

BOOK REVIEW: L'anima e la magia dei COLORI. Uso consapevole dei colori nella vita

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Samya Ilaria Di Donato: L'anima e la magia dei COLORI. Uso consapevole dei colori nella vita. LE DUE TORRI, Bologna, 2017.

Samya Ilaria Di Donato is a colour researcher and consultant. Previously a country manager for a multinational company and president of the Italian Association of Image Consultants, careers that she left (after a health problem which changed her existential perspective) to dedicate herself entirely to colour. Today she organises colour training and consultancy for leading companies, is a business counsellor, trainer in chromo-disciplines, talent consultant as well as creator of colour-related events.

Of her many publications, I started with this book - *L'anima e la magia dei COLORI* - and it allowed me to gain an overview of her research, to be explored more deeply in the other texts. It is a particular and unusual approach, based on diverse spiritual and holistic disciplines and, as the author explains, it is divided into four levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

In the introduction, the relationships established between the source, the object and the observer as well as their influence on the body are examined. Then Di Donato looks at the significance and function of colours through myths, rituals, alchemy, and holistic therapies, with the aim of evoking a "journey" of knowledge.

The **significance of colours** represents the main aspects.

Alchemy - myth or a real pre-chemistry discipline that has fascinated scientists like Isaac Newton, and philosophers like John Locke and whom psychoanalysts such as Carl Jung and James Hillman have written about - describes the different corresponding colours of *nigredo* (the blackening or melanosis), *albedo* (the whitening or leucosis), *citrinitas* (the yellowing or xanthosis) and *rubedo* (the reddening, purpling, or iosis) which mark the different phases necessary to achieve philosophical gold.

Religion illustrates how different religious denominations use colours to express mystical notions - of which I list a few examples. In addition to the traditional colours of the castes (*varna* = colour), *Hinduism* explores the seven "chakras" (energy centres) with their seven colours - each one connected to meaning, an element, a function, a planet - marking the path to asceticism. The author explains *Judaism's* ten "Sēfirōt" (emanations through which the divine is manifested, also connected to the practical and emotional circumstances experienced by each individual in daily life) with their colours and features. From *Christianity*, she examines the liturgical colours together with those of the Archangels whose colours symbolise the functions. *Buddhism's* five primary colours ("Pancha-Varna") are also discussed.

So-called "natural" **Chromotherapy** provides a concise overview: *Chromotherapy*, which uses colours to restore the body's balance. *Crystal Therapy* uses crystals, stones and minerals of varied shapes and colours for the same purpose. The *Family Constellations*, which apply the colours of the "chakras" to the systems psychology technique devised by German psychologist Bert Hellinger. *Art Therapy*, which cures several psychological disorders through drawing and colouring. *Ayurveda* (the science of longevity) expresses its three "doshas" (vital energies) with colours. *Aura Soma* which heals through contact with coloured bottles filled with an infusion of herbs, essential oils, plant extracts, buds, crystals and water. *Reiki*, the Japanese practice that conveys healing energies through the placing of hands, applied by the author using the colours of the "chakras".

Beyond the discussion on the science and effectiveness of these practices (around which there is a debate which is not appropriate to mention in this context) I thought it was very interesting to see how they all turn to colour as both diagnosis and cure, as well as all the myths, rites, religious confessions, esoteric practices that the author describes - zodiac signs, tarot cards, enneagram, etc. - all of which are not only a question of science and efficacy. - signs, tarots, enneagram, etc., which give the colour symbolic, signifying, active and transformative properties.

In conclusion Di Donato in the twelve chapters of the book presents a wide and diverse outline of the various fields of knowledge in which colour is the protagonist, quick and essential points in which the content stirs the comparison between cultures and applications, searching for similarities and differences. For more information: <https://samyadeicolori.it/>.