

## Women at work...Women in pain <sup>1</sup>?

No... not always...

If some women are tangled up in their perfectionism and their sense of duty and end up finding a reason for their imprisonment or their exhaustion, others find a source of real pleasure. If it is not the symbol of creativity expressed in a space other than that of maternity, work constitutes then an area of freedom as well as a new perspective, even the source of a brand-new power...

What unfolds then has only the proportion of what was imagined or actually exercised in the past on them, their mother, their father, their family...Revenge is there to be taken on their collaborators or unfortunate work-mates who will pay for it unknowingly.

**Platina** enjoys working or making others work. As soon as she can exert her power or has the opportunity to be brilliant and dominating she excels at it...

« *Sees others smaller than her...* » A perfectionist and born manipulator, she climbs up the ladder and very often gives the image of « someone who fears neither God nor man. » Woe betide then those who go against her will or her desires...

She seduces to conquer better and tie others, otherwise she alienates and subdues...All means can be used to this end, even « blows below the belt ». An iron hand in a velvet glove...Female rivals are eliminated, male rivals are « knocked down », in that she takes her pleasure. It does not lie in work in itself even if, very often, it is more rigorous in its form than in its content<sup>2</sup> – but rather in what it can convey in terms of a beautiful self-image and a feeling of power...

Of course, migraines can sometimes occur at that moment. As soon as her will is thwarted or her plans foiled, they mirror her interiorized anger and helpless rage. There is, at work, the space for a real expansion, but all this up to a point...unless the fight continues on another level, where resorting to the law and asking for reparation come then to support a space of exaltation of an ego looking for its true identity and silent depression is then quite frequent. Not only does one have to spot it, but also to search for it. It may sometimes appear with bouts of melancholy or accompanied with toxic substances, but it is neither devoid of dangers, nor of suicidal risks.

Standing as a striking spokesperson of her mother and of the latter's disillusion, a symbol of revolt against the insufficient or much too overwhelming paternal lineages, Platina, grappling with her work, often makes her collaborators suffer for what generations of women have, in her opinion, unfairly undergone. If she uses then all the artifacts of her femininity, does it imply that she also sacrifices all its potentialities?...No children or just one or two, a prevailing professional life...If she doesn't suffer truly at first, it is at the end of a life that has been filled and was sometimes unstable, that « the lack of being » inherent in her personality starts appearing- if not « the lack of having » generated by her behaviour.. Even if she doesn't admit it to herself or to others, loneliness is finally taken very hard by the Natrum mur which is often underlying in her case and is then very difficult to bear.

She then becomes a woman « in pain » and she will not outdo in terms of stress, sleepless nights, exhaustion and vain attempts to « understand », all those who, under her command, try to perceive her aim and contradictions. The intransigent harshness and the absence of compassion are not, indeed, the easiest things to live with and integrate, given the often affable and seducing aspect of her apparent character...

Faced with her, the **Arsenicum album** woman is ill-treated : pointed at, dominated, criticized, sometimes castigated in public, she keeps her anger inside – and just like Sepia and Cyclamen- her migraines for Sundays. However, her exhaustion keeps growing...till the fatal burn-out where she

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<sup>1</sup>Text which served as the basis of the summary for a communication made on June 13 2015 in Paris within the frame of the day common to FFSH and CEDH

<sup>2</sup>Always appearance !

fears she will be cornered, so great is her apprehension of seeing her absence ill-interpreted, questioned or mistaken for self-indulgent absenteeism...Faced with Platina, *Arsenicum album*, either man or woman, suffers terribly. Their severe superego meets as much of an ally as a formidable foe : shaken by orders which can be as contradictory or even incomprehensible at times and by an impossibility, if not an interdiction to ask for soothing explanations which might help them to find their bearings, they are bound to suffer.

**Cyclamen** is not in a better position : her headaches, her dizzy spells and the tension she feels in her neck and shoulders speak for themselves...Obsessed by the fear of doing or having done wrong, she suffers silently, till the moment when she gives in to a deep depression and leaves her work place, to look for a space where problems are less overwhelming for her obsessive scruples...

Faced with Platina, **Pulsatilla** capitulates very quickly, as is the case whenever there is a manifestation of aggressiveness and violence. She is neither capable of fighting nor of rebelling and if, at first, she lets herself be abused and « subjected to slavery », her depression and tears quickly remove her from a hardly sustainable domination; unless Platina rejects her and finds a more or less fallacious argument to fire her without further ceremony.

More adaptable at first and disillusioned by definition as well as mistrusting of the loyalty or the nobility of soul or her fellows, **Sepia** breaks down a little slower : if, at first, she « somatizes », she doesn't deceive herself. Even if she suffers from the situation she undergoes: and unless she's going through a phase of depression or unbalance on other levels too, as soon as she is lucid on the reality of what is actually taking place, she doesn't question herself more than necessary. She tries to go on but capitulates quickly as soon as she knows that the fight is disloyal and « guaranteed to be won » by someone who is stronger and less respectful of values than she is. On the contrary, if she happens to be led on this path, a way for her to express her opposition and contained anger, she will defend herself in the most precise and adapted way ; but she must be warned about all the lies and deceit she may encounter...They may well destroy her inwardly<sup>3</sup>.

Often apparently close to Platina, the **Lycopodium** woman will also find pleasure in her job. If, most of the time, she surrounds herself with people who are less clever than she, who can comfort her in the self-image she wishes to have and thus enable her to avoid a kind of loneliness that she fears and wishes for at the same time, that doesn't mean she will « suffer » less or won't make others suffer.

She is often aware of what is really at stake, and just like *Sepia*, of the possible dishonesty and turpitude of those who surround her and with whom she has to deal, so she remains emotional and easily tired.

If she proves to be fairer than Platina and often seduces by the acuity of her judgment and views, she's not always pleasant to deal with: whoever is unable to guess her weaknesses and qualities, resist her caustic and sometimes humiliating words and occasionally refuse their abusive impact, will have to suffer constraint and a form of harshness.

Just like her male counterpart, she doesn't usually bear either weakness or tears: beware thus of her relationship with *Pulsatilla* when she has to deal with her...All the risks of being abused are gathered together here! The former loses her temper and becomes cynical and caustic, the latter cries and collapses, which only makes the situation worse and finally becomes unbearable for both of them.

Beware as well of *Sepia* and *Cyclamen* when they are in an asthenic phase : if they can, just like *Arsenicum album*, put up with this kind of personality, they don't suffer less, even if the methods of work are coherent and interesting.

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<sup>3</sup> This was the case of a patient who had been working for a firm as an accountant for about 20 years, she was suddenly accused of theft, at the moment when, as she had already done in the past, she had asked her boss for an advance on her salary, that the latter had verbally granted. She was probably too expensive for her firm which found this inelegant means to fire her for serious professional misconduct. ..The patient saw nothing coming and she says, « I could have accepted remarks about my work , but not on my honesty ». Moreover it was very difficult for her to make herself heard by justice as it was her word against the other's. She thus remains « traumatized »

If the **Nux vomica** woman is going to take pleasure, too, in building, hatching plans and elaborating lucrative strategies, the overload of her digestive system and that caused by her worries, are going to make her suffer: back-ache, despondent mood...Just like the **Aurum** woman's who, except for the sense of guilt linked to this profile, will look like her on many points, thus people close to her will be at the receiving end of it.

She shouts, loses her temper, causes stomach-ache for Arsenicum album and Argentum nitricum : in a very paradoxical way, they often end up putting up with it; she's the cause of back blocks for Actea racemosa who is torn between her desire of submission or rebellion...

As for Staphysagria, Calcarea carb and Thuya, who are obsessive and apparently quieter, they are nonetheless stressed out: very often they put on weight and « fatten themselves » to bear the shock of an everyday life filled with shouts and thunderous noises. Suffering is there, permanent tension can be felt everywhere and somatizations are more or less visible...

**Argentum** nitricum often suffers at work. Whether he or she is employed or employer, they feel submitted to a rhythm and moreover, most of the time they make it a rule for themselves: always faster, always more...they can neither let go nor delegate and take everything upon themselves, their time and their family. They can then reach the point of an ulcer, a gastritis or suicidal burn-out. The obligation to stop is then for them a synonym of horror, so unbearable is the idea of being confronted with emptiness. Their means of defence against the anxiety of being « without landmarks », « without limits » and of « one must » are submerged. It is then the anxiety of the interior void and of the lack of structuration which characterizes them, which overwhelm them and terrorize them up to the point of disturbing their sleep...Don't they struggle with all their might against immobility, a synonym for them of a confrontation with Nothingness ?

**Medorrhinum** suffers and makes others suffer...as an absent-minded employee, who always has a strong sense of guilt and is always disorganized, she raises a problem: torn between her desire of accomplishing her work as she wishes and in her own time and the nightmare of having the sensation that « someone, behind her, is watching her » she is affected by the constraint and becomes all the more disorganized.

If she happens to be in a position where she has responsibilities, she will sometimes put up the pretence, by leaning on Arsenicum album, Sepia or Cyclamen who will make up for her failings, she will make them suffer: not only is she the champion of the non answer or also of the deferred answer - with all the stress that can be involved, for someone who is organized and who meets the deadlines - but what's more she is also, the best of last-minute demands, tasks performed in an emergency.

A lack of suitable organization, when it's not complete disorganization, contradictory, incoherent orders due to the difficulty of making choices mark out her career path. They make the life of her collaborators extremely uncomfortable. If Medorrhinum has difficulties holding on to her decisions and giving them a logical twist, she suffers from this and makes others suffer.

Moreover, if the motto consists in thinking that, the more incompetent a boss is, the more they surround themselves preferably with incompetent people, one can say that this saying fits Medorrhinum perfectly: probably in an avoidance behaviour, doesn't it enable them not to be questioned, confronted to their failings, or placed in a situation where they can feel them in their reality. However, this doesn't prevent them from suffering secretly, despite the lightness that they can sometimes « offer to see ». The obsessive component of their personality – Psychosis- as much

as the necessity of having to focus and to submit themselves, the « Luèse<sup>4</sup> » are obviously involved here.

Caught between her desire of escaping and that of restraining herself to meet the demands of a professional life, Medorrhinum is one of the candidates for suffering at work; but one has to emphasize the fact that if she suffers, she's as much the cause of the suffering of all those, who, around her, attempt to straighten out the helm of a sometimes very badly steered boat.

**Cyclamen** suffers and makes others suffer in a completely different way...Her scrupulousness and her « fear of having done wrong » confer to her presence an atmosphere of stress, that her tendency to migraines only makes worse. If, like Arsenicum album, she gives the impression that her work is very well organized and marked out by milestones, her anxiety is not really very pleasant for those, who, like her, question their « well accomplished work » or the results to come...

**Thuya** suffers too, but silently; only those who know her fragility and her doubts can measure the weight of her pain. She checks everything, returns to what has already been done but suffers alone...

**Arsenicum album** experiences the same difficulty, but her demanding nature prevents her from going back incessantly to what she has done in a way which is as precise as punctilious. If she suffers, perhaps it is less from her shortcomings than from those of people close to her who are likely to question her work or her capacity to manage them. Beware of her interaction with Medorrhinum or Mercurius sol: they make her feel insecure and generate anger, doubts and constant double checking. She will become all the more demanding, as she won't be able to really trust them, hence the suffering on both sides. She keeps « supervising » and provokes in them a desire all the greater to escape from what they can live as a « nightmare » in which an unconscious challenge and a feeling of guilt, find themselves entangled in a very strange way.

Beware of her relations with Sulfur or even Nux vomica too, if when they are in a balanced phase give a more lively turn to the ambient atmosphere, and thus create by their presence a reassuring factor, their phase of unbalance can be a cause of suffering for Arsenicum album...Tempted by her vague feelings of expansionism, Sulfur will exceed the imposed limits, which won't please Arsenicum at all, hence bouts of anger more or less openly expressed on one side, and terrible shouts on the other side: one will have stomach-ache, or will let out her eczema or asthma, the other will « get in a temper » and increase her toxic or food cravings, or will « somatize » under different forms....

It will also be the privilege of Pulsatilla or of Calcarea carb or Thuya: they won't say anything and will act as equally trustworthy and quiet performers. One will cry in silence, the other will « curl up in a ball » or will incessantly brood over their mistakes or potential mistakes, if the pressure is too high or the demands too excessive.

The relationships with Sepia, Arsenicum album or Cyclamen, even if they are tinged with seriousness and deep anxiety, are generally less problematic: the fact that each is here guided by the same desire brings about a better comprehension, without the need of many explanations...

As usual when confronted with her professional life, **Sepia** suffers silently; but maybe this is not the most problematic place for her; otherwise when she's not recognized or is unfairly treated, she sees her endeavours ill-treated by the appearance or the stratagems of whoever is a better manipulator or seducer than she is...Sensitive as usual, intuitive as many tuberculin patients can be, she can foresee the problems but, hardly able to use the same weapons, she is often « pipped at the post »: obliged

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<sup>4</sup> Homeopathic diathesis whose miasmatic influence can be spotted through the process of anarchistic destruction and construction at the level of the body and of phenomena of sclerosis with, on the psychological level a tendency to depressive or maniaco-depressive disorders, to psycho-behavioural instability and to pathologies entailing an aspect of various deviations.

to wait with the tenacity that characterizes her, she suffers in silence, till truth can finally break out in broad daylight.

If such is not the case or if it lasts a little too long, beware of the silent, but not less deep depression which will assail her...Beware too of all the risks of suicidal somatization or just suicide: they lie in wait for her, without, very often, being foreseen...A silent suicide, but nonetheless hard to experience, when one measures the accomplished task or the role played by a personality as discreet as trustworthy: her only weakness and fragility lie in her anxiety of being abandoned, which, if rekindled, can only throw her into a suffering that she experienced from the very first moments of her existence.

The workplace takes for Sepia the shape of the family that she couldn't have, especially if she's single and devotes the maximum of her time and of her energy. Very often affectively involved with one of the leaders or members of this professional circle, she fulfills their smallest desires or supports their strongest ambitions: Nux vomica finds some benefit there; Sulfur, a balancing counterweight, even if, sometimes « a rant » or a sulking silence face each other...and yet in this game of power, the winner is not the one who thinks he can! Paradoxically, haunted as much by the fear of ending up alone, facing responsibilities which attract and frighten her at the same time, Lycopodium finds « her master » there...Unless a component tinged with masochism prompts Sepia not to react; whether she's too weak or fragile to do it, or again the circumstances are there to prevent her, it's with an attitude as firm as subtly conciliatory that she will make her voice heard. If she suffers, it's silently, but with the often justified hope of having the last word...One must bear in mind this unstinging devotion to her boss or a cause...The anemia that can be noted at times, due to « factitious disorders », of which the syndrome of « Lathénie de Ferjol » is one of the variants, is one of the most described stigma of the last century.

Suffering at work of the **Phosphorus** woman, easily tired, idealistic, more creative in the world of the imagination and new ideas, than in that of concrete achievements which finally do not really interest her. Confronted with a world that they have difficulty figuring out, but whose potentialities they can assess in terms of profitability – if however they manage to turn the dream into reality, Nux vomica, Sulfur or Aurum, struggle to impose their own objectives: in front of them, Phosphorus appears as an elusive, fascinating character, but whose projects they must however try to determine clearly, if they want to see them put into practice...There is pain to endure thus if one is to meet the pitfalls linked to the proposed aims, due to the constant quest for something « always more beautiful » sometimes « always more ethereal » or still « more in keeping with the harmonics of the world »...

Suffering at work too for **Causticum** whose rigidity and difficulty of seeing people « slouching in front of her » speak volumes on her experience, faced with a **Fluoric acid** who is indifferent, and unstable; or else Medorrhinum who has difficulties in putting into action orders within deadlines, or just following orders: the fragility felt here only finds its equal in the anger and the paralysing obsessions which prompt her then to feel like going away and travelling through less limiting spaces...

Suffering for **Psorinum**, **Petroleum**, of all the patients suffering from asthenia and depression: their suffering at work can only be compared to their fragility and their undermined vitality...

With them, all the profiles of the silently humiliated, made unable to speak and especially to make themselves heard :

**Silicea**, a prey to her obsessive desire to do well, but also to her fatigability.

**Staphysagria** obliged to bottle up her rancour, her helplessness anger faced with what she's living rightly or wrongly, as a humiliation or vexation: she ends up having a terrible toothache, headache or burning her stomach ;

**Ignatia** compelled to keep inside what she lives as « moral blows » and, if it is risky for her, to try and contain her spectacular reactions, which bring about tensions and stress for her collaborators or colleagues;

**Lachesis** obliged to control her vague desire of domination, seduction and aggressiveness: these are badly perceived by the people surrounding her, and can only increase her vindication and her more or less expressed reactions of jealousy.

**Lilium tigrinum** ill at ease with her fantasies, her confused ideas and the strange sensations that she feels going through her body. Her changeable moods and angry reactions are hardly appreciated within the workplace.

Suffering as well of all these candidates for back-ache and muscular pains, sometimes high blood pressure : **Nux vomica**, **Aurum**...One moves, one acts. but the body ends up speaking and telling the contained emotions and inner tension, faced with excessive pressure and constraints....

Suffering too of all these candidates for fibromyalgia, failing to be heard, taken into consideration, or understood who will show signs that can be shared with **Arsenicum album**, **Argentum nitricum** ; **Aurum muriaticum** and many remedies which act locally and carry stigma of sclerosis ; used to not paying attention to their tiredness, to « keeping up a pretence » they are often perceived as people who « feel sorry for themselves », if not as pretenders, as they don't show any signs that can be objective or measurable.

The blood pressure and biological profile don't show anything, so *they are not ill but just trying to be taken care of by the system*...unfortunately, this kind of comment is commonly heard about them.. However, on the contrary, they do not do it very often, they refuse to go on sick leave, which has to be imposed on them most of the time: their feeling of guilt and obligation are overwhelming. They don't pay attention to themselves and the slightest remark on their excessive personality is taken as a reproach.

An impossibility to accept the limit, the « Lack » and a tendency not to take the early warning signs into account: one can see there the schizo-affective disorder component and what originates from a process of transmitted « Luèse ». The feeling of being alive can be felt in the movement of the body, the feeling of void and the acceleration of movement. The dehumanization of relationships and the objectivation of other beings is one of the most common and conspicuous aspects, permeating the way of being and the workplace and eventually leading to the tension that forbids restorative sleep and can be felt inside the body, focusing pain on the muscles and articulations...

But maybe it is up to women, thanks to their strength and fragility, to keep reminding others of the necessity to fight against this stronger and stronger current tendency to always want more, always go further, regardless of the recognition of people's being and humanity ...maybe it's also up to them to maintain, despite all opposition, the very specific role they have to defend thus the health and future of the children they bore in their wombs<sup>5</sup>.

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August 2015

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<sup>5</sup> A lot of thanks to Mrs Martine Fritsch and her friend for this translation and their precious help.

