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Postgraduate Course**

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Contents

The Dead Tree Stump!	1	Calcarea Sulphurica	73
Sea Animal Remedies	9	The Halogen Salts	80
Spongia Tosta	9	Calcarea fluorica	81
Corallium	19	Calcarea Silicata	83
Medusa	25	Salts of Sodium	84
Asterias Rubens	31	Natum Muriaticum	87
Limulus Cyclops	38	Natum Themes	90
Homarus Gammarus	41	Natum iodatum	91
Astacus Fluviatilis	44	Natum Bromatum	94
Badiaga	46	Comparison of Natrum bromatum and	
Gadus Morrhua	48	Natum Iodatum	98
Oleum Jecoris Aselli	53	Aqua Marina	100
Venus Mercenaria	55	Comparison of Aqua Marina and Natrum	
Murex Purpurea	57	Muriaticum	105
Pecten Jacobaeus	61	Definition of a Family	107
Calcarea Carbonica	63	Ambra Grisea	108
Cypraea Eglantina	66	Sepia Succus	111
The Calciums	67	Index	115
Calcarea Phosphorica	69		

The Dead Tree Stump!

We can only ever perceive a part of the 'totality'. And you can never perfectly describe exactly what you see. Language is limiting. It's the difference between tasting a good glass of wine, and talking about it!

We need to be able to put together a few, precise concepts. We try to transform observation into something we can use as symptoms from *Materia Medica*.

Concepts from looking at the Tree Stump:-

<i>Proud</i>	<i>Roots in different directions</i>
<i>Empty inside</i>	<i>Puzzle</i>
<i>Host</i>	<i>Simple</i>
<i>Deformation</i>	<i>Dead</i>
<i>Illness</i>	<i>Naked</i>
<i>Sadness / miserable</i>	<i>Joyful</i>
<i>Holding in</i>	<i>Twisted</i>
<i>Need for protection</i>	<i>Strong</i>
<i>Bones / teeth</i>	<i>Contradiction</i>
<i>Secretive</i>	<i>Both sexes</i>
<i>Ancient</i>	<i>Lonely</i>
<i>New and old</i>	<i>Irregular upper edge</i>
<i>Separation</i>	<i>Face of the Devil</i>

There are problems with interpretation! This sort of thing happens during a proving. Only a couple of people said that it was just a piece of old, dead tree. Other comments were related to personal perception. In simple terms, it depended where we were in the room – some people were on the side where there was a lot of bark, but on the other side it was 'naked'. We each have our own reality of it. Each observation is true according to the observer.

An aesthetic description is important for us to understand the remedy. This is objective. The more objective you try to be, the 'flatter' your level of observation. (E.g. 'miniaturisation' in modern medicine!) We are seeking for what is individual, not what is the same for everybody. 'All men are equal' works perfectly well for democracy, but not for medicine!

With the tree, it is evident that it is dead, it was left in the wood for a long time and has an empty centre. But there is a lot more that can be perceived, but not necessarily by everybody. That is the subjective part. Both objective and subjective observations have a place. There is a kind of double level of communication. You mustn't cut off either the objective or the subjective.

It's important to understand which bits can be communicated easily (objective – it is part of a dead tree) and which bits are important *for you* and are subjective (subjective – e.g. secretive, joyful, naked).

In homeopathy, what you perceive is as important as what you can objectively see. Using this, we move from having a few hundred symptoms, to having thousands of symptoms.

Which of the concepts above could be put together in order to shrink the concepts to something that is shareable as much as possible? And which of the concepts make sense in a clear way to describe to somebody else what we all saw? What information can we use to give out a kind of synthetic *materia medica* of our experience? What is more important and more fundamental in trying to understand what it was?

We have to organise the simple list into something that is coherent.

You have to put the things together, like lines in a drawing, to give out a single image. But you have to back up the theory with cured cases! You have to back up your perception with something objective. You don't get a remedy from a proving – it has to have been used successfully for something before it is a remedy.

It is important to understand your expectation of a therapy. What does it mean to be 'cured'?

What concepts can we put together to understand the wood? (As if it's a proving – hypothetically.) A few of the words can be placed together in a concept that embraces several of them.

- *Tree* – the substance is wood, etc.
- *Dead* – (which kind? Natural or cut down?)
 - Decay (like a sub-rubric of the concept of being 'dead')
 - Wounded
- *Hollow*
- *Medium-sized Trunk*
 - Root-less
 - Branch-less
 - Leaf-less
- *Open up*

It is very difficult to give a precise description of everything. It is almost always impossible. We can't be in a position to tell everything about the piece of tree – there will always be something missing. The weight, the colour, the shape, etc. are needed to be accurate.

Mostly, we underline what we see. But we should also underline clearly what we *don't see*. This is a negative observation. Especially if we don't see something that *should* be there. For example, why does a particular patient never talk about their sentimental relationships? This is a negative observation, not just a speculation (that would be if we discuss 'why?') More or less, the person should give some information about an important part of his life, so the fact that he doesn't is interesting.

In physics, a fractal is a small part of something that fits a description of the bigger part of the something.

The quality of subjective information is not shareable. However, it is useful to yourself. E.g. a Calc Carb person maybe very conservative. If you are also conservative, you will enjoy the discussion. If you are a revolutionary anarchist, you will find the person boring. So 'boring' would be useful in a subjective sense – so next time you see somebody who is very 'boring', they might be Calc Carb, but it is not useful information for other people.

In the books, every symptom can be read in a different way and has a different meaning. Some of them are very important, some are absolutely useless! Something may be totally characteristic of your experience, but be useless to other people. A book should inform on a level of common experience.

Understand the difference between:-

- Symptom
- Coherent Group of Symptoms (C.G.S.)
- General theme
- Fundamental theme
- Area

These concepts are very important.

A symptom is one of the many possible descriptions that we have out of a clinical experience or a proving; the way to express something that doesn't work.

A C.G.S. is something that is recorded in a very logical way in all our observations of a case. Consider *Arsenicums*. You can see that several symptoms of this remedy could have the characteristic of a 'burning pain'. This means that if you read all the extractions from a Repertory, you find this word 'burning' several times – in abdomen, head, pain, dreams of fire, etc. It gives out a clear description of something that is perceived as burning. This concept of burning is much more important than a specific symptom.

Somebody could say that they have burning pain in the elbow. However, you can't find this symptom in the Repertory. But if you know that feeling of burning is important for *Arsenicums*, then it's possible that this symptom is just missing in the Repertory or *Materia Medica*.

If the concept is recurrent, don't consider the 'grade' in which it is in the Repertory. The books are incomplete and can't be totally trusted.

We are dealing with a theme when beyond something which is logically recorded, we have a concept. A concept – you put together several symptoms, several ideas and it makes sense to collect them together as a concept. You can see the concept clearly expressed by several symptoms together.

E..g. Lachesis.

It is common for snakes to have a significant de-compensation (aggravation) when they start to become old. (Menopause or andropause.) For this, you can find a lot of symptoms in the Repertory describing this concept → idea of becoming old, hot flushes, worries about not looking good, etc. These can be added together to produce a concept of problem with old age.

A general theme is a more evolved concept of C.G.S. It's more rooted, better known, presented in several books. Sometimes you have the theme written as a word in the Repertory, but many times you don't.

We can describe the feeling of being 'paranoid' with several symptoms but there is not a single word to describe it in the Repertory.

What's the difference between a general theme and a fundamental theme? A general theme is the result of grouping several symptoms, but it's representing something that must be evident in this case. Without this, you wouldn't prescribe the remedy. E.g. 'dead' is precise information about the tree trunk – we need this in order to know what is the nature of 'hollow, tree, trunk, open up'.

A fundamental theme is a way of being. It's a strategy. It's a way of existing. It's been present in the system forever. It is a rooted way of relating with the environment with this specific substance. The fundamental theme must be there, otherwise we're not talking about this substance or remedy.

For example: Talking about *Phosphorus*. For the main phosphoric substances, their relationships in life are very important. This is one of the most fundamental things for them. This remedy belongs to the area of ones where 'relationship' is important. You're defining a very large concept that belongs to a certain group of remedies.

Problems!

The Limitation of Symptoms

- Imprecision – *they don't tell you what you really need to know*

- Reduction of complex concepts – *the word is too reductive (e.g. the feeling of 'forsaken' is completely different in Pulsatilla, to Anhalonium and Opium); one word is very limiting*
- Mistakes in translation – *in the Organon and many other books from language problems, or even translating what the patient or prover said into words; your idea can be quite different to what the patient meant*
- Unbalanced symptom: too many or not enough – *we don't have a mathematical model; some remedies have 25,000 and some have 25*

Verify our prescription in books that may not be reliable:

- Too often not from a real experience of the author – *this is very important! Too often, it's just a collection from different authors. Too often, our books are just copies of previous books. Materia Medica should be based on the author's personal experiences – a book of 50 remedies that they have used very successfully, not a collection of info including remedies they've never used!*
- Missing or incomplete information
- Superficial provings – *the quality of provings can vary enormously*
- Superficial description of the substances used

We need a model of researching and studying the effect of remedies that could overcome these limits in real time

- Improve the tremendous amount of disorganized data we already have
- Deepen and synthesize our study of substances used for preparing remedies.

We need a new paradigm from which to work with homeopathy. It has the potential for being extremely deep, but we have too much disorganised information / data.

Homeopathic symptoms:-

- Phenomenon observed during homeopathic experimentation or in clinical experience (n.b. not just cause and effect)
- It can be verbal and not verbal expressions; objective or subjective, that we can observe in a biological system

Examples OPIUM:-

- Rubrics of uncertain significance, but reported in the 3rd degree (bold type)
 - Apoplexy
 - Asthmatic attack, ailments during a
 - Heated, becoming: agg: bed, in
 - Cheerfulness, gaiety, happiness: general: chill, during
 - Delusions, imaginations, animals, of
 - Nausea, seasickness
 - Stool, watery
 - Extremities, twitching, convulsions: during

None of this information is helpful because it doesn't help us choose *Opium* over a different remedy. You can have a 3rd degree symptom that doesn't help you make a good differential diagnosis.

Opium Keynotes – like symptoms (belonging to fundamental themes)

- Analgesia
- Catalepsy: fright, after
- Coldness

A keynote is a kind of ‘super-symptom’. It is one of several symptoms that represents a fundamental theme of a remedy. Sometimes a ‘keynote’ is a keynote for a group of remedies, not a single remedy. In the case of these keynotes for *Opium*, they are part of the fundamental theme for *Opium*. But it is also in all the remedies in the ‘drugs’ family. The limit of the concept of a keynote is that it can be very precise because it belongs to fundamental themes, but it is possibly related to a group of substances, not just one substance. This common way of being doesn’t just belong to *Opium*.

What we define as a ‘polycrest’ is a kind of archetype. It’s a big, common way of being. It’s an anthropological model which is a huge definition of what a human being can be.

Lachesis keynotes

- Ailments from: climacteric period
- Ailments from: mortification, humiliation, chagrin
- Forsaken feeling: friendless, feels
- Choking, constriction, clothing agg.
- Congestion, hyperaemia, etc., general

Lachesis is like the archetype for the snake remedies, all of which have these symptoms. It’s a kind of paradigm of snakes. What we call *Lachesis* is a combination of a large number of remedies.

One of the reasons a keynote may not work is because it isn’t a keynote of the remedy, but of the group to which the remedy belongs.

In the Repertory, some rubrics are symptoms and some are themes. For example, “Ailments from: climacteric period” is a theme, not a symptom.

Thematic, though poorly emphasised, rubrics (Opium fundamental themes)

- Delusions: light, incorporeal, immaterial, he is
- Delusions: flying, he or she is
- Delusions: heaven, is in
- Fancies: power, increased, of
- Indifference, apathy: agreeable things, to
- Theorizing: gigantic
- Extremities enlargement: sensation of
- Motion: lost or diminished power of

These are only given as a 1st degree importance. But in actual fact, each one of these symptoms describes one of the most fundamental concepts describing *Opium* and even other remedies related to *Opium*.

Thematic, though poorly emphasised, rubrics (Lachesis fundamental themes)

- Ailments, from: erysipelas, after
- Confusion of mind: identity, as to his: duality, sensation
- Extravagance
- Pulsating, beating, throbbing: temples, left
- Constriction: sensation of

Thematic, though poorly emphasised, rubrics (Opium general themes)

- Head asleep, as if
- Extremities, numbness, insensibility: lower limbs
- Paralysis: general: lungs: congestion, from
- Chill, violent chill: unconsciousness, with

Theme:

A theme is a concept that represents characteristic aspects of any substance in its interaction with a biological system and/or in the observation of this phenomenon. Defining a theme includes semantic problems because the single word has to encompass complex concepts. We have a necessity to explain the theme.

Coherent Group of Symptoms:

Symptoms that we can group logically. Symptoms that don't belong to C.G.S. are much less important (regardless of grade in the Repertory). The degree has less importance than the coherency. First degree symptoms are much more important if they belong to a coherent group.

The first result of such an approach is that a huge amount of symptoms become useless, regardless of the degree in which they are put in the Repertory. If a symptom does not fit with the fundamental theme, the general theme or the C.G.S., it is almost useless for us because it does not allow us to say that this remedy can be recognised through the symptom.

The quality of the information is more important than the quantity. This process cuts out a lot of stuff that is not so important.

General Theme:

Characteristic modalities of the remedy, not necessarily present in our homeopathic literature. For example, "omnipotence" or "ovulation" or "poor immunity response". It is a relevant concept where or not it is a CGS.

Fundamental Theme:

These explain the General Theme and really important keynotes. A concept without which we cannot apply the Law of Similars on a deep level, nor deeply understand the remedy. Fundamental themes are essential elements in the adaptation of any system and a specific approach of the substance. Fundamental themes are not necessarily present in our homeopathic literature.

Opium (& drugs in general) Fundamental Themes:-

- Isolation / Avoidance
- Omnipotence / Nullipotence
- No framed identity
- Altered perceptions

Whatever in the Repertory expresses one of these themes is a kind of keynote that gives us an idea of the concepts.

General or Characteristic Themes (Opium / drugs)

- Analgesia / Hypersensitiveness
- Space & time
- Activity / apathy
- Coldness
- Music / art / creativity
- Transgression

(n.b. They are hypersensitive and compensate for these by not feeling anything.) There are compensated and uncompensated feelings.

Coherent Group of Symptoms (Opium & drugs in general)

- Poisoning

- Extreme spasm / retraction
- Retention

It is the relation between symptoms, CGS, GT and FT that provides the structure and meaning of the remedy and its siblings.

A good prescription or analysis is something that considers all the concepts together – symptom, CGS, GT, FT and Area. There is no hierarchy; they should all be considered. It's the organisation of all these things together which allow us to recognise a remedy, or even a group of remedies.

Instead of a pyramidal structure, it could be more precise to consider a *three dimensional model* of various themes / nuclei interacting together. (Mostly, we have a pyramidal structure with 'the mind' at the apex.)

There are several ways to understand a substance. We have many sources of information, including:-

Provings – they can be incomplete or misinterpreted

Clinical

Toxicology

Pharmacology

Traditional – a lot of remedies were proved because of their previous uses

Myths & fairy tales

Personal

Other sources

Consider 'Tarantism' – the people genuinely thought that the Tarantula is a poisonous spider. However, its bite is no worse than a wasp sting. But for centuries, people would pretend to be bitten by a spider and behave in the way that we know was brought out by the proving and clinical experience.

Organisation, coherence of symptoms and themes allows us to understand a remedy in its relationship to others and for purposes of differential diagnosis.

We have very different levels of similitude. Someone might react to Arnica, but would react better, and for longer with Bellis Perennis. But Opium would have been better, and Lactuca Virosa (*Lettuce Opium*) would have been the best, and the simillimum.

A **family** is a group of remedies with common characteristics and similar themes. The most important, fundamental themes are shared together. The difference is their way of overcoming and compensating this problem: there are several ways to overcome the same problem. These characteristics can be expressed on different levels of similarity or analogy.

Drug like:- cann-i, cann-s, laur, psil, coca, camph, pen, nabal, agn, op, pip-m, bufo, hell, lith-c, and more...

It may be a horizontal relationships (poison of snakes / salt of element, etc.) in which case it is very evident to say that they are similar. However, remedies in a group may be biologically unrelated. There are many analogies that we don't know how to express in a logical way. There are alkaloids in the toad – *bufo* – that you find in certain mushrooms so it makes sense that they are in the same group.

The idea of a 'family' can only be a perspective. It's important to define why you put a group of remedies together as a family. Make explicit what is your model of a family.

The relationship between a human and a substance is vital. On the one hand, there is no evidence to connect 'Tarantism' with a spider bite. But on the other hand, it is interesting to find out which kind of connection we have in history – myth, legend, anthropological, etc. It is our human projection to this substance.

There are concepts that are in some way universal – archetypes. These are the ideas that we associate with substances.

Massimo makes a big distinction between the way somebody lives when he is sick, and the way he lives when he is not sick. If you look a system / personality / remedy, the person does the best to relate the inner and outer world in the best possible way. Every system does this in a physiological way when nothing bad is occurring, or in a pathological way when there is more or less disease.

To be what it is, each substance has a characteristic structure and takes on characteristic strategies in order to be able to survive. The sociology of plants, or animals, for example. It's easier studying animals because in some way, they are closer to us. However, each plant has its own behaviour, and its own attitude to survive. It's even more complicated when you study minerals, stones, crystals. But it wasn't always like this in the history of human beings.

The concept that everything has some sort of vital force in it is a very old idea in many ancient cultures, including the old European tradition.

Many of the minerals we use are not found in nature in the form that we use them. For example, *Natrum muriaticum* is Sea salt, but it has many other bits & pieces in it! We must consider the source of the substance we use.

What is it that makes the substance able to exist? What makes the substance able to survive and go on? These are important questions to understand the remedy. The strategy of surviving is the specific way that the substance uses in order to be what it is.

People have used the bark from a willow for centuries, for inflammation. However, there was no way that they were to know that it contained aspirin. Many of our remedies have a rich history behind them. The ancients were able to recognise the therapeutic effect, without the tests that we now have. Often their 'knowledge' does not belong to our concept of 'knowledge' of today, which incorporates, learning, lessons, books and being given information. In these cultures, knowledge was based on a non-verbal approach and experience.

Sea Animal Remedies

We are starting with these because they are much more related to what we can consider the structure of human beings. They are easier to study and you can find interesting analogies between the development of certain kinds of substances and the development of humans.

The evolution of humans started in the Sea water. 70% of our planet is the Sea, in which is the largest amount and diversity of animals. The different animals in represent different steps and phases in evolution. You can relate these to the different strategies available to human beings.

In order to continue to evolve, the Sea animals began to move out of the water. In the meantime, the really evolved animals (dolphins, whales, big mammals) very probably came out of the water where they developed significantly, but then went back into the Sea environment.

There is an evident link between life in the Sea, and our life in the Uterus. The Water is more or less the same kind of environment. *Aqua marina* contains all of the minerals of the period table – even some that are very little known because they come from Space via meteorites, etc.

For most Sea animals, their environment is a few square metres. Or they do not decide where they want to move, but it is due to the tide (like in the case of the *Medusa* or *Oyster*). Out of the water, it's only possible for plants to live in this way – rooted to one spot. This is why *Corallium* was considered a kind of stone for ages. Then they thought it was a plant because it would move a bit. And only after several years did somebody discover that *Corallium* is the external skeleton of an animal that lives in a community; it is a society animal.

Most animals evolve. It is not possible for *Spongia* to evolve because it is too basic. It cannot become more sophisticated. You can have less and more sophisticated sponges, but it will always be a sponge forever. It is such a basic organisation that we can't even consider it as a tissue – a tissue has organisation. The main activity of sponge cells is to live together so that they can pump the water for nutrients and survive. If you push a sponge through a sieve, you do not kill it – it just takes another shape and continues to live. This is because the cells are so undifferentiated (like a cancer).

It is important to consider the socialisation of animals. This is fundamental out of the water – very, very few animals are able to live without a social structure. For most, this is essential for reproduction. It's possible for this to be completely absent in the Sea environment. For many, the female leaves her eggs in the water, the male leaves his sperm in the water and they meet, without any copulation. On the land, there is some copulation. The water is a stable environment suitable for an egg.

With the very basic animals, the two sexes have hardly any relationship. The 'children' have more or less no concept with their parents – no-one whom you can try to resemble. For many, there is nothing that looks after them.

The most basic way of socialising is in a school. This is an organisation of fishes swimming together in a huge number. (In mammals, there is a social structure – the most important male and female, etc.) A school is the simplest way of moving, but there is no boss, no social relationship, no intercourse – nothing that looks like somebody taking care of them.

We have to use these concepts to figure out something that resembles the main strategies of our patients.

Spongia Tosta



Badiaga is a sponge from fresh water. The other sponge, from the salty water is *Spongia Tosta*. It mainly comes from a substance that is roasted. (*Badiaga* is from the fresh animal.) This idea of roasting substances was used a lot by Hahnemann. This had a special meaning in alchemy – to increase the mineral power of the substance (calcination). It cuts off the water, eliminates any kind of tissue, and you're able to transform a substance coming from an animal or plant into something that is just mineral.

In traditional medicine, it was used as a roasted substance. The main use was as an anti-haemorrhagic for bad injury – it was used for external bleeding and internal bleeding. The trituration of a roasted sponge was used a lot for metrorrhagia, etc.

The Arabs used this remedy a lot in their traditional medicine. They used it a lot for people with a goitre. Every time they saw somebody with such a swelling in their throat, they realised that the sponge was very efficacious to treat this problem to reduce the mass and also to improve the related symptoms.

In *Spongia Tosta*, we use mainly the skeleton of this plant. It's a kind of roasted *Calcarea silicata*! The amount of calcium and silica in the skeleton is exactly the opposite to the evolution of the animal. The more it contains silica, the less it is evolved. Usually you find that animals with a big amount of silica are really, really primitive. Animals with the biggest amount of calcium are more evolved. If you study very, very basic plants (e.g. *lycopodium*), they contain more silica. *Lycopodium* used to be 100 metres high and some ferns were 2,000 metres high!! They contain lots of silica as a protection. The most evolved plants have a kind of thorn (e.g. roses) as protection. Silica is hard to be chewed and digested so many animals won't eat it (they start to triturate their teeth before the plant!)

Calcium carbonate is the first sign of an animal having a bone, like in an oyster. The animal itself is still boneless, so it has an external bone as a cover. From this point of view, we have more or less evolved shells. (We have 4 shells in homeopathy – *murex*, *calc carb*, *Pecten jacobus* and *Venus mercenaria*.) As you move on in evolution, the bone goes inside. For example, *Sepia* has a bone inside the system upon which to attach bones and muscles so that it can move.

In these 'animals' there is no tissue, no digestive system, no respiratory system, etc. Just a collection of cells living together to filter the water.

The main themes for *Spongia*:-

- **BASIC FRAME**
- **Distance**
- **Dependency**
- **Hyperaesthesia**
- **IMMATURITY**
- **Safe environment**
- ALTERNATION
- Fright
- Grudge
- SHOOTING PAIN
- RETRACTION SPASMODIC
- Motion
- Water
- (cough)

- (panic attacks)

Bold is fundamental themes. Underlined are the general themes. Those in brackets are present in a great majority of patients cured by this remedy. If something is written in upper case, this specific theme for this remedy is much more important than in others.

Basic Frame – In our growth as human beings, we need to cross several steps in our evolution from the beginning of childhood when we leave the uterus to growing as adults. More or less, we all have a solid structure to our growing. If there is a serious damage in this sense and the evolution is not growing in a proper way, you don't only have a problem in your personality as a structure of the self, but also in your physical structure. (A fundamental theme can be seen on both mental and physical levels.)

Basic frame means that the basic needs of survival are provided and they are OK. You don't see anything more sophisticated than what is needed for survival. You can see this in their relationship to other people, their own understanding, their attitude to getting a good insight, their relationship to food, money & their house. Everything has to be sure, clear, basic. They need a clear sense of being supported, whatever it is. If they don't have the support, they'll replace it as soon as possible.

They may cut off the emotional side of a relationship and only live because they need the support. It's like the infant state of a baby who is unable to survive by himself. *Spongia* is blocked in this state. Completely dependent on somebody else. Becoming an adult means being able to live on your own.

They don't set up relationships using emotions. "I need someone, that's it!" This is acted in a very, very childish way. When they are really bad, they will ask the wife or the husband to go with them to the hairdresser! They cannot stand at all to be alone, in any moment of their existence. This need is essential.

Distance – In a compulsory way, they must not get in emotional contact with another person. Between them and the others, there is always a kind of safety distance which will prevent them from being injured, touched, invaded. In some way this could appear as a kind of contradiction to the dependency. They have to keep the right distance to use the support in a safe way. It's an emotional distance, rather than a physical distance. They look emotionally dependent but because of the basic frame are completely dependent. They won't allow anyone closer than that.

It's like when you need milk from the mother to be fed, but on the other side, you are almost unable to have an emotional relationship with the person – you just need the milk, warm environment and to be protected. Beyond that, there is no connection.

Dependency – The idea of living by themselves is almost impossible. There must be the physical presence of somebody to guarantee the protection that they survive. Whenever there is a lack of this support, for any reason, they are in panic. If someone who was one of the most important people, dies or has to leave, there is a very serious state of de-compensation.

Seek out the relationship. Often, they will find somebody who is happy to exist in this kind of relationship – like a kind of nurse!

Even if you try to understand what's going on in this person, because of such a basic frame, it is almost as if they are unable to make a clear connection that takes a minimum insight. You can be quite astonished that the person is not able to understand the connection. You sense a clear feeling of being disconnected. There is such a lack of organisation in the basic frame.

Immaturity – This is very strong in the remedy. The person is clearly not able to be independent. It is clear that they need somebody else, even to survive. They suffer

tremendously if there is a loss, but it's not an emotional suffering. It's related more to them than the person that dies. They will panic – “What can I do now without this person?” Their programme will be to replace him or her as soon as possible with another who is stronger. They must have close to them what they perceive as a strong personality. A stable house, stable finances, enough food and good life insurance!

Safe environment – This is like the Sea. What is important in life is to be safe, to be protected, to be stable. Not to change their mind, not to face new things. Not to move out from common habits. Not to face problems with food, work, etc. Guaranteed work. Very basic needs and wants – to have something sure and safe. You get a clear feeling that they are not ambitious at all. There is no ambition at all. It's essential to survive and stay in a place that is safe.

It's as if everything in life points to this – to have something safe and sure.

Alternation – From a clinical point of view, a common observation in cases of *Spongia*, is that they always think something in the external environment makes them sick. Whatever they're complaining about is something that comes and goes away. It is as if they try in some way to get rid of 'my problem' but it comes and comes and comes. They are either good or not good, constantly.

In every patient, we should look at the relationship they have with the external world and the relationship they have with their internal world.

They live somewhere where the external world can affect them as little as possible.

It's as if the constant fight against something that they perceive as something that makes them sick, is a strategy to help them try to overcome the problem. Whenever you try to give a context to their suffering (a modality or causation), you often have a very poor result. It is as if their problem surrounds them. It overwhelms them and there is nothing that they can do except to try to avoid it and compensate for it.

From the point of the view of the physical translation of this suffering, you often see alternating symptoms. The problem comes and goes.

Spasmodic retraction – The tendency of developing different kinds of spasms is common to many remedies. However, the intensity of the spasm in the case of *Spongia* are almost paroxysmal and out of control. They happen in a strong way and are overwhelming. Like a whooping cough that keeps on going and they don't know what to do.

The reaction of anything to something that makes them sick is that they retract. This is a kind of symbolic picture evident in *Spongia*. If they come across something that makes them sick, they immediately jump back into their safe environment.

Whatever happens, the retraction is immediate. It is spasmodic and blocking. It is something in a clinical way where the result is a kind of paralysis. A symbolic, rather than muscular paralysis. They are stuck and cannot move. They can't do anything to react against what's going on rather than retract straightaway into their little house.

They often have problems affecting the muscles – paralytic pains, something that blocks the motion, makes them unable to move.

Think in terms of what is indispensable to our system. You can live without eating and drinking for a few days. You can live without breathing for a few minutes. This is the most basic need and the most common use of *Spongia*. They block the first act of existing.

There is a spasm, a clenching of the bronchial tubes. It is reported as if there is no reason. From the clinical point of view, in the case of this patient, it is as if you're not able to understand what's going on. They give you the idea that nothing happened – they are completely unprotected and it's as if nothing can be done. The only thing that can do is shrink inside and close up.

Fright – You have the impression that they are in a kind of panic because of the fear of the fear. Sometimes it's not even possible to give a picture, a definition, a face to these fears. They are so scared that whatever can injure them is scary – they're not even able to tell you why. They are scared because they could be scared!

There are very many fears that mostly come out when the patient is entering a de-compensated state. They are not so able to re-arrange using their energies and strategies to survive.

Our Western society generally considers that adults shouldn't need protection like children do. So they often develop panic attacks. They feel unable to cope with the world. They can get blocked in a panic and need somebody to take care of them.

If you study the delusions / dreams, you find very basic things:- strange faces, ghosts, child-like pictures. A child is not able to use a creative fantasy to give an image to this. A *spongia* patient rarely gives you a sophisticated, created dream. The mind is not organised.

Grudge – This is a common concept for many Sea remedies. (We have a common expression of this in *Natrum Muriaticum* – the grudge is almost one of the main internal supports.)

The grudge is a very specific defensive attitude. With such a poor tool to elaborate a defensive against it, it is as if they can tell you that their life is just a collection of bad experiences. All they can do is to withdraw spasmodically from that. A grudge is a very defensive strategy. If they can remember clearly a bad experience, they are sure they will never experience it again. Like a child who knows that it hurts to put their finger in boiling water – they will not repeat the experience anymore.

When telling you about what you consider a grudge, they say it in this way. It's common stuff that happens to everybody. Everybody else is able to learn from it and move on from it. For them the collection of these experiences tells them clearly that they don't have to repeat the bad experience anymore.

Very often because they need to project the suffering outside of the system, the other person becomes the cause of the problem and they will never talk to them again! It is a childish attitude.

Hyperaesthesia – This is clear in several Sea remedies. The fear of suffering and the fear of pain is a fear of the fear. In such a basic structure and basic frame, it's hard and difficult to elaborate any kind of suffering. They can't allow themselves to take in the pain, elaborate on it and make an experience of it. It is as if it's something new, something not easily digestible. We come back to the same concept:- fear of dying, fear of cancer, fear of black, fear of water. A kind of panic situation – you feel that you are suffering but there is no explanation for it. You don't know when it will stop.

If I have a pain in the ankle, I know that it is due to an injury and will go in a few days. For *Spongia* it is just the beginning of an unknown – something terrible could happen out of this. They're not able to objectively say that they just need a bandage on it. The specific, subjective perception of a painful situation is unique. You see a lot of, “My God! I'm suffering! What could it be?”

Every pain is a subjective experience but there is a degree to which each patient will perceive it. In this case, they have a hyper-critical perception of pain.

Shooting pains – Something is sticking, penetrating, stitching. Even in the way of talking. Whatever makes them suffer is like an arrow penetrating the system and coming out. In the concept of shooting is the idea of being penetrated. This is a recurrent theme in many of the Sea remedies. If your main strategy is to keep your distance from others, then whatever hurts you is something that has penetrated your system.

The idea of being penetrated in some way is what harms them. It's something able to invade the system. It often takes the attitude that something that is like a shot. It enters and comes out. You feel the pain of it, but there is no possibility of elaborating the experience. You can't make an experience out of the pain. This can lead to a grudge. A good, adult structure is able to work out ways to overcome the problem and next time to react in a better way and cope with it.

If you can't elaborate, the only thing you can do is forget as soon as possible after a pain. If there is a loss, the first thing they have to do is replace what is missing.

It's often reported as if they're receiving a shot. It's always something coming from the external environment.

Motion – Doesn't want to leave home, doesn't want to change, doesn't want to move. This is a clear psychological attitude of somebody who is 'conservative'. They refuse anything that could be an effort for them to move from the place. The physical representation is where the attitude is not at all to be sporty, not at all to use and please the physical body.

You can see this from children – they are not able to walk properly, or crawl or enjoy sports. They are not able to cope in a social way with the other people using their physical body.

The concept of motion affects the emotions, feelings, attitude but is clearly recognisable physical stuff.

Water – Water is the biggest archetype in our mind – it can be a tragic flood or a beautiful thing. There is a common regressive attitude towards water. Very often they tell you that water for them is an important, fundamental element. It is often perceived in a quite ambivalent way. If they are stressed or have any problems, they will stay close to or go into water.

At the same time, when water is perceived as a gigantic element (deep, you can't see) it is a very powerful and frightful thing. This kind of water for them is a clear symbolic representation of being able to face something gigantic which they really can't do.

They will love to stay at the Seaside 2 metres from the shore. But as soon as they move a little bit closer, they cannot see the bottom of the Sea – full of whatever animals, so mysterious, so scary, it can swallow me, etc. (Not like the water in the womb.)

In the dreams / delusions, according to how much they are compensated, this representation of the water can be completely different.

Cough – There are many kinds of diseases that this remedy can help. However, in common in most of the cases cured with this remedy is the matter of suffering from a severe cough. (Many didn't go to him with a severe cough, but it was there in the story of the patients.)

Panic attacks – The characteristic of the panic attack is that these people seem to be completely unable to give information to the homeopath about what is going on. You try to squeeze out some information. The main request is that they need support, and in large