

DAY-TO-DAY UPS AND DOWNS OF CHILDHOOD...¹

III – SLEEPING DISORDERS

If they occur *too early in life*, they call to mind the disorders of the maturation of the nervous system inherent in prematurity or different somatic disorders, with the physical and psychological discomfort that they may engender.

The interrelationships with an anxious, perturbed or exhausted family circle and all the resulting consequences for the present and the future should be taken into account. The strength of the mother's anxiety, with the message if not the secret injunction that it may entail, must be stressed here.

By not permitting the mother to find relief – and therefore the child to find peace of mind –, those disruptions of night rest make the protagonists of this pair stay in a sort of endless loop: the child seems to give an echoing or mirroring response to their anxious mother who, refusing to accept the silence of this 'loss of contact' synonymous for her with death or separation, gets all the more anxious...

'**Luétique**' mothers with that instability in their genes: faced with them and their image, left defenceless, like a blank page, with their inconsistencies and paradoxes, the child gets agitated, anxious, and 'says'...

Fragile or evanescent '**tuberculinique**' mothers...: unable despite themselves to be in phase with the world, whose aggressive and stimulating messages are not always received, they often protect themselves by escaping and withdrawing into themselves. But, to the child, silence is 'Death'...: it is loss of contact, lessening of the feeling of life if not of the perception of oneself. Beyond the inconvenience of having to go to bed and being alone with their imagination, anxiety is often striking and sometimes even makes their structuration difficult. They often have difficulty in going to sleep.

LUESINUM is found here too: given to a wailing newborn baby obviously unable to find rest. At 7CH - 2 granules every evening, then at 9CH, 2 granules every other day -, it often permits to restore the unusually disturbed stability;

TUBERCULINUM, too, may be of great help in soothing anxiety about messages seen as disturbing.

Illustrating these diathetic features more particularly, certain types of mothers are propaedeutic:

ARSENICUM ALBUM mothers, who fear the absence of breathing, with what it inevitably brings to mind given the nature of their fundamental worries;

THUJA, CYCLAMEN, ARGENTUM NITRICUM or ACTAEA RACEMOSA mothers, obsessively agitated, as MEDORRHINUM, anxious and unstable, may also be: the child does not have the feeling that they are kept under control, reassured or at ease. They do not receive the peace of mind which, by allowing them to let themselves drift off to sleep, makes it possible for that confused and agonising impression that they are left with an impression of 'endless fall' to be removed from them...: does not that feeling, which punctuates their dreams, prefigure

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another abyss for them? Is it not synonymous with the one, deadly, which accompanies the forming of their psychic life? Does it not make emerge the one which, carrying the message of a potential death, runs counter to all inner security?

PHOSPHORUS mothers: they transmit to the child the strength of their feelings 'outside words', with the disturbing message that they may entail...

They are joined here by the IODUM, FLUORIC ACID, LACHESIS, LILIUM TIGRINUM mothers and many others: their mental strain, their fragility and the excited agitation that accompanies them do not permit the soothing of the anxiety that they transmit.

If they occur *later*, sleeping disorders in the child should make one ask various questions: 'How long? Why? How?'

The classic fear of the dark of STRAMONIUM with its problematic stages of falling asleep should make one look for its hidden cause: parental violence, brutality of the words and shouts, force and frequency of everyday quarrels which, often occurring at night and late, take a disquieting turn in the evening's sleep.

Violence within oneself also: if STRAMONIUM constitutes a remedy from which the threat of epilepsy is not dispelled, one should not disregard what constitutes its particular aspects... : 'Consequence of fear, consequence of rash, of excretion, of secretion stopped at an untimely moment!' Everything is contained and might explode or be exposed into the open... Whether it comes from other people or oneself, the fear of the violence felt is extreme. Bearing the mark of parental banning – if not taboo -, hardly controlled, intense, it makes them experience a tight feeling in the throat to the point of dysphagia. What cannot be expressed in liberating elimination remains there, poisoning the body and the mind. The child is therefore left with their inner monsters and grimacing faces that fill their nights with disturbing colours.

Even if it has a less loud and spectacular aspect, the fear of the night of PHOSPHORUS, TUBERCULINUM, CALC PHOS and, later, KALI PHOS - who hallucinates because of it -, is as strong.

Both ACONITUM and ARSENICUM ALBUM fear their aggressive impulses. More sthenic in the former, whom they make wake up with a start as early as the first hours of sleep, they are as strong or violent in the latter: blocked by the superego, they are firmly fixed given their fundamental fragility.

PULSATILLA fears abandonment or what they interpret as its warning signs, and sleep is a separation...

NAT MUR is afraid of other people, either at school or around them... At night, they are confronted with their anxieties, silent anger and inability to defend themselves;

SEPIA suffers if they are not recognised... They think about it again in silence as soon as night leaves them with their loneliness and painful feeling that they are neither understood nor loved...

They are close to LACHESIS, jealous and yet so desirous of being well received, reassured and of having their standing increased...

SILICEA fear for their results, which prevents them from letting themselves drift off to sleep.

They are like LYCOPODIUM who, secretive and proud, does not bear any 'emptiness' likely to show them a deficient image of themselves... which, deep down inside, they know and fear at the same time.

AURUM worries about the future which, given the tumult of their circulatory system, they vaguely feel will be dismal and absurd...

Many others might be mentioned here, about whom there is the issue of what is not said or sometimes confessed for fear of... or out of decency..., but often also out of non-awareness of what is really at stake and disturbs the sleep².

To be continued...

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² Translated by Pascale Tempka