

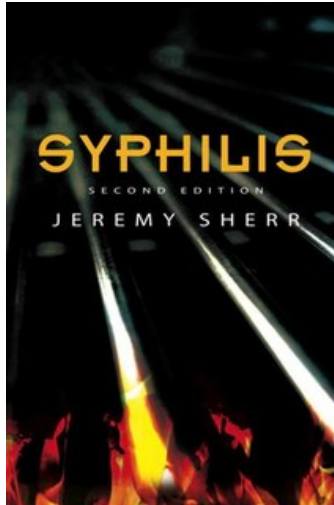
# Jeremy Sherr Syphilis

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[Syphilis](#)

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*Dynamic Materia Medica*  
*Syphilis*



*A Study of the Syphilitic Miasm through Remedies*

SECOND EDITION

**JEREMY YAAKOV SHERR**



*Saltire Books Limited, Glasgow, Scotland*

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*For gold the test by fire is made:  
True rings the steel of perfect blade:  
From poisons healing draughts are riven:  
Ships prove their worth when tempest driven:  
The soldier's heart's revealed in fight:  
The maiden's chastity by night:  
While friendship's test will ever be  
The touchstone of adversity.*

Samuel Hahnemann

## *Commentary for the Second Edition of The Dynamic Materia Medica Syphilis*

*A writer is someone who can make a riddle out of an answer.*

Karl Kraus

*Dynamic Materia Medica Syphilis* was written for those who like to solve puzzles, much like solving a case. The following commentary is a key to unravelling the secrets hidden within. You may choose to solve this puzzle yourself, leaving this section to the end, or you may choose to read it first. Perhaps the best way is to read both the book and this guide in parallel. Your aim is to join the eleven syphilitic remedies into a meaningful totality, to arrive at the unifying concept behind the syphilitic miasm.

At the time I wrote this book my concern was how much to make obvious and how much to conceal. I was careful to keep some of the secrets hidden beneath the surface, as I attempted to emulate the wonderful way in which Kent conceals and reveals the essence of remedies through word and analogy. Perhaps I encrypted it too much. The clues are all there, but most of them require effort and some can only be understood on a second reading.

*Dynamic Materia Medica Syphilis* is an examination of the syphilitic miasm through its main remedies. I have described eleven archetypical syphilitic remedies, each in a different way, to demonstrate the variety of approaches to studying materia medica: provings, toxicology, poetry, metaphor, myth, essence, history and analysis, all spread over an underlying bed of philosophy. I conclude each remedy with a synthesis, using my grammatical system which I fondly call 'the verb'. This is designed to take us beyond the emotional essence of a remedy and into its geometrical structure. (You can read about the verb in the section 'The Verb' - Grammar of Pathology in Chapter 1: Perceiving Materia Medica.) The book culminates in a meta-synthesis of all eleven remedies that reveals the simple common denominator of syphilis.

Since the remedies portrayed here are a 'family', it is important to examine what defines a family in the materia medica. The syphilitic group of remedies discussed in these pages is not based on chemical, botanical or zoological affinities, for this classification belongs to the realm of external appearance. The remedies in this

volume belong to a variety of kingdoms and families, but they share a common affinity through a central idea.

The central idea lies in the realm of causes, the energetic world of potency and simple substance, the blueprint behind all material manifestation. This primordial library is not arranged in a 'scientific' linear structure, but rather in spiral form based on energetic correlation, in which the central idea of a plant may be analogous to the central idea of a mineral or animal.

This is the realm of primary energetic design, the realm in which the homoeopathic principle operates: the similarity of ideas rather than structure, pattern rather than signature, potency rather than mother tincture. To my mind this represents the true study of homoeopathic families, as opposed to crude categorisation according to form. The central energetic themes can only be found through provings, as it is the provings that reveal the fine structure lying at the source of each remedy, the unexpected rather than the expected.

The second author I have used as an inspiration in writing this book is Fracastoro. Fracastoro was a 16th century Italian doctor, poet and Renaissance scholar considered the father of modern epidemiology. He was the first to describe the new disease in an epic poem named *Syphilis*, a work of great breadth and beauty in which he weaves together a tapestry of medical facts, history, astrology, mineralogy, botany and myth into an amazing image of the syphilitic epidemic. I have chosen key parts of this poem to parallel our investigation into the materia medica, history and mythology of syphilis. Don't skip them! Thus our syphilitic journey begins with Fracastoro's myth about Syphilus the shepherd.



Figure C.1 Girolamo Fracastoro (1478–1553)

When Syphilus the shepherd sees his cattle suffering from severe drought and heat, he decides to curse the Sun God and worship the king instead, and the people follow his lead. Naturally the king is happy about this, but the Sun God's vengeance is quick and violent. By means of his hostile rays he spreads venom on the earth and the first to be infected is the blaspheming Syphilus, who develops symptoms of a new and as yet unknown disease characterised by sleepless nights and tormenting pains and aches. The disease rapidly spreads through the population and is named after the poor shepherd. Despite the people's repentance, the Sun God declares the plague eternal and non-reversible. Syphilus is brought to be sacrificed at the altar, his body ready to "stain the knives with his bright red blood", but at the last minute the Sun God relents and allows the substitution of a bull. Syphilus survives but is forced to live with his torturous, endless disease.

In this myth lie some keys to the syphilitic nature. The aggravation at night due to cursing of the Sun god and image of blood stained knives are both hallmarks of the disease, as is the endless torment it inflicts. For unlike the Black Death which had swept away a third of Europe's population 130 years earlier, the Great Pox was not a rapid killer. It endured for many years in the bodies of its victims, causing acute pains, disfigurement and ultimately an agonising death.

Fracastoro goes on to explain that the new disease will be the cause of war and bloodshed, that Italy's rivers will flow with blood. He predicts that the disease will lie dormant for many centuries and then return with renewed violence:

*For a time will come again, by permission of the fates, as the years slip by, when the plague will pass away and lie sleeping deeply in black night; in turn after long centuries that same disease will rise again, and once more visit the heavens and air and again some age to come will regard it with wonder.*

The war aspect brings us to our first remedy, **Androctonus**, the Scorpion. As this is a new remedy, it is not classically listed as syphilitic, but its aggressive, destructive and violent nature make the association seem likely. More so is its affinity with the knife, which I have found to be a common denominator of most syphilitic remedies and a symbol of the disease. The reason for this will become clear as we progress through the book.

Androctonus stands alone in the world. Like a lone commando in the wilderness, he views the terrain through the narrow tunnel vision of survival, fear and attack, paranoia and violence. Yet it is not in combat that the real test of Androctonus lies, rather it is the long tedious peace or retirement that follows a war that proves difficult. Once the pin point concentration of battle is no longer needed, the sharp focus turns into vague and listless staring.

Beyond the emotional nature of Androctonus we see a central theme of *constriction into a point* running through the remedy. Another theme is rocks – compacted earth. Both symbolise the contractive nature of syphilis. The

combination of these two concepts, contraction and hard earth, is analogous to the compressed elements lying deep under the ground: heavy metals, which form the majority of syphilitic remedies. The image of metal contracted to a point gives rise to our syphilitic symbol, the knife.

In Androctonus we see an aggravation from 6–9pm. This, combined with the quality of dry coldness and its orange yellow colour, locates its position between earth and air on the circle of four elements (Figure C.2). As both dry and cold have contractive energy this position is known as the contractive point and relates to night, autumn, black gall and to the heavy contracted metals lying under the ground.

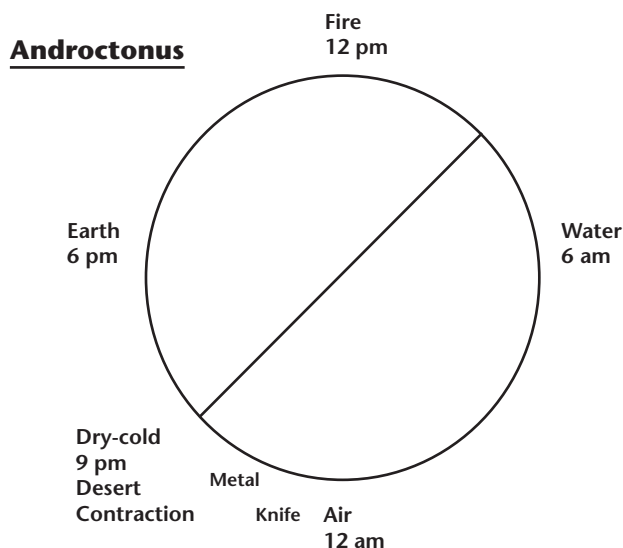


Figure C.2 Androctonus on the circle of four elements

When it comes to metals and syphilis, **Aurum** is the gold standard. I have presented Aurum as a poem on the right hand page and a parallel list of symptoms on the left. These should be studied together, so as to unite art and fact. The poem reveals the simple secret of Aurum's inner nature, a reflection of the strange symptom '*As if the heart was turning round*'. Aurum is turned upside down, head facing the earth and feet to the sky. All of Aurum's ambitious striving towards the lofty heights of success are therefore erroneously directed downwards rather than upwards. Thus Aurum is doomed to eternal failure. Death becomes the object of its desires rather than a love of life. Every success is a failure; every failure a success. Like the whole syphilitic miasm, this remedy finds us buried in the deep recesses of darkness and gloom, desperately climbing downwards.

**Guaiacum** was the foremost cure for syphilis when it first arrived in Europe. Guaiacum is an extremely dense, hard and heavy tree that does not behave like



*Hail great tree sown from a sacred seed by the hand of the Gods, with beautiful tresses, esteemed for your new virtues: hope of mankind, pride and new glory from a foreign world; most happy tree, if only the holy powers had wished you to have been born under our heaven and to grow amid this race of men belonging to the Gods, sacred with everlasting wood.*

Once syphilis arrived on Europe's shores, it spread like wildfire, hitching a ride on wars and whores. Wars must have been more fun at the time, as morality as we now know it had not yet been invented. Every army had its accompanying band of prostitutes, often courtesy of the enemy. Men and women had not been separated by the forces of war etiquette as they are in modern warfare, though syphilis would soon take care of that. *Treponema*, the bacteria responsible for syphilis, rejoiced, and soon the whole of Europe was infected. Syphilis was christened the 'French disease' by the Italians, but the French held the Italians responsible. The Dutch blamed the Spanish, while the Russians blamed the Poles. In Japan the Portuguese were at fault, whereas the Turks simply called it the 'Christian disease'. In Tahiti it was known as the 'British disease'. This tells us something about the inner nature of syphilis: it began with warfare, was propagated by warfare and caused further warfare. Four hundred years later, this affinity prompted, pervaded and perpetuated the Second World War.

Also known as *Lignum vitae*, the 'Tree of Life', Guaiacum, a major remedy for syphilis, can be contrasted with the other tree of life, Thuja, the main sycotic remedy: disease of the night opposing disease of the day.

*Sister Thuja  
tree of life,  
growing wide and tall,  
I'm not like you,  
sprouting warts,  
I'm tough  
condensed  
and  
small.*

*Sycosis grows  
on wings of wood,  
soul floating to the sky.  
The secret of  
proliferation,  
duplicate  
to multiply.*

In the following diagram (Figure C.3) we can see the difference between the metallic contraction of syphilis in Guaiacum the ironwood, and the woody expansion of the sycotic Thuja.

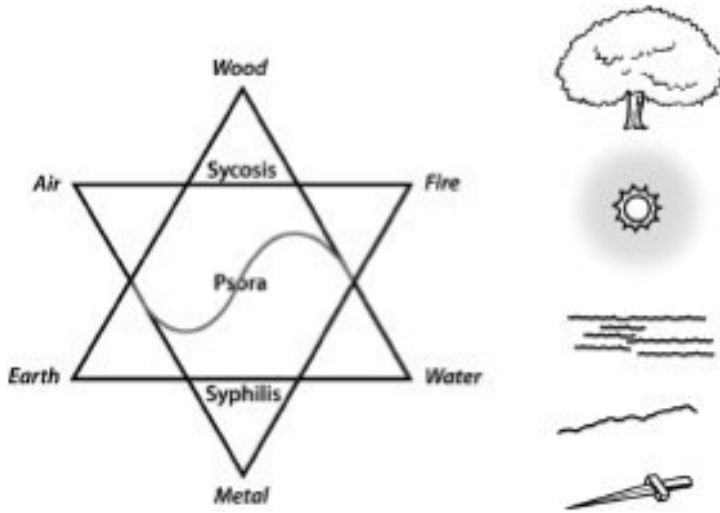


Figure C.3 Star of David representing the six elements

The Star of David diagram shows psora as the central line that divides fire and air above from earth and water below, the horizon. Picture the beach with sun and sky above the horizon and the water and sand below. On a physical level these represent heart and lungs above the diaphragm and kidney and colon below. This division goes one step further. The four elements give rise to trees above (sycosis, thuja) and to the metallic syphilitic elements below the ground. The nature of wood is expansion, as trees grow upwards and outwards towards heaven. Metal's habitat is deep under the ground; its nature is hardness and contraction, its sharpest point the knife.

Another new proving from the Dynamis school, **Haliaeetus**, shows its syphilitic credentials in its violent, depressive and self-destructive nature. Haliaeetus is the Eagle that should soar above, except that it cannot, for it is paralysed. This feature of paralysis relates to the source of the remedy, the *blood* of a *wounded, desperate* eagle. The knife, a symbol of syphilis, surfaces in the proving symptoms, as a desire to kill with a knife. The syphilitic theme of parallel lines also surfaces for the first time and echoes the remedy Syphilinum, with its never-ending, tortured journey of parallel, linear symptoms. While the healthy Eagle, as a detached observer, can transcend the duality of parallel lines as it flies high above us, the wounded Eagle plummets into the dark and evil abyss that lies between these lines. The following is from the proving of Haliaeetus leucocephalus:

*Trying to get things organised at home, which is like trying to get my eyes focused. Other times I just stared out the window, unfocused. When I'm unfocused, it's like a place where you can get lost, as if you're going to lose it. Unfocused is like going into the abyss, from which I won't come back, go crazy. I either feel totally in flow with the universe, or floating aimlessly down a river. When I'm focused, I bring it all in, in the present, there, like meditating, or seeing God. God is One.*

revolting fat we find an image of Mercury. The Mercury remedy picture has a strong affinity to water on all levels (Mer=sea), and an opposing affinity to fat (spread that butter thick!). Even the feeling of a mercury droplet is greasy.

By the nature of the law of opposites, the repulsive Mercury is also the purest of remedies. Only the purest of people will be compelled to balance their extreme spotlessness with its disgusting opposite. Hahnemann purified and proved Mercury, as did his son Freidrich, a hunchbacked dogmatic genius who was both repulsive and pure. One of my favourite parts of this book is the correspondence between two parallel dissertations: one a 17th century alchemical treatise concerning the purity and impurity of alchemical mercury, the other a 21st century manual for Mercury computer language which distinguishes the pure from the impure. Compare the two.

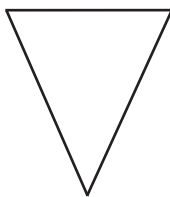
The archetypal remedy of the syphilitic miasm, Mercury is a mirror of society today, a world where universal unity is shattered into seven billion egotistical droplets, each confined by enormous surface tension, each battling the other. I hope that by reading the essay you will get the feeling of the chaotic and scattered state of this remedy. While studying this chapter make sure to read the descriptions of mercury miners from *The Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica* by TF Allen, and carefully compare the logical groupings of 'left page' symptoms with the 'right page' essay. These will help you to recognise the order within the chaos; nothing is random or out of place here. Then match these concepts to the synthesis, and you will find that beyond the Mercurial disorder lies a clear and rational theme.

Mercury has a strong affinity for the pituitary gland. Pituitaries soak up mercury, as may often be found in dentists, leading to a host of syphilitic related diseases including suicidal tendencies. The pituitary is the general of the hormonal system, a dictatorial conductor of bodily rhythms, including the adrenal gland which is responsible for attack and defence. The pituitary is located behind the nose and above the palate, precisely the parts which syphilis and mercury consume, depicted by the Mercury desire to pull a stranger's nose. It is as if syphilis and its analogue mercury are determined to destroy this gland, attacking from the nose in front and the palate below.

The patterns of Mercury can readily be seen in the diagram on page 135. These images demonstrate some of the analogies between Mercury's many facets: mercury the element is adjacent to gold and silver while Mercury the planet neighbours the sun and moon, which both appear in Mercury's astrological symbol. Alchemically mercury is considered the hermaphrodite spirit with both masculine and feminine attributes, the off-spring of the Sun and the Moon.

The pituitary is located below the solar based pineal gland, nestled in the crescent-moon shaped bone, the sella turcica (Turkish saddle). The gland itself has two distinct embryological origins: the brain above and the palate below, a union of

heaven and earth, just as the astrological symbol is composed of the conjunction of Moon and Sun to the cross of matter. This symbol also bears a striking resemblance to the winged messenger god Hermes, identified with the Roman god Mercury, and to the caduceus, the staff of Hermes. Look to the shape. Within these triangular images you may perceive Mercury's opposing tendencies to spread wide and contract to a point. This triangular signature is apparent in the cross-section of noses, tibias and knives, all major affinities of syphilis (Figure C.4). Mercury displays the spread-out chaos of tiny droplets held together by a huge surface tension: scattering versus constriction.



*Figure C.4* The triangle – expansion opposite contraction. The cross section of noses, tibias and knives

**Phytolacca** is known as 'vegetable Mercury'. Kent suggested that Phytolacca be proved again, so that is what I did. Although it was a small proving with nearly all the symptoms coming from one prover, the picture is very distinct and clearly fits the syphilitic miasm. Severe, bleak depression; black moods; suicidal tendency; feelings of persecution, with dreams and delusion of mafia, evil forces, assassinations and prison. And, of course, a syphilitic knife. This is a proving well worth reading for its clinical usefulness. Although I was a supervisor rather than a prover, I experienced one of the darkest times of my life during the proving, a severe intense forsaken depression that I only later understood was related to the proving. The division between parallel lines that we find in other syphilitic remedies is also present in Phytolacca, however this remedy chooses to alternate between the two sides in a zig-zag fashion. The sharp alternation of moods between dark depression and elation suggests its usefulness in bi-polar conditions. An additional meditation proving depicts a refined, arrogant, cynical, psychotic and depraved aristocrat, at once pristine and loathsome, disgusting and pure, much like its Mercury analogue. Many aspects of Aurum and Platina appear in the Phytolacca provings. It is as if this remedy straddles the three neighbouring syphilitic elements, numbers 78, 79 and 80.

The question arises, why does a plant produce such a bleak syphilitic picture, usually reserved for heavy metals or aggressive animals? Kent lists only two black-type syphilitic plants, Phytolacca and Stillingia. Both remedies originate from roots. I realised that it is not the plant species but the specific part of the plant that makes these remedies syphilitic. This demonstrates one of the dangers of

botanical or zoological classifications to define remedy families. One cannot assume that the leaf, petal, fruit or flower from the same botanical family will produce similar symptom pictures. Nor can one compare milk, blood and feather of the same animal; the specific parts matter.

To summarise, we can add an extra ingredient to the syphilitic formula, the root. Roots belong to the underworld, the dark realm of heavy metals, destruction and death: syphilis. Roots are the bones of the plant world, nourishing us from the hidden depths of darkness, an analogy I describe in the poem *Roots* (see *Stillingia* chapter).

*Yet even as I grasp the hand of Hades  
hardening my heart  
like metal,  
against the pain,  
eternal night,  
I know  
that all, yes all, above me,  
thrives, survives,  
by me.  
I am the root*

Our investigation now returns to the heavy metals with a study of **Platina**. The common essence of Platina, element 78, represents only a small and incomplete aspect of this remedy, hence I call this chapter 'Pride and Prejudice'. While some modern homoeopaths deride provings that are based on a single prover, they do not hesitate to build elaborate pictures based on the older Platina proving that is derived from one 'over-imaginative young lady' – the common picture of a tall, haughty and sexual woman. I have included two later provings that demonstrate very different aspects of this remedy, of fatigue and ennui, bulimia, estrangement and low self esteem.

Another erroneous assumption based on the pride and prejudice essence locates Platina at the peak of the sixth period, a notion that does not tally with the count of remedies in the period or with the proving itself. This elevated, mid-point distinction belongs to Iridium, whilst Platina is situated just after Iridium on the descending side.

Platina's most essential feature is division, resulting in an alternation across a central divide, both in its general and mental spheres. Platina stands teetering at the threshold of a doorway, oscillating between wide-open, fresh air and the narrow confines of a small room, where everyone suddenly seems strange and inferior. This room, previously familiar, now seems foreign to him, and she cannot recognise his surroundings (gender change intentional). This change only occurs after leaving and returning to the room. Hence it is not the room that has

suddenly changed or shrunk, it is the transformation that has occurred within Platina while she was outside which makes her feel estranged or superior: a soldier back from war, a youth after a spiritual journey, a woman in a man's body, a child in the wrong family. Platina is a catalyst, and its picture shows a person on the verge of or just after transformation, hence the old becomes estranged and inferior. The Platina dynamic is a repetitive cycle of entering a familiar place, exiting and then re-entering an unfamiliar place. This dynamic is common to both the older and later provings. The sexual pride, however, is only a partial feature of the first proving. Hence pride leads to prejudice.

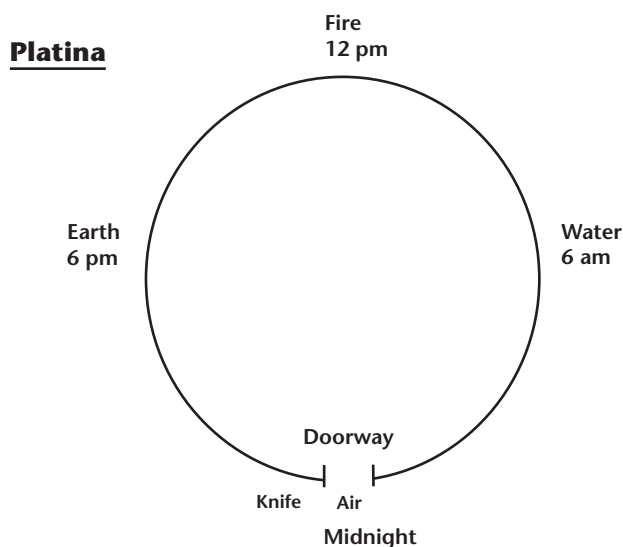


Figure C.5 Platina on the circle of four elements

The doorway across which Platina alternates is poised at the narrow point of midnight, Platina's time of aggravation (see Figure 10.2 on page 196), the division between white and black, life and death, uterus and birth (Figure C.5). Cutting between these two extremes is, once again, the syphilitic knife. Platina represents the sharp point at the end of this knife, the single, one and only, all important tip to which the whole of the rest of the knife is dedicated. This tip is the point of entry and exit, the fulcrum of transformation.

Platina leads us to another queen, 'Queen's Delight', or **Stillingia sylvatica**. This is a black-type syphilitic remedy, somewhat surprisingly, as little is known of *Stillingia* other than a short proving. I use this chapter as a guide to extracting whatever meaning we can from such a small, raw proving. Pay attention to the way important features are marked in **bold type** to form an image.

symmetry running through the whole remedy, for example, two cracks lengthwise along the tongue, two ulcers on the tip of the tongue or near the anus, symmetrical eruptions and diplopia.

What is the essential feature of parallel lines? They never, ever, ever meet. Syphilis is a never ending torturous disease. As they would say in the old days, 'Five minutes with Venus is an eternity with Mercury'. The mental aspects of Syphilinum now becomes clear – a never ending torment that cannot end. The despair of recovery, the long sleepless nights, the insanity, the fear of paralysis, the crying which begins at birth, the far away distant feeling, the inability to balance two sides of a mathematical equation (equal sign =). Physical examples of this inability to converge are strabismus, open fontanelles or ovarian pain at the point of orgasm that prevents union. The emotional manifestation of never-meeting parallel lines is depicted in a play about a couple living in the same house but experiencing parallel lives.



Figure C.6 Sensation parallel function: must converge

Since parallel lines that never meet is the central sensation of Syphilinum (and the entire syphilitic miasm), this must be balanced by an opposing function that attempts to converge the two lines into a meeting point – a triangle (Figure C.6). Hence the triangular shape is predominant in this remedy: pointed teeth, T-shaped headache, affinity for the inner canthus, tip of the nose or tibia, strabismus, zigzag pains, insertion of deltoid, bifurcation of bronchi, affinity to mountains and lightning, and many more. **We now see that the theme of a pointed triangle is an essential feature of the syphilitic miasm, an attempt to solve the parallel lines that lie at the base of syphilitic remedies. This triangle, in its metallic form, is represented by the image of a knife (Figure C.7). We have arrived at a unifying theory of syphilis.**

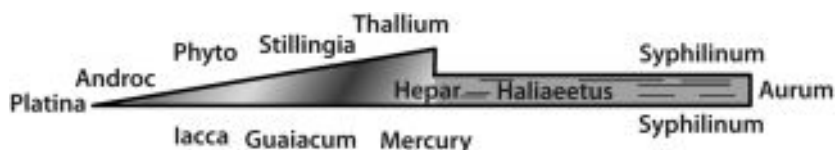


Figure C.7 The syphilitic knife

This brings us to the well-known keynote of Syphilinum: ‘Always washing the hands’. Most modern authors describe this as a result of germ-phobia, guilt and similar psychobabble, which understanding has seldom worked in my practice for cases of this nature, though it may be true in some instances. The proving describes this symptom not as an emotional obsessive compulsive condition but as part of severe neurological disturbance, a precursor to an epileptic attack, concomitant with a heavy sensation in the vertex which metaphorically splits the head in two. We can now understand this rubbing of hands as an attempt to unite the two parallel sides of Syphilinum.

Let us take a step back. What is the origin of these parallel lines? The parallel lines belong to psora as well as syphilis and represent the point of transition between the two miasms. They are the final expression of psora’s separation and, at the same time, they are the beginning of syphilis. The Syphilinum sensation of parallel lines is psora posing a question, which in turn is solved by the syphilitic contraction to a point (Figure C.8).



Figure C.8 Psoric question? Syphilitic answer!

Syphilis was the valve that released the parallel psoric pressure of Europe, but it came at a terrible price. At the close of the 15th century, Europe had reached boiling point and was about to explode from relative overpopulation, which had bred a myriad of psoric pandemics. The Black Death killed 75–200 million people worldwide. In England epidemics occurred in two to five-year cycles between 1361 and 1480, reducing its population by fifty percent. As always, pandemics are nature’s attempt to regulate overpopulation. For thousands of years the psoric functional pathology such as itch, vertigo, metabolic disorders, asthma and the many other manifestations listed in *The Chronic Diseases* as psoric had been suppressed, the pressure was rising and something had to give. In 1492 the Spanish inquisition also reached its peak, expelling all Jews from its borders. In the same year Columbus set off to explore the New World, where he traded psora for syphilis. The fragile bonds within psora, weakened by centuries of suppression, were permanently severed by syphilis. The ripe fruit of psora spawned the seeds of syphilis.





Figure C.9 From wholeness to psora, syphilis and sycosis

This graphic above (Figure C.9) illustrates the sequence by which psora developed into parallel lines and was vicariously relieved by syphilis and sycosis. The story begins in the beginning, with the holy wholeness of one (see my book *Helium*), as depicted in the whole circle (stage 1). One splits into two, a dynamic duality that represents the harmonious play of life (stage 2). Yet the snaky dividing line which separates yin and yang creates a susceptibility, a crack into which inimical forces may enter (*Organon* §31). It symbolises a latent psoric disposition into which an exciting cause can penetrate, such as a virus, wind, shock or tempting apple, resulting in an acute primary response. When this occurs the two sides separate (stage 3). This separation may be solved by an acute febrile secondary response: fever. The two aspects fuse back together creating heat, which terminates in death or recovery (back to stage 2). If, however, the acute disease is insufficient, incomplete, suppressed or denied, we turn our back on the problem, on our inner selves (stage 4). By not dealing with the problem here and now, the acute response is substituted with an endless march into intractable, unsolvable chronic disease, in which the responses of the vital force become useless, stupid and inappropriate. As Hahnemann states, in *Organon* §72, the vital force is

*... unable of itself to extinguish them, but must helplessly suffer ... to be ever more and more abnormally deranged, until at length the organism is destroyed.*

8

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*Mercurius*

## *Working with Mercury*

FROM *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PURE MATERIA MEDICA* BY TF ALLEN

He was emaciated and cachectic, and looked prematurely old. Great emaciation. Body wasted. Cachectic condition.

It is certain that the children of the workers are affected with the mercurial poisoning; although it may be from the poison carried by the clothing. One child of a woman-worker was badly nourished, and when a year old had no teeth. The children of the workers were pale, cachectic, and scrofulous; while in the same locality, the children of those who did not work at silvering mirrors were usually healthy. The children of the workers are very commonly affected by scrofula rachitis, and tuberculosis.

A daughter, born during her mercurialism, was very small, only learned to walk when three years old, and never grew to be more than four feet in height; there was kyphoscoliotic curvature of the spine, the head was drawn to the chest and somewhat to the left side; there was very imperfect development of the muscle and bone.

This worker had four children by his first wife, who was also employed in the factory; all were sickly; one son died of gangrene of both feet; the three other children and the wife died of consumption; the second wife and her children also died of consumption; the children of the third wife were healthy except the one born after she was employed in the works; all three wives died in consumption.

A child of one of the workers, a year old, had trembling of the arms, moderate stomatitis, and ptyalism; the child was pale, but well nourished, even fat, and intelligent.

Fatal consumption. One woman, who had been healthy and had three healthy children, died of tuberculosis.

Among five hundred patients suffering from caries, necrosis or exostosis of the bones, there is no case known of it occurring among the workers in Mercury.

Syphilis is extremely rare among the workers in Mercury, especially remarkable since the sexual desire is usually excited; several physicians who practiced in Furth, where the factories are, and who had a large practice among syphilitics, could not remember a single case of syphilis among the workers.

Within thirty years, more than hundred persons in Erlangen and four or five times as many in Furth, have been treated for constitutional mercurial poison; and though these cases have increased sexual desire in consequence of Mercury and, without doubt are not particular about their associations, since among them the belief is universal that Mercury protects them from syphilis, no case has been known to occur.

The first symptom was persistent diarrhoea, which lasted profusely eight days, and ceased after she stopped work; after a year and a half there appeared tremors with loss of appetite and diarrhoea, followed by falling out of the hair; on stopping work and using baths the tremors disappeared in four weeks, and the hair grew again; after returning to work the teeth began to be gray, though she daily scoured them with charcoal; afterwards she was attacked with weakness, vertigo, uneasy sleep with heavy dreams, loss of memory, affections of the mouth, which she treated with alum, and increased decay of the teeth; after a time the tremors reappeared and gradually becomes worse, as also did the headache and sleepiness; afterwards she had palpitation of the heart and hiccough, at times so violent that she had to be held by several people; after leaving the work she became better, but the tremors did not entirely leave her, and were especially aggravated by any vexation or other emotional excitement; the gums were somewhat atrophied and retracted from the teeth; teeth of a grayish-brown colour; copper colour of the roof of the palate and uvula; slight tremors of the extremities and of the tongue, especially noticeable in speech; the right posterior cervical gland swollen; rheumatic pains in both upper arms; profuse perspiration at night and easily becoming chilly; the patient had had two children, the first four weeks too early; the child was weak, and died when a year and a half old.

## *Mercurius Analysis*

### *Can't Find Place – Must Move*

- Towards evening, an uneasiness that did not permit him to remain in any place; he could not remain sitting two minutes; he was forced to change; also he was unable to remain lying on account of the jerking in the limbs; also at night he kept constantly rising; with jerking of the head and throwing about of the arms during sleep.
- No rest in any place, constantly anxious.
- Extreme restlessness all night; at one time he stood up because he had no rest while lying, then he lay down because walking was intolerable, and so he had no rest.
- An almost irresistible desire to take a distant journey.
- Almost uncontrollable desire to travel far away. Homesickness, or desire to travel; wants to go abroad.
- Desire to flee, with nightly anxiety and apprehension.
- Delusions, imaginations: home: away from, is
- Mind; wander; desires to
- Speech & voice; speech; wandering
- A frightful dream, in which he started up and thought he was not in his own house, sat up in bed and talked about a far-distant village.
- He does not know where he is.
- Forgot the names of persons and places, and was frequently at a loss in endeavoring to recollect the persons to whom he had lent his tools.
- Chaotic.
- Confusion of mind: loses his way in well-known streets.
- Recognise: does not: house, his own
- Recognise: does not: relatives, his
- Worse from the warmth of the bed so that he is forced to uncover; but after he uncovers and cools off he gets worse again, so that he has difficulty in keeping comfortable.
- General tremors.
- Involuntary tremors.
- Mercurial tremors affect the muscles which are usually under the control of the will, so that one is never master of one's own motions. On attempting to respond the muscles begin to tremble and twitch excessively; they frequently make all sorts of motions, as in chorea, before the desired motion is affected, or are sometimes affected with violent convulsive motions, which also involve neighbouring groups of muscles.

## *Mercury, Shatter Me*

Where from mercury, where to?

A single globule of liquid metal rolls across the table, fugitive from a broken thermometer. Hydrargyrum, silver water, makes its bid for freedom. One hundred degrees from boil to freeze is all the space it has. Gaining speed it reaches the edge, sharp breath before a final leap. Even as it falls the defiant droplet holds its shape, bound by an enormous surface tension. Vivacious we run, united we fall. And then – splat! The globule explodes into a thousand tiny beads. Scattered, shattered, rolling, fleeing, it's every drop for itself. Mischievous particles propel themselves in every direction, impudent young beads lose track of their mothers, estranged sisters rush a frenzy. Repulsed relatives clash and quarrel, refusing to amalgamate. Galloping globules regard each other as enemies, to be clashed with, contradicted, fought against. The idea that this vivacious chaos was once merged in a sea of harmony is lost forever. Seven billion scattered individuals enveloped by the tight metallic membrane of ego are all that is left of a shattered unity.

What now, mercury, what now?

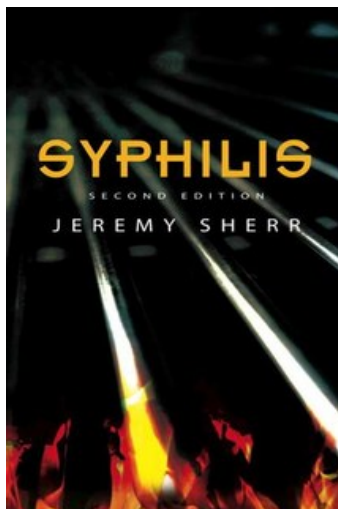
Restless travellers wander abroad, attracted by the love of home. Flat ulcers spread in all directions, oozing greasy deposits from a rotting base. Compulsive hydrophobics wash their hands, putrid abscesses discharging filthy pus. Beggars slurp dirty mugs of tea, fatty globules floating to the surface. Disgusting degenerates leer repulsively, stooping to lick blood and spit from the road. Moaning livers store multiple toxicities, coagulated clots occluding corroded arteries. Hydrocephalic children gush watery saliva, seeping oily perspiration with no relief. Worms crawl and creep vaginas, pointless noses fail to lead the way. Rotten teeth invade puffy tongues, rolling stones abuse a mouth. Epileptics jerk and tremble, scalps tight against bony skulls. Jestling jokers pull a nose, retracted gums exposing long black teeth. Impudent children taunt maliciously, abused anorexics mutilate in self-contempt. Oily haired youths roam the streets, oozing odours of violence. Wives quarrel husbands, husbands abuse friends. Hackers surf the nightly net, communicating contradiction. Precocious egos cut their nose to spite your face, lost drivers search in vain for home. Tubercular travellers gorge greasy sandwiches, emaciated prostitutes scorn the night. Geniuses misplace memories, blank words, forget dates.

**Water**

The name: Mer-cury – sea

Hydrargyrum – silver water.

- Sees water running where there is none.
- Eyes water: objects were seen through, as if.
- Hydrophobia.
- Fear: water, of
- Dreams: water
- Dreams: water: danger from
- Dreams: water: falling into
- Dreams: water: flood, of a
- Rage, fury: water, sight of
- Considerable oedema of lower extremities.
- After suppression of foot sweat . . . uncontrollable desire to commit suicide.
- Mind; suicidal disposition; weeping, amel.
- So great was the violence of the trembling of his whole frame that he was nearly thrown out of a bath by it; much of the water was driven over the side of the tub.
- Worse in cold cloudy weather, or damp weather.
- Acute hydrocephalus.
- Left ear, a sensation as if cold water were running out.
- Morning sickness; profuse salivation, wets pillow in sleep.
- Mouth and tongue moist, and plenty of saliva, yet great thirst for cold water.
- The mouth was always full of water.
- Thirst for cold drinks, especially fresh water. Very great thirst for ice-cold water.
- Eructations: water, of: night
- Boiling: water, stools were
- Far more urine was passed than water had been drunk.
- Urine: watery, clear as water
- Water, prepuce were distended with
- Water: foot, as if: dipped into cold water: sole
- Chilliness, as if dashed with cold water.
- Vesicles full of water.



Jeremy Sherr

[Syphilis](#)

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