**Notes on universal patterns**

I wanted to pull this document together as a simple, concise, and digestible guide for understanding general overarching universal patterns. We can use these understandings in approaching medicine; plants and their indicated medicine, the patient and their indicated type, our own state of health…for once we understand the most dominant archetypal force at play, we can understand what will bring it back to balance, seemingly no matter what medicine system one works with across the world, these universal patterns are -in some form or another- at the root. I.e. in orthodox medicine, cooling antacids would be used to douse a firey acid reflux, and in herbalism, cooling herbs would be given to douse the fire.

There are infinite amount of systems across cultures and time by which humans have come to understand the forces at play within them- these are just a few from the most well known- ultimately however, I believe they could all be distilled down into the same underlying basic concepts.

For reference;

* Vata, Kapha, Pitta are the body types of ayurvedic medicine
* Mutable, Cardinal and Fixed signs belong to astrology
* Mercury, Sulfur and Salt belong to alchemy
* Spirit, Body and Soul are ancient and widespread terms and hard to pin to one tradition, possibly religious origins.
* Ectomorph, Mesomorph and Endomorph are the Sheldon body types
* Air, Ether, Fire, earth and Water belong to many traditions observing the natural landscape, some of note include; traditional Chinese medicine, celtic medicine, Native American medicine (the four direction are also observed here)

VATA | MUTABLE SIGNS | ALCHEMIC MERCURY | SPIRIT | ECTOMORPH BODY TYPE | AIR + ETHER |

This is an archetype we can understand in its most stripped + basic form as “movement”, simply, the force behind life.

* A combination of the elements of Air + Ether (Quintessence)
* The highest state of existence expressed as breath
* Qualities in imbalance: cold, dry, atrophic, tense light, nervous, anxious, airy, spacey, changeable, dispersible, restless,
* Bodily manifestations of imbalance: Irregular appetite, belching, wind, vertigo, dissociation, short + irregular breath, amenorrhea, lack of boundaries, inconsistency, stiffness, popping joints, emaciation, coldness, dry skin, anxiety
* Associated Organs: Joints, skin, nervous system, mucosal membrane, respiratory system, large intestine (linked to lungs), reproductive system, bowel (the “seat” of this archetype), top of the face
* Associated planets: Saturn, Mercury, Uranus, Neptune, sometimes the Moon
* Elemental energy: Yang and Yin (Mercury is the mediator)
* Plant manifestations: thin, spindly, airy, dry, feathered, spaced out
* Plant actions: Expectorant, carminative, nervine, diuretic (occasionally)
* Taste: Sweet, Salty, bitter, astringent
* Tarot: Air is associated with the suit of swords (change + Action)
* Plant Archetype: Moss, Sycamore, Lemongrass, Lavender, Rosemary, Yarrow, Asparagus, Celery

DEEPER DIVE

*Alchemical Mercury:* this isthe spirit + movement. Highly volatile + changeable between states [ solid – liquid – gas].

*Mutable signs:* changeability, adaptability, inconsistency, illusive deception, communication, intellect, interaction, “chameleon”, associated with the law of polarity + law of reflection,

*Air element:* movement, freshness, the mind, thought, gas matter, sense of smell, volatility

*Ether element:* in alchemy ‘ether’ is the consciousness behind experience, the “web weaver”, the conductor behind the orchestration of all other elements, the transitional period of change.

PITTA | CARDINAL | ALCHEMIC SULFUR | SOUL | MESOMORPH | FIRE |

This archetype is the spark of creation, the flame of intelligence, transformation…the burning light of perception.

* The element of fire, pitta body types are the fusion of fire + water
* Its highest expression is light + vitality.
* Qualities of imbalance: heat / excitation, oil, inflamed, burning, steady, hypermetabolic
* Bodily manifestations of imbalance: inflammation, oily skin, red skin, infection, odour, rash, indigestion (or “irritated” digestive issues), sweating, impatience, jealousy
* Associated organs: small intestine [pittas metaphorical “seat”], middle of the face, heart, blood, kidneys, lymph, stomach, adrenal system
* Associated planets: Sun, mars
* Elemental energy: Yang
* Plant manifestation: sharp, prickly, intense, red, dominant, tall,
* Plant action: diaphoretic, stimulant, apoptogenic, expectorant,
* Taste: sour, salty, pungent, spicy,
* Tarot: suit of wands
* Plant archetype: Nettle, dandelion, echinacea, cayenne, echinacea, st. Johns wort, rosemary, lavender, Basil, cinnamon

DEEPER DIVE

*Alchemic sulfur:* Sulfur is the unique blueprint of an individual: the soul. Sulfur represents our life path, our unique baggage with which we enter this life. It is the self experiencing this realm, with a conscious attachment to the celestial.

*Cardinal signs:* The cardinal signs are governors of excitability, ideas, beginnings and initiation. The Sparks of creation

*Fire element*: the extremity of yang energy. The epitome of the sun [centre of the universe] The spark of initiation, passion and decision. “burning desires”.

KAPHA | FIXED | ALCHEMICAL SALT | BODY | ENDOMORPH | EARTH + WATER |

This archetype is the condensation of nutrition. Essentially the form and frame of life.

* The elements of earth and water [consider this creates mud]
* Its highest expression is the divine physical: the accumulation of nutrition in to a substance
* Qualities of imbalance: damp/ stagnation, damp/ relaxation
* Bodily manifestations of imbalance: stubbornness, inflexibility, water retention, accumulation, stagnation, heaviness, slowness, fluid imbalances
* Associated organs: liver, bones, kidneys, lymph, stomach
* Associated planets: Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus
* Elemental energy: Yin
* Plant manifestation: oily, thick, broad, moist,
* Plant action: tonic, astringent, bitter, lymphatic, diuretic, demulcent
* Taste: sweet, salty, astringent,
* Tarot: suit of pentacles
* Plant archetype: dandelion, milky oats, marshmallow,

DEEPER DIVE

*Alchemical salt:* The vessel of life and the physical realization of the elements. The actual physical body [consider phrases like ‘body of water’] and the expansion of experience from here.

*Fixed signs:* the stable, determined, deep and stubborn. The persistent ones. Slow in action but therefore steady in pace and completion.

*Water element:* The body of all energy + the transmitter of all energy. Consider the nutrition it carries for all of life.

**[[ The information on this document has been deeply inspired by Saja Popham of evolutionary herbalism, for further reading definitely have a look:** [School of Evolutionary Herbalism](https://www.evolutionaryherbalism.com/) ]]