

The Faces of Sepia

Although a very strong female remedy, Sepia is a valuable remedy for men and children although it may often be disregarded or seldom thought of because it is more difficult to see in men and children (Morrison). The Sepia man may be seen as “wimpy” or without a backbone and will suffer similarly the “neutralization of the dynamic tensions which animate all organisms” that we see in female patients (although it will manifest differently in a man, causing him to appear effeminate or lacking in masculinity). Sankaran describes the Sepia theme as “a struggle between occupation and relationship” which surely can be found in men as well as women. There is an independent nature in Sepia along with a strong will (which might be said to correspond to the bone in the cuttlefish) and this is contrasted by a sense of being “not enough” (not pretty enough, good enough, smart enough, etc). This patient feels pushed against his or her will to do things (by the mate, parents, etc) that are not desired nor wanted, hopelessly, as if there is no other choice. Tyler calls Sepia a “washer woman’s remedy” indicating it for tired, worn out constitutions who fit other aspects of the remedy, such as a hopeless feeling that their work is never done (and gives an example of a husband’s complaint that “his bonny girl is no more.”).

The Sepia child may at first be “lively, bright, affectionate, and excitable” and can seem very much like Tarantula according to Sankaran (in fact, Sankaran reports that a successful Sepia type will have been independent and strong-willed from the very beginning), and Phatak describes the remedy as being “suited to young people of both sexes who are of delicate or nervous dispositions and who may be disposed to sexual excitement or worn out by sexual excesses.” The child may develop fears and a certain over-sensitive nature, which will be followed in later stages by self-containment, introversion, and a closed-off withdrawal from family, friends, and community (perhaps as a result of stresses, grief, or strong disappointment, particularly over a love relationship). Ultimately, the type develops intolerance for and

indifference to family and to interaction and to his or her occupation, usually making statements such as “if only I could get away from it all for awhile.”

Morrison illustrates the cuttlefish as a mollusk with the “secretion of its ink sac being of its very essence and nature.” The ink of the cuttlefish (known as India Ink) is the pigment Melanin, which is comprised of sulphur, calcium, and magnesium, among other compounds (so one would expect facets of these tied up in the Sepia constitution) and it appears bilious like a dark stain. Melanin is also the element that causes pigmentation in human skin. The cuttlefish has a more abundant ink supply, is quicker to move into action, and is quicker to change color than others in the cephalopod family and is also considered much more aggressive. All of this paints a picture of the ability to move at lightning speed and to “strike” quickly if needed (Sepia loves movement, dance, and thunder). The ability to change colors “more rapidly and in more variety than even a chameleon” is an indication of the changing moods of Sepia, who may be incited to anger very quickly, provoked by hardly anything at all, or may be pitched into the depths of despair and depression. On a recent Dish Network satellite television documentary, cuttlefish being filmed under water flashed bright red color instantaneously and “rushed in” then “rushed away” in response to a flash of light from a camera. The speed of movement and color change is truly remarkable.

Among the keynotes of the remedy, one finds extreme sadness and depression (that might be akin to a “dark cloud” engulfing the patient, just as the ink of the cuttlefish surrounds it once expelled). The patient is weepy, indifferent “to those loved best” and is irritable and easily offended. Vermeulen writes that there is overwhelming sadness and hopelessness, potential suicidal tendencies (this is an extreme desire to escape), and that there is no desire for sex, there is an aversion to sex, lack of orgasm, impotence, developing frigidity where it did not previously exist, and can be carried to a denial of sexuality and a fear of rape. Also indicated is a “negation of female roles” (wife, mother, lover, daughter). Ironically, there is aggravation from milk, an aversion to milk, boiled milk, and there are milky excretions (milk might be seen as

synonymous with motherhood or womanhood with this remedy). Sankaran explains that Sepia patients may experience dreams similar to Lachesis (dreams of snakes, dreams of envy), but that Sepia will not have the same desire to keep the self attractive and the competitive desire to win that Lachesis has relative to relationships, and instead will demonstrate utter despair and hopelessness about relationships. Sepias may also dream of rape or of situations in which there is helplessness, hopelessness, and lack of power. There is a decided lack of concern for and indifference to family, to husbands, to children, but this is not out of lack of care, but rather results from extreme exhaustion and total weariness (cuttlefish are known as providing “the worst mothering” in all of the animal kingdom).

Physically, the cuttlefish resembles the shape of a woman’s pelvic organs (uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries). It appears nearly jelly-like. Similarly, Sepia patients suffer with problems in “non-striated” muscles and tissues, and the female organs are particularly affected – Vithoukas gives the word “stasis” to describe the state of Sepia. There is much sagging and prolapse, weakness and weariness present (both physically and mentally). Patients may present with a yellowish or brownish “saddle” across the nose and cheeks and may also complain of black “spots before the eyes” (reminiscent of ink spots, perhaps), and may also have brownish spots across the abdomen and complain of pain in the area of the liver, or a sensation of a band about the midsection. The patient may crave sour foods, acid foods, anything with vinegar, and may further express a “too salty” taste in the mouth or a putrid taste or “rotten egg” taste upon coughing. The patient is not relieved by eating and may express that the smell of food or cooking is repulsive or sickens her in addition to being aggravated by milk as previously mentioned.

With prolapse, there may be shooting pains upward into the female organs, a feeling that “everything is falling out,” or a bearing down sensation, and the patient may note that she feels better with her legs crossed (described as “pot-bellied”). She may express a desire to scream out loud and needing to hold onto something to keep herself from doing so. Men may complain

of cold sensations or actually experience coldness in their genitalia. There may be weakness or restlessness with jerking in the lower limbs, or a sense of lameness or stiffness, or a sense of tension, as if too short (it is interesting to note that the tentacles of a cuttlefish are quite short compared to other cephalopods). There may also be herpes-like breakouts or ringworm-like eruptions, most notably in the spring. Female patients will be worse with hormonal changes of any kind, such as going on or off of birth control pills, being pregnant, changes immediately after birth, at the onset of menopause, with the onset of menses, and so forth. There may be urinary problems, stress incontinence, or difficulty with stool. This is also a very chilly remedy.

The Sepia type may be found to be slender and narrow-hipped or may be quite chubby with a “washerwoman’s countenance” of weariness and tiredness. She may feel better with rapid or violent motion (dancing in particular), with occupation or being busy – and oddly may also feel worse with occupation, particularly if it is not an occupation of her choosing, but one she feels she must do (laundry, ironing, bathing the kids).

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