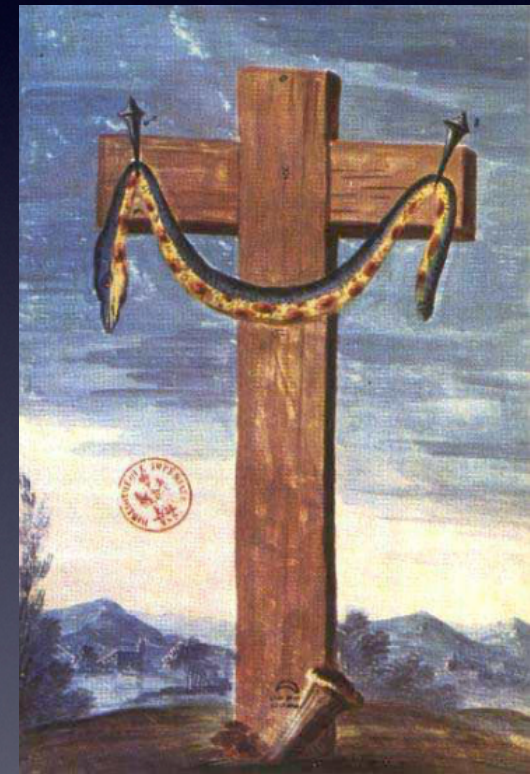
- ✧ To start any transformation of the personality: all assumed rigid ego structures should be dissolved into *prima materia*
- ✧ **Dissolve then sol and luna in our dissolving water, which is familiar and friendly**, and next in nature to them; and is also sweet and pleasant to them, and as it were a womb, a mother, an original, the beginning and the end of their life. That is the reason why they are meliorated or amended in this water, because like nature, rejoices in like nature, and like nature retains like nature, being joined the one to the other, in a true marriage, by which they are made one nature, one new body, raised again from the dead, and immortal. ...”
- ✧ Dissolve then sol and luna is dissolving **opposites**





## Main points from the previous workshop: Coagulatio

- ✧ 100% lack of coagulation is psychosis. Ego is coagulated
- ✧ formation of an idea, dream or an image or anything graspable: coagulatio
- ✧ making substantial ego, self, shadow, anima
- ✧ False Self is also coagulated
- ✧ Moods and feelings toss around in us until they coagulate to something tangible, then we can handle it objectively
- ✧ Ultimately coagulatio is the immortal body, the philosophers stone, the white foliated earth, the true Self



✧ Part 2: Transference, Countertransference and the Coniunctio

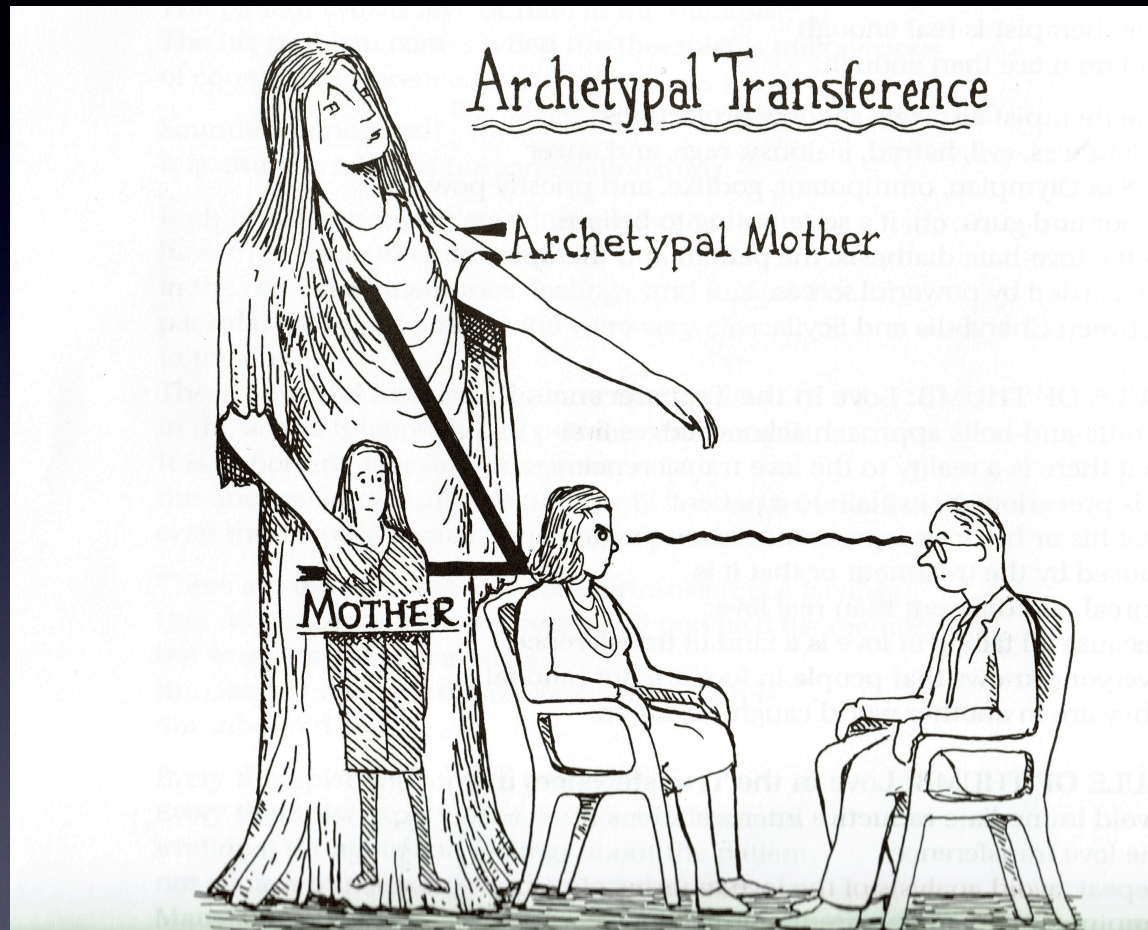
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## In a broader sense all relationships involve Transference

- ✧ All relationships require a subject and an object which relate to each other by some form of transference
  - partly conscious and partly unconscious
  - unconscious transference: where the unconscious contents of the subject does not directly arise to consciousness but appears on an object that is suitable to receive it
  - in analysis: transference is the relationship which the patient experiences with the analyst
  - counter-transference: the relationship which the analyst experiences with the patient
- ✧ In analysis: the projection of the primary relation with one**self** on the analyst
- ✧ The transference can and should be withdrawn into the subject's conscious ego

Transference was first described by Sigmund Freud: unconscious projection of the feelings a person has (e.g. about their parents) on to the therapist



From Harry Wilmer: Practical Jung, Nuts and Bolts in Jungian Psychotherapy



## The child when born falls in a void .....

- ✧ the child when born falls in a void, alienated with itself, its fellow human beings and the root and ground of its being; it has to be stimulated to cry ....
- ✧ then, if it is not bonded with mother, in Eros on belly, breast and Agape in eye contact in natural and spiritual love, it physically dies
- ✧ the relationship with mother is in *participation mystique* and relative unconscious
- ✧ gradually, there is a separation for the development which involves the conscious formation of identity
  - which involves deciding: I am this and (a lot) not this
  - if the reflective function of the child is not sufficiently developed, a false Self, an isolated ego poorly connected to the original identity may develop

## Good enough parenting facilitates healthy ego formation





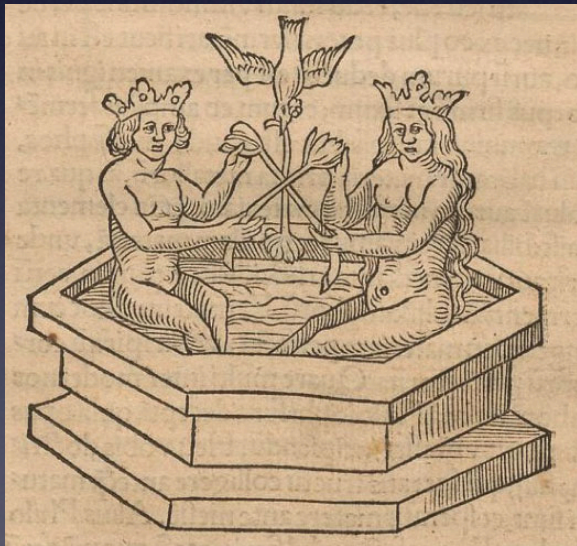
## Not good enough parenting hampers healthy ego formation



- Ignorance
- Parental envy
- Intergenerational
- Substance abuse
- Psychiatric Trouble

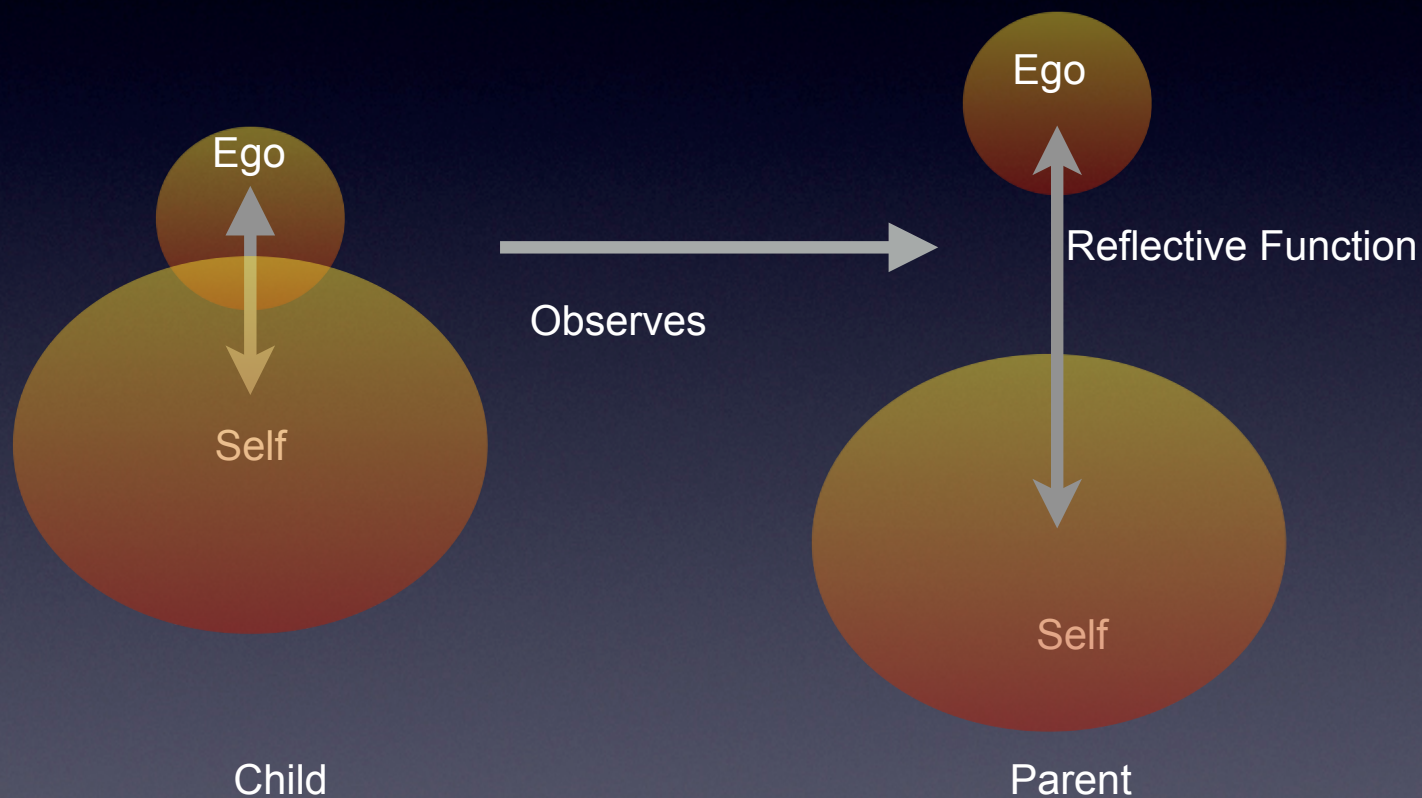
A positive transference relationship is a life giving and healing force we can not do without

- ✧ The coniunctio dynamics in the Transference, facilitate the solution of the False Self and the Coagulation of the true Self
- ✧ the bond of love in the transference relationship is a life giving and healing force we can not do without
- ✧ Then the greater archetypal self bursts through with all its healing power, far greater than any technique





Growing up, the reflective function of the child, its internal working model of Self-Other relationships, depends on opportunities to investigate the mind of the parent

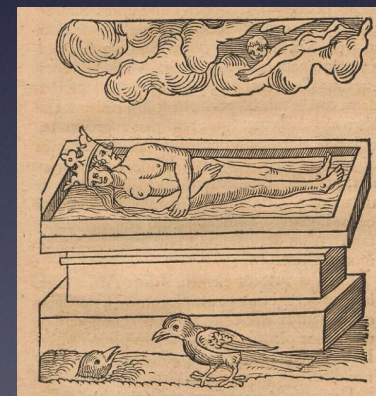
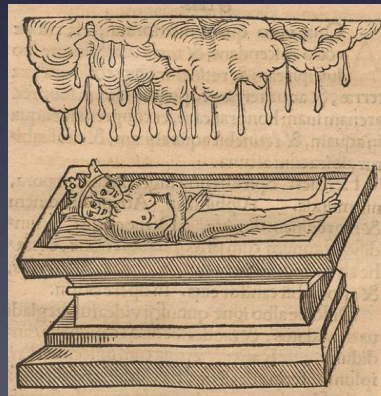
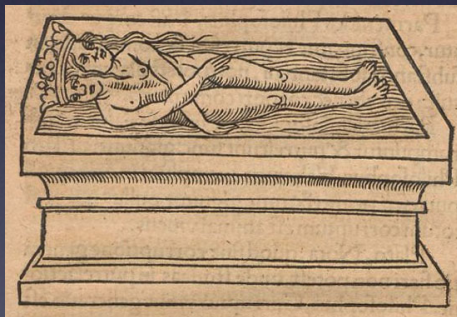
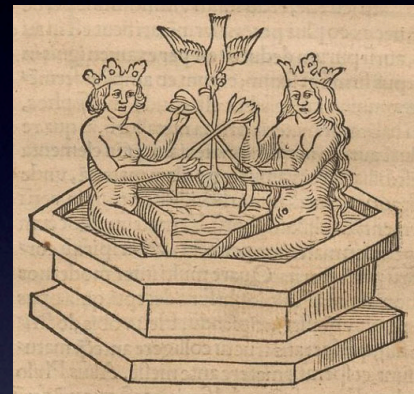


## Transference of archetypal Self onto the analyst is pivotal in Jungian Psychoanalysis





# The Rosarium Woodcuts was published in 1550 as part II of De Alchimia Opuscula complura veterum philosophorum (Frankfurt)





# I. Rosarium Fountain



- \* Outside the sequence
- \* Foundation of psyche prior to ego
- \* To get here needs work
- \* Prima Materia and Ultima Materia
- \* Circulatio
- \* Opposites
- \* Fountain, square, circle: frequent dream images



## 2. Emergence of the Opposites



- ✧ Unity split in two: Opposites
- ✧ As in creation myths: separatio
- ✧ King and Queen: not mortals
- ✧ Sun and Moon: archetypal
- ✧ Left hands: unconscious
- ✧ Dove: holy ghost, plays a central role, creation of consciousness, snake in Eden
- ✧ Dove: Aphrodite, love or enmity
- ✧ Inter- and intra-personal: anima/animus fascination



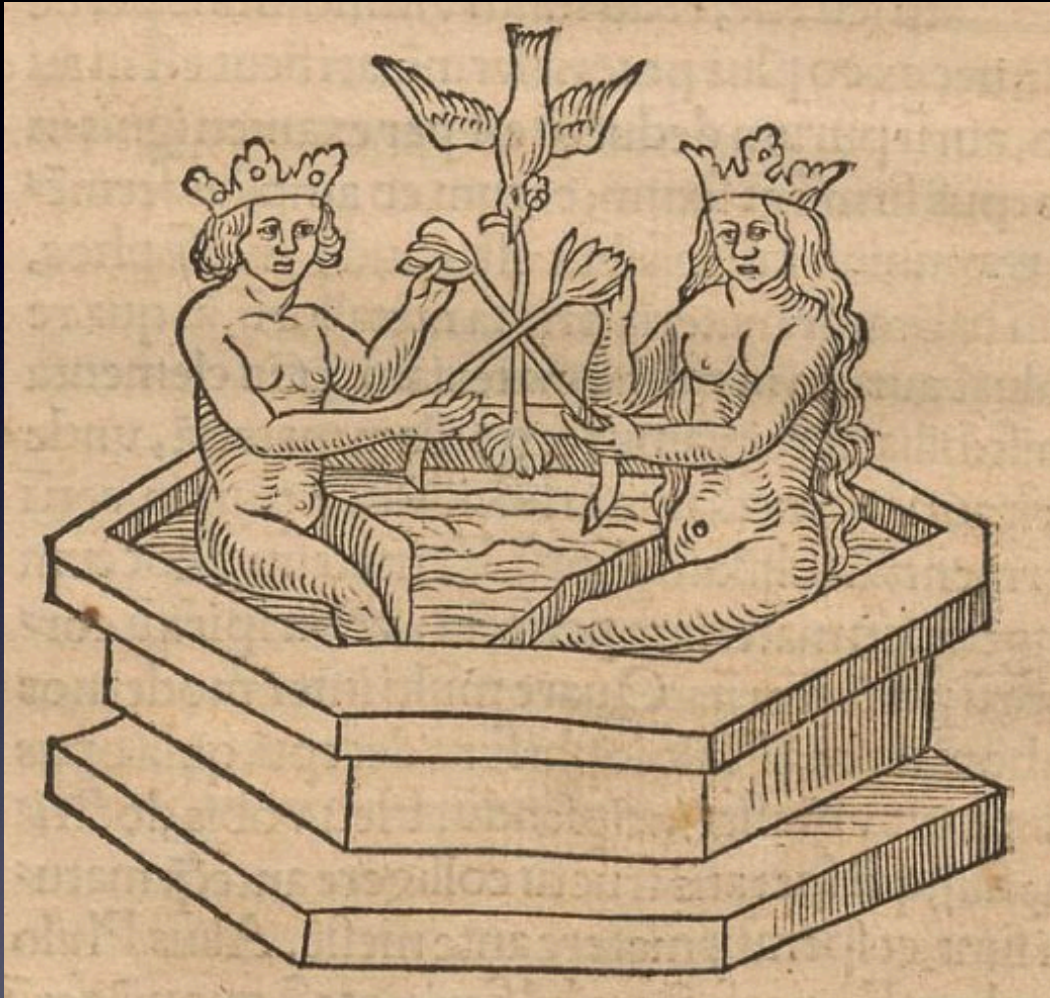
### 3. the Spirit is what Unifies



- \* No cloths, no touching hands,
- \* no star, connected by flowers: nature's capacity to attract, the lure of the unconscious
- \* Dove, spirit, erotic charge: imago dei fell in the human realm
- \* Oh Luna let me be your husband, Oh Sun I submit to thee
- \* Anima/ animus dreams
- \* Interpersonal: persona's (analysis) have disappeared, the naked truth



## 4. In the Bath



- \* Six pointed star descended into six pointed bath
- \* Mutual Solutio, return to Prima Materia
- \* Participatio Mystique
- \* Von Neumann: Weak ego: regression to original state, ecstasy of oblivion
- \* Strong ego: autonomous experience
- \* awareness that autonomy is precious



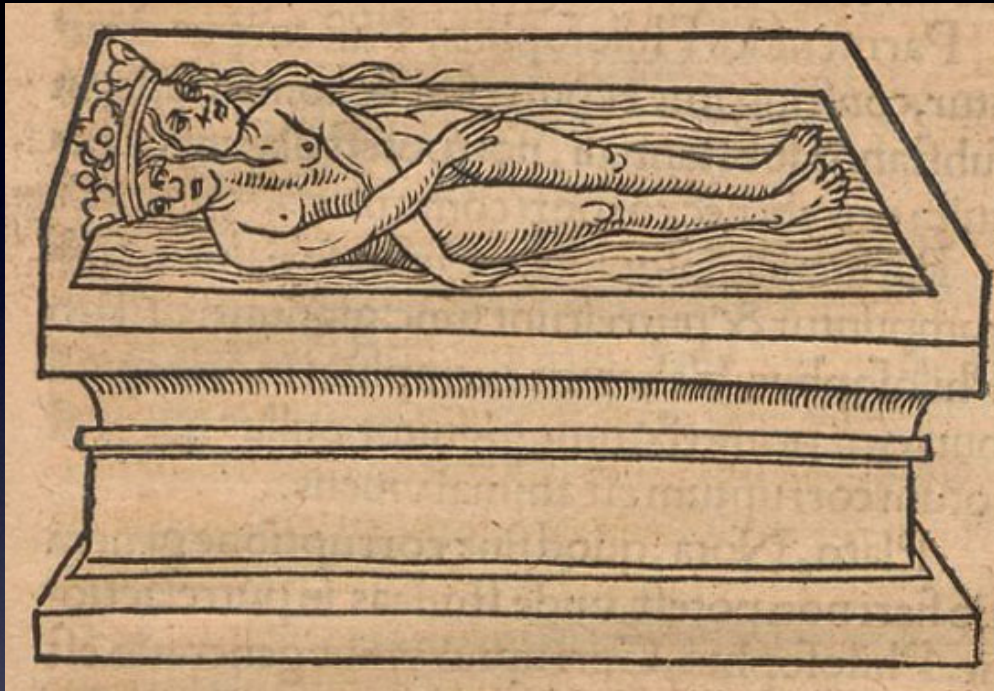
## 5. Underground “Coniunctio sive Coitus” with window



- ✧ Uniting of opposites
- ✧ Underground, underwater, unconscious
- ✧ Consciousness does not increase when we embrace what we desire, first half of life, return to start
- ✧ Second half of life: Window: “now we see, we are no more nature’s fool”: go to six



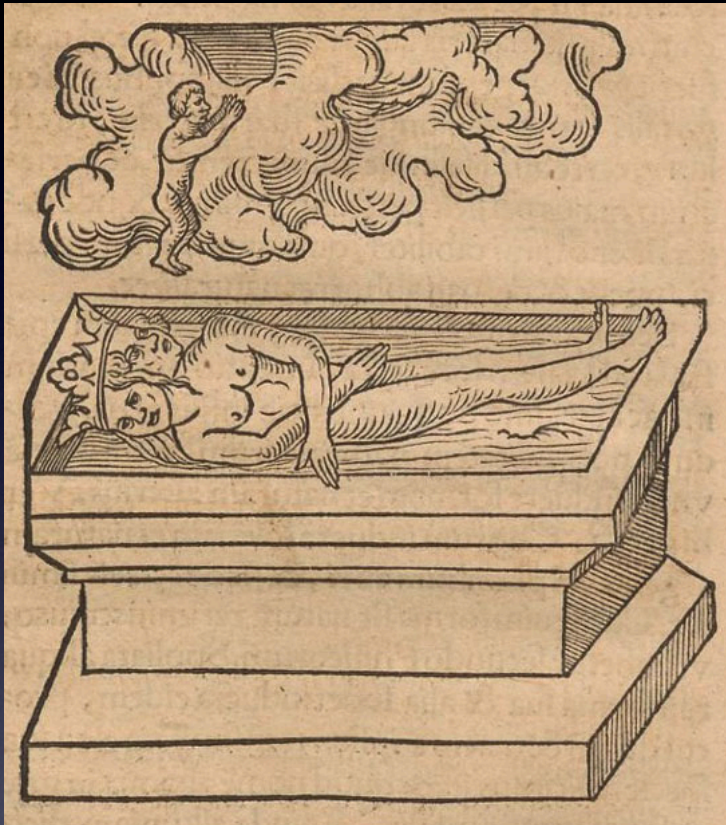
## 6. In the Tomb, morteficatio, putrefactio



- ✧ a dead united body, morteficatio
- ✧ *A shock: is that all there is? ... le petit mort*
- ✧ if one sees the opposites as pair in oneself: sudden death takes out the energy of partisan ego
- ✧ alternatively: death of ego upon encounter with the Self; happens when ego had over identified with one pole of the opposites
- ✧ sobering when we withdraw the transference projection
- ✧ in certain alchemical texts this death is the conception of the philosophers stone
- ✧ putrefactio is the next step: "putrefactio is of so great efficacy that it blots out the old nature and transmutes everything in a new nature (Paracelsus I:153)"



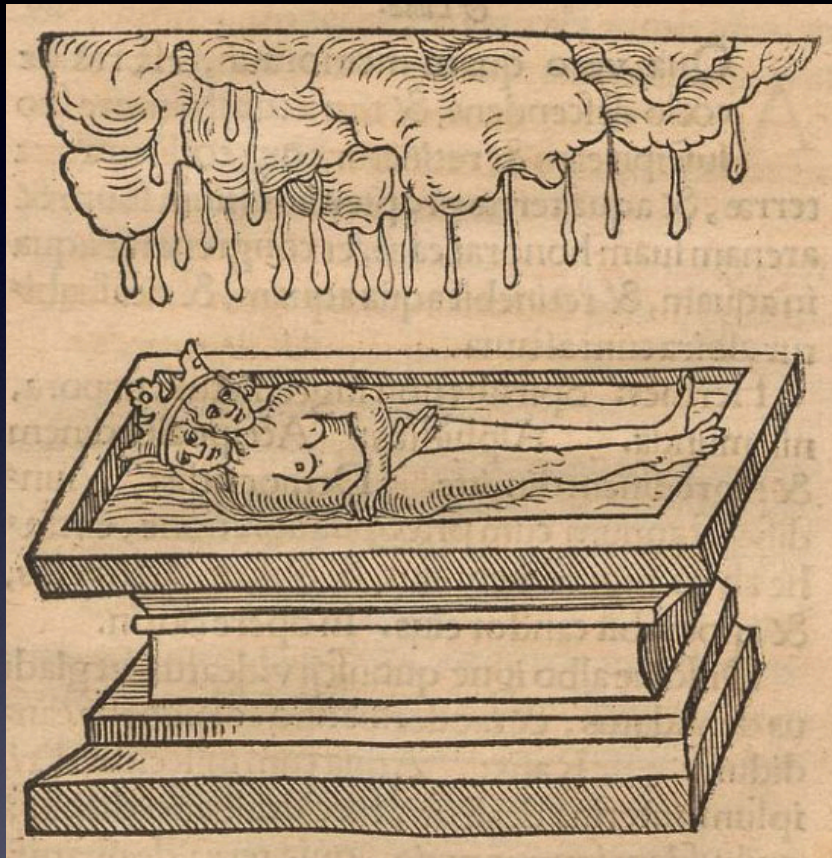
## 7. The soul leaving the body at moment of death



- ✧ the age-old image of the soul leaving the body at moment of death
- ✧ when a significant identification or projection breaks down
- ✧ after loss of a beloved (person, familiar part of ourselves)
- ✧ could be false self comfort zone
- ✧ waiting for something to return
- ✧ the cloud: transpersonal reality
- ✧ Jung: homunculus is birth of divine child, inner man



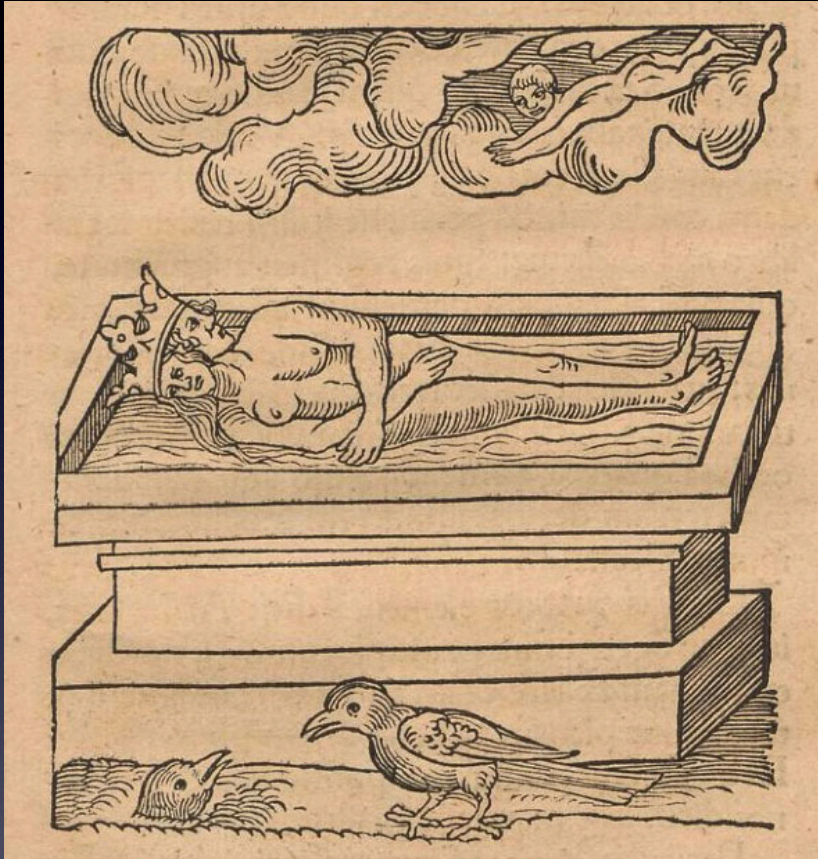
## 8. Gideons Dew drips from the Cloud



- ✧ God's proof for Gideon; fate
- ✧ Dew refreshes, purifies and revives the body
- ✧ Purification of the ego from the contamination with the unconscious
- ✧ shrinking of old previously swollen ego from identification with unconscious material (Jung ,CW 16 para 503)



## 9. Reunion of Soul, Spirit and Body



- ✧ return to the purified dead body
- ✧ white foliated earth, despise not the ash, for it is the diadem of the heart (Jung, CW 16, para 495 quoting Morienus)
- ✧ white ash, coronation of the queen, sow your gold in the white foliated earth
- ✧ birds mirror return spirit (not only souls)



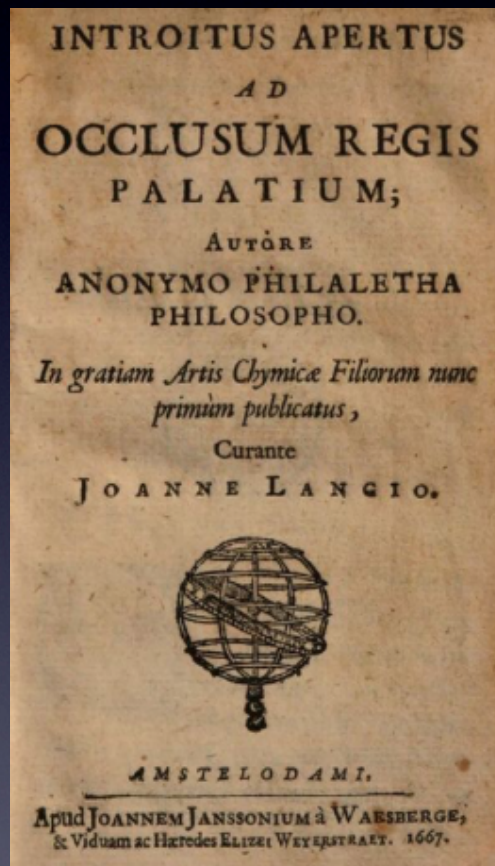
## 10. Resurrection of the United Eternal Body



- ✱ King and Queen combined, alive, winged (sublimatio product) and erect
- ✱ Eternal quality: non-temporal psychic substance
  - 4 crowned serpents: reptilian tamed
  - standing on the moon, self, not ego
  - only one bird, liberated spirit
  - floating above the earth
- ✱ Sun and the moon tree?



## Eirenaeus Philalethes: Introitus apertus ad occlusum regis palatium ....

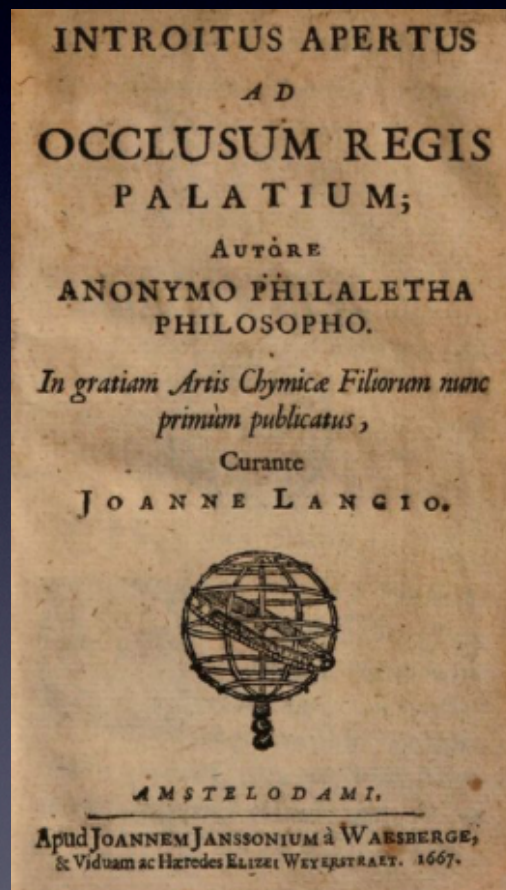


If thou knowest how to moisten this dry earth with its own water, thou wilt loosen the pores of the earth, and this thief from outside will be cast out with the workers of wickedness, and the water, by an admixture of the true Sulphur, will be cleansed from the leprous filth and from the superfluous dropsical fluid, and thou wilt have in thy power the fount of the Knight of Treviso, whose waters are rightfully dedicated to the maiden Diana. Worthless is this thief, armed with the malignity of arsenic, from whom the winged youth fleeth, shuddering. And though the central water is his bride, yet dare he not display his most ardent love towards her, because of the snares of the thief, whose machinations are in truth unavoidable. Here may Diana be propitious to thee, who knoweth how to tame wild beasts, and whose twin doves will temper the malignity of the air with their wings, so that the youth easily entereth in through the pores, and instantly shaketh the foundations of the earth, and raises up a dark cloud. But thou wilt lead the waters up even to the brightness of the moon, and the darkness that was upon the face of the deep shall be scattered by the spirit moving over the waters. Thus by God's command shall the Light appear.

Eirenaeus Philalethes: Introitus apertus ad occlusum regis palatium (An Open Entrance to the Shut-Palace of the King) Amsterdam, 1667, quoted in CG Jung CW14: pars. 189-211



## Eirenaeus Philalethes: Introitus apertus ad occlusum regis palatium ....



“If thou knowest how to **moisten this dry earth with its own water**, thou wilt loosen the pores of the earth, and **this thief from outside will be cast out** with the workers of wickedness, and the water, by an admixture of the true Sulphur, will be cleansed from the leprous filth and from the **superfluous dropsical fluid**, and thou wilt have in thy power the fount of the Knight of Treviso, whose waters are rightfully dedicated to the maiden Diana. Worthless is this thief, armed with the malignity of arsenic, from whom the winged youth fleeth, shuddering. And though the central water is his bride, yet dare he not display his most ardent love towards her, because of the snares of the thief, whose machinations are in truth unavoidable. **Here may Diana be propitious to thee, who knoweth how to tame wild beasts, and whose twin doves will temper the malignity of the air with their wings**, so that the youth easily entereth in through the pores, and instantly shaketh the foundations of the earth, and raises up a dark cloud. But thou wilt lead the waters up even to the brightness of the moon, and the darkness that was upon the face of the deep shall be scattered by the spirit moving over the waters. Thus by God's command shall the Light appear. “

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