

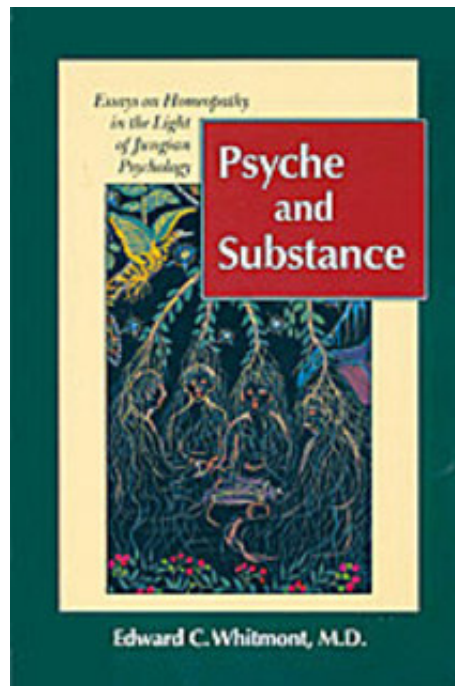
Edward C. Whitmont Psyche and Substance

Reading excerpt

[Psyche and Substance](#)

of [Edward C. Whitmont](#)

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CARBO ANIMALIS

somatic, indeed personality patterns which is now, albeit slowly, making its advent into some branches of modern psychology may be able to bring us a step nearer to the profound mystery of Homeopathy.

The mystery of Homeopathy is close to the mystery of life; it is the paradox of the hidden unity of suffering and healing, the very mystery of the serpent wound around the tree of life: the emblems of Hermes the guide of souls and of Asclepius the Healer.

CARBO ANIMALIS

The carbons are the main building stones of living matter. All organic chemistry is based and structured on the carbon molecule. *Carbo animalis* and *Carbo veg.* are precipitates of living and dying organisms. They are stages of incomplete combustion, oxidation not carried to the ultimate product of carbon dioxide but prematurely precipitated. They represent incomplete life cycles. The converting of living organic substance into combustion products is a basic life process: through "living breath," through oxidation, we convert living matter into carbon dioxide. The appearance of incompletely oxidized carbons would indicate an incomplete or unsatisfactorily completed life process, the inability to complete the process. The full consummation, oxidation of the life process, occurs with age and is completed in death. Here one might compare the inadequate living of one's potential, of consummating emotional tensions, griefs, joys and working through paradoxes and conflict, to the incomplete combustion of carbon. We meet the pathology of the aging process, regardless of actual age, in *Carbo animalis* and *vegetabilis*. The *Carbo veg.* patient may be likened to a state of vegetative disturbance and breakdown: the limitations of a gradually declining vitality, a slower metabolism, resulting in imbalance of combustion of unconverted waste. On the *Carbo animalis* level we meet the "animalic," the imbalance of oxidation. Repressed and unconsummated emotional functions exert pressure and interfere with physiological balance.

Thus the pathology of *Carbo animalis* could be understood as the difficulty of acceding to the demands of aging and maturing on the instinct and affect level. When receptivity, tolerance and the inability to change come to a halt, the result is isolation, rigidity and anxiety.

The Materia Medica describes a state of isolation, rejection of people, withdrawal and withering. These people become slaves to their own rigid views and routine; they respond with anxiety to the threat of any disturbance of their accustomed way of thinking or living. The result is a gradual failure of adaptability *per se*. One interesting detail is the symptom of confused hearing, of confusion and failure to locate the direction from which sounds come. Adequate hearing reflects the capacity of receptivity. In hearing we take in from the outside. If this function is disturbed, we lack orientation to the outside, to our fellow beings.

The personality type may be described as introverted, indrawn, scrawny, thin, dark, sometimes heavy-set, rigid, retiring, antisocial with an aversion to people, desiring to be alone. The *Carbo animalis* patients are poor mixers, though they may enjoy the company of one or two individuals to whom they are accustomed. Newcomers are not admitted. Throughout the symptomatology runs aversion and incapacity to deal with change. The symptom of homesickness is actually the state of not being content away from the accustomed known, rather than any expression of human attachment. There is aversion to conversation, taciturnity, shyness, a feeling of isolation, often heard in the words, "When I was young ...": a mournful reflective state of discouragement and gloominess, obstinate irascibility, ill humor, a feeling of being abandoned, thoughts of death and hopelessness.

The reaction of the psyche to this state of repressive isolation is anxiety, fear of the dark, fear in the evening, fear when going to sleep: fear breaking in whenever ego control weakens. Then the repress-level rises. The same incapacity to adapt expresses itself on the physical level also. The slightest change of routine is intolerable. Weakness, exhaustion and aggravation result. The patient finds it difficult to get started and resents being prodded or hurried. The slightest disturbance in physical health is aggravating. There is a lack of adaptation also in the digestive system, expressed in frequent intestinal upsets. Almost anything may upset the diges-

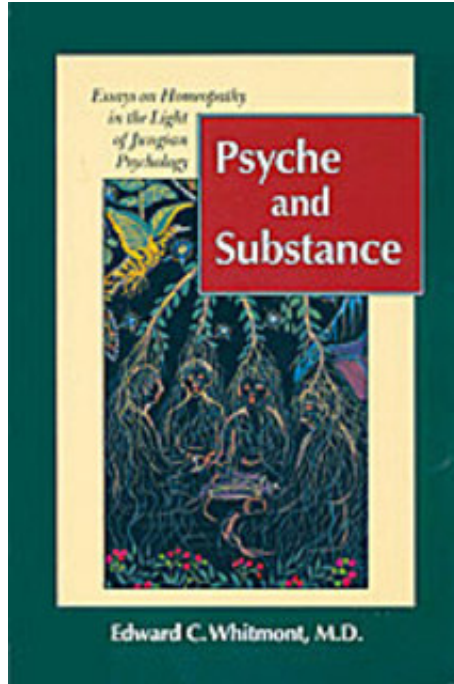
tion. Even normally harmless food will present problems which the weak assimilative power of the organism cannot handle.

The general constitutional state expresses a tendency to "stay put," to stagnate, to harden. Foremost is the cancerous hardening. This is the area for which *Carbo animalis* has been used routinely, unfortunately so, in view of the much wider range of pathology which belongs to its scope. If there were a simple description of cancer, of the constitutional or psychological aspect of cancer, it could be characterized as "life inadequately lived," of hardening prematurely and onesidedly. Cancerous hardening, hardening glands, hard scirrhous growths are leading keynotes, but equally we have hardening of joints and muscles, chronic rheumatism in any and every form. These rheumatic symptoms have not been given adequate evaluation in our prescribing. We have arthritic stiffness, gouty nodosities, tension in the limbs as if tendons were contracted, numbness and spasmodic contractions all over. The psychosomatic aspect of rheumatism is one of defensive rejection, of stiffening against aggressiveness and emotion.

The weak joints, easily sprained, point again to the failure of adaptive strength and flexibility. So do the venous congestions, ebullitions of heat (circulatory lack of adaptation) and the already-mentioned lack of digestive adaptation.

Among the modalities the general air hunger characteristic of both carbons may express inadequate oxidation, inadequate cellular respiration or combustion. We find aggravation from cold and dry air, reflecting the lack of adaptability of the circulatory, capillary system and of warmth regulation.

In the psychopathology of obesity which occurs to a certain extent in *Carbo animalis*, there is a tendency to compensate for emotional starvation with sweet, fat and starchy foods. The problem is that the *Carbo animalis* patient also lacks the capacity to assimilate these foods.



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