

Essence  
of

MATER | A  
MEDICA

Second Edition

George Vithoulkas

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## AETHUSA CYNAPIUM (aeth.)

The chronic type

Individuals who feel apart.

Strong emotions but do not express them easily.

Moved to tears but do not actually cry - emotions felt inside (Unlike Ignatia - moved to tears but constricted at throat so doesn't cry).

Own emotional world - very intense.

Live happily by themselves, but also enjoy company.

Talk to themselves.

### Sleep

Intensity comes out in sleep - sleepwalks.

Deep sleep on either left or right side.

Salivate during sleep.

"FEAR of closing eyes lest should never wake". - Kent.

**Agg.** darkness - do not like darkness - fear will not wake up again. Feel as if suffocating from darkness - have to open window (Lachesis, Grindelia).

Cannot control the breathing - have to get up, (Ignatia - fear will never sleep again).

Fear of not waking up after an operation.

### Extra notes

Crazy for animals, cats and dogs etc - look after them with unnatural passion.

Talk to animals when don't talk to people.

Great irritability.

P.M. T. - tremendous build up, headache, feel rotten two days before and days 1 and 2, then relax and libido increases immediately after menses. - Fear of losing a loved one is unbearable.

Sudden redness in face with a wild look, and drawing feeling in

face before or during menopause.

Deep furrows in face in sick cases - look near death, look very old.

Eruption on tip of nose, or between nostrils, or even in nostrils - recurrent (eczema or herpes etc.)

**Agg.** HEAT, ESPECIALLY SUMMER.

Yellowish leucorrhoea which stains linen.

Distension of abdomen when irritated, or if eat more than usual - sometimes have to induce vomiting to amel.

Craves cheese, FARINACEOUS food, salt.

**Averse:** fruits.

## **AGARICUS MUSCARIUS (agar.)**

The mental/emotional picture

**Anxiety about health** - will drive you crazy with it (Nit. ac., Ars, Phos, Kali ars.)

Don't necessarily have the physical symptoms of Agaricus.

Find something to suffer about: become anxious about some little thing, then it builds up and they become pessimistic. Finally, they don't want to live and go to doctor - the doctor's slightest suggestions are blown up in their minds, e.g. if doctor suggests a mammography they will have a fear of cancer for the rest of their lives.

They cry ++ and are anxious and drive you mad.

Sometimes ANXIETY state changes to a tremendous EUPHORIA, which they recognize is not quite healthy despite the euphoria, and so revert to anxiety.

Out of the body experiences - feel well when come out of the body (Cann. ind. find it a terrifying experience).

An element of spookiness about these people.

Think about dead people.

Can't sleep in certain beds because they look like coffins, or can't have sex in certain beds for this reason.

Fear of cancer, but don't think they are going to die. They are always meeting or hearing of people, who have cancer, like to help dying people.

Aversion to eggs.

Desires salt + nil else especially.

Agg. HEAT

Hypochondriacal anxiety.

## **AGNUS CASTUS (agn.)**

Agnus castus is a remedy which I believe will be increasingly needed in our modern societies, especially by the younger generation. It is indicated after a lot of abuses common among young people - sexual excesses, the use of psychoactive drugs, loss of sleep, sporadic nutrition, etc. Such people have been easily excitable, and engaged in many of these activities very intensely over a relatively brief period of time. Then they become pale, anaemic, low in energy, absent-minded etc.

Eventually these people begin to realize that their whole constitution is breaking down. They develop the fear that within a few years or a few months they are going to die. They feel they have over-exerted and dissipated their life energies to the point that their whole system has become rotten.

Such people reach a stage in which they are unable to concentrate any more on their studies, their daily tasks etc. They experience sexual impotency, and they become very

preoccupied with this problem. They become convinced that they are about to have a nervous breakdown, or that their vital organs are about to collapse.

This concern becomes so great in *Agnus castus* that these people develop an anxiety about health which is almost hypochondriacal.

-voluptuous fantasies without erection, and finally into complete loss of sexual desire.

It also happens that the *Agnus castus* patient breaks down in another way: he sometimes feels that he is worthless, that he is absolutely useless in the world. And then, at other times, he feels that he is a very great man, that he is something quite special. These states then alternate with each other.

Women also may need *Agnus castus*. In such a case, we at first find a woman full of lasciviousness, almost hysterical in her desire for sex, Eventually, however she becomes absolutely frigid, completely lacking in sexual interest.

*Agnus castus* patients tend to appear pale, anaemic fatigued anxious and lacking in courage. They have dilated pupils and sensitivity to light. Their stomachs are easily disordered. If food is the least bit heavy, they will suffer from eating it.

Often there is a sense of inner trembling and coldness - an inner chill. This occurs even though the body itself may feel warm. There is a kind of relaxation of internal organs, and one may see prolapsus and a feeling of weakness in the abdominal area. This is not so much a pressing down sensation, but a weakness. This same weakness can lead also to a Silica-like constipation: the stools come out in pieces, and they sometimes recede.

Sometimes *Agnus castus* is indicated in nursing women whose milk has stopped flowing.

## **ALUMINA (alum.)**

Alumina is a unique remedy often under-appreciated by beginning prescribers. It is characterized by DELAYED ACTION both internally on the mental plane, and externally on the central and peripheral nervous systems. The idea is SLOWNESS of function followed eventually by PARALYSIS. This is a very slow onset. The patient may not realize that anything is wrong for a long time; she may feel a vague "heaviness" in the legs about which she doesn't complain until it has developed into locomotor ataxia.

The most striking aspect of the mental picture is the great SLOWNESS of mind. She is slow to comprehend things, then slow in figuring out how to proceed to accomplish her task, and slow in its execution.

The slowness of mind results in a peculiar kind of confusion which is unique to Alumina. The ideas are very vague, and hazy, like undefined shadows. You may see a patient who has difficulty in swallowing. But when you ask her to describe the trouble, she becomes halting and indecisive. She thinks a long time, tries this word and that, struggling to find the correct word to describe what she is feeling. This difficulty in expressing what is happening is so peculiar to Alumina that it is like a keynote symptom. This is the type of patient whose descriptions are so vague that you may prescribe many remedies before realising that you have never really had a case to work from; once you recognize this peculiar kind of vagueness and confusion, then you will give Alumina and witness a good effect.

With time this confusion progresses to another peculiar mental state : when she talks, she thinks that someone else is talking. Or, even more strangely, the patient may say that she cannot hear except through the ears of someone else. This can be tricky, however, because the patient will not volunteer this information. This is the kind of symptom you must elicit by direct questioning. You may suspect Alumina on the basis of

other symptoms so you ask about this symptom directly, and the patient says, "Oh yes, now that you mention it".

By this stage of pathology, the patient comes to the conclusion that he or she is going insane. This is not actually a fear of insanity; it is more of an objective conclusion. It is a kind of confirmation of what was previously suspected. Alumina is not a prominent remedy for fear of insanity. In fact, if the patient displays a lot of fear of insanity, one would tend to turn away from Alumina.

Finally, the patient falls into a deep sense of despair. She feels, "nobody can help me". "Why am I not getting better"? She feels this over relatively minor ailments, and she goes from doctor to doctor trying to solve the problem; when she sees that no-one can help, then she falls into a despair of recovery. The Arsenicum despair of recovery arises from a tremendous fear of death. In Alumina, however, the despair is very deep, and it is real. She is very sick! The mental plane is confused, she is losing her identity. This can be an early symptomatology of schizophrenia.

It is important to remember that this progression from slowness of mind, to confusion, to loss of identity and despair of recovery, occurs very slowly and eventually the nervous system demonstrates degeneration as well. This is a process seen in broken down constitutions - whether by age or by frequent diseases; it is commonly prescribed in senile patients.

Next we consider the emotional plane. Alumina has a great sense of being hurried inside. Kent stresses this symptom greatly in his Materia Medica, yet Alumina is listed only in ordinary type in the Repertory. What Kent means to say, then, is that this is a sense that the patient cannot do things fast enough; she feels there is such a **DELAYED ACTION** in functioning that everything happening in the external world seems to move too slowly. This is the basis for the symptoms: "Times passes too slowly". Even though an external observer would see the Alumina patient as being very slow, she feels inside that time is passing too slowly. A half an hour seems to be a whole day.

As the emotional pathology progresses, this sense of being hurried leads to apprehension that she won't be able to finish everything in time. She tries her best, but she is so slow that she cannot actually finish, and this causes her to be apprehensive. At the very extreme of this state, she suffers from a pervasive fear that something bad will happen - an accident, a misfortune.

This process eventually progresses into depression, with suicidal impulses. Alumina has suicidal impulses upon viewing a knife, or seeing blood. Platina, Arsenicum and Mercury are other remedies having a similar symptom, but they mostly have the impulse to kill others. Alumina has the impulse to kill himself or herself.

The Alumina depression can best be described as a "gloominess". There is no light. She complains to the doctor, but in a non-burdensome way. She does not wail and moan and cling to the prescriber. She merely reports her symptoms in a heavy but non-nagging manner. She has the appearance of being RESIGNED to her condition. It has come on over such a long time and so insidiously that she has resigned herself to her condition.

This resignation, coupled with the vagueness and slowness of mind, sometimes gives the patient the appearance of merely "going through the motions". You may observe her a bit and come to the conclusion that she has not really come of her own motivation. She seems to be feeling, "Why did I come here after all"? But then she opens up a bit and begins working with you. The theme of DELAYED ACTION pervades the physical plane thoroughly. There is a slowing of function at first; this progresses to weakness of muscles, and eventually to a kind of paralysis.

The weakness in Alumina applies peripherally. Just as we see when the patient is struggling so hard to express herself but simply cannot find the right word, she wills herself to function on the plane, but the response is delayed. the characteristic Alumina constipation is the prime example. Here is Kent's description : "Now, so great is the straining to pass a soft stool

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