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In his article Jörg Wichmann states that the fundamentals of homeopathy (law of similarity, potentisation, life force) don't have a basis in science and cannot be explained scientifically. But this basis they find in the hermetic tradition (e. g. shamanism, alchemy), where all three concepts are well known. Homeopathy is only partially and in a very general sense scientific (in the meaning of precise observation), but the system as a whole doesn't fit into the system which modern science has developed into. It is also better for our political representatives not to claim to be scientific, because this is more honest historically as well as philosophically.

Jörg Wichmann, Germany

Defining a different tradition for homeopathy

In modern times, we are used to seeing homeopathy as a science, and try to make it appear as such in public. Being 'scientific' seems to be regarded as a sign of quality. Yet Hahnemann himself saw homeopathy as an Art, which makes a big difference. This is not only a question of history, theory or terminology, but all discussions with allopaths, politicians, scientists and the media depend as much on these definitions as our own self understanding as practitioners of a healing art.

The point I want to make in this article is this: though there are some characteristics of homeopathy that look scientific at first, homeopathy really rests on a totally different tradition, which can only explain our art of healing and put it into a context that makes sense. This tradition is hermetic, which puts homeopathy in the same line as shamanism and alchemy.

We shall see that this approach has two major advantages. First it makes it possible, and quite easily so, to explain homeopathy - to explain why and how it works, to put our method on a solid basis (which Hahnemann did not do thoroughly, for a principle [like the law of similars] that is not grounded in some comprehensive theory is nothing but an isolated assumption). And secondly it may give us a totally new standpoint in respect to politics and public acknowledgement, about which I shall explain more later on.

A methodology needs a general theory as a background, to give meaning to its assumptions and hypothesis. Homeopathy hasn't had any up to now. No one has shown how homeopathic laws fit into a general theory of how the world functions as a whole. And we can't seriously expect the public to assume that homeopathy works apart from the general function of the world. So what is the world-view which is based on the assumptions of a life force, of similars and of the dematerialisation of substances to make their spirit work?

There are three major pillars of homeopathy: the law of similars, the potentisation of remedies, the working of the life force or dynamis.

All three of them find no basis in any known scientific theory. All the talk about 'energies', 'resonance', 'vibrations', etc., is not scientific at all (in the sense of modern mechanistic science, since it is not possible to define these words as scientific terms) and is meaningless for any serious discussion.

But all three pillars are well-known and obvious in the hermetic tradition of old, also called the 'eternal philosophy', 'philosophia perennis'. This has been and is the basic philosophy of

all people in the world outside the current, short- lived scientific belief system. In the West it is the explicit basis of, for example, esoteric schools, kabala, alchemy, theosophy, anthroposophy, astrology, and Jungian psychology.

This approach of putting homeopathy into the hermetic context (and outside the scientific) is not just an intuitive idea, but a theoretical concept that can be proven and affirmed in detail, historically as well as philosophically. Since this is too much for an article, I will just state the main points as a thesis for further discussion.

The principles of the hermetic world-view are the following:

- 1) principle of analogies
- 2) principle of polarity
- 3) principle of levels/layers of existence
- 4) principle of structured wholeness / symmetrical divisions
- 5) principle of unity

And as applied to homeopathy:

Analogy: as above so below - the law of correspondence and resonance in micro- and macrocosm.

- In homeopathy the law of similars.

Polarity: in all the manifested world there is duality; nothing exists without the simultaneous operation of its opposite.

- In homeopathy the law of first and secondary reaction.

Levels of existence: beside the physical level there is the level of the life force, the level of the psyche, of the rational mind and the level of the spirit - to name the gross ones; and these levels exist in micro- as well as in macrocosm.

- In homeopathy, the law of the working of the dynamis apart from the physical body, which is called an instrument of the spirit, dwelling in it.
- The possibility of potencies is based on the possibility of separating these levels from each other, i.e. to separate the spirit or entity of a remedy from its physical form. (This has been shown by alchemy many times.) ·

Structured wholeness: the law of each wholeness (holon) being in itself symmetrically structured (in the East called mandala).

- In homeopathy until now no correspondence. Here I see a great need of research and discussion - Misha Norland (mappa mundi), Jan Scholten (periodic table), Frans Maan (reflexive universe), Rajan Sankaran and Chaim Rosenthal (structure of the kingdoms) and others, such as Jeremy Sherr and Josef Reeves, have started working on this.

Unity: everything in the world is one on the ultimate level of existence, everything is one and connected and related; and to achieve that unity and relatedness is the higher purpose of our existence, as seen by all mystics and religions.

- In homeopathy 'the higher purpose of our existence'.

Alchemy

In the perspective of the development of European philosophical traditions, homeopathy is an heir of alchemy; though Hahnemann didn't mention this and even tried to exclude this perspective, since in his time it was not proper to discuss alchemy in decent circles.

- The idea of potentisation is clearly alchemistic as a means of spiritualising matter - Hahnemann states this clearly enough. And no where else but in alchemy do we find this idea.
- The idea that there is a force inside matter that can be isolated and influenced and that this force is the important part of any material entity given.
- The whole background of thinking is the same as in alchemy, as shown above.
- Paracelsus is seen as an important fore- runner of Hahnemann by many historians.
- Kent`s idea of simple substance is what alchemy called `prima materia' - the substance before matter which has no specification but is linked to the working of the life-force before it manifests. Kent picked this up from Swedenborg, a visionary whose picture of the world reflects all the characteristics of a hermetic `Weltanschauung', as shown above. Kent's system of potencies (30, 200, M, IOM) is also derived from Swedenborg's esoteric system of numbers.

Shamanism

There are several main points linking the homeopathic way of healing to what we are now used to calling shamanism.

- the personal way of selecting remedies, which work better the more you know them - which is much the same as a shaman having to know his spirits. This connection would account for the existence of `polychrests`, which vary between different schools and practitioners and which have no real basis in homeopathic theory otherwise.
- healing by participation: the homeopath has to become involved (somehow `similar'); the shaman has to travel into the underworld with the diseased.
- knowing spirits/ remedies mainly by our own personal experience.
- the two types of illness: by outer influence/'causa' or by loss of the soul / disharmony of the dynamis.
- antidotes and taboos around taking the remedies / using the spirits.
- remedies should be our friends' (Phatak) / `spiritus familiaris' of the shamans.
- initiation and proving.
- healing in the context of community, group consciousness.
- homeopathy and shamanism individualise the disease, while keeping the patient in community, whereas allopathy isolates the patient and generalises the disease.
- practically breaking the rules of materialism in application of remedies by using `paper-remedies' (i.e., name of remedy just written on a piece of paper).
- group-effects in provings.
- a spirit loses its power if you know its name and do the proper ritual / an illness is cured by naming the remedy and giving its immaterial information (i.e., in potency higher than the number of Avogadro).

Science

Homeopathy has been a forerunner of modern science as well, since Hahnemann and other early homeopaths started to apply precise observation to medicine and to collect and compare structured experience. This was new to science in those days which was still much influenced by Christian authoritarian thinking, though it was not so new to the old folk traditions and alchemy which was used to exchanging real experiences and applying what worked. So part

of the homeopathic method can be seen as 'scientific' in a very general sense, but the system as a whole and a major part of the method does not fit into what modern science as a system has developed into.

There are many scientific studies of homeopathy of course. But they can only show, and they only try to show, that homeopathy does work - which for us is no big news indeed! No scientific study has given us any hint of an explanation of our complex laws of healing. So obviously modern mechanistic science is not an approach that will take us any further in our own thinking or in practical work.

A new political (op)position

In order to achieve any public and political acknowledgement, homeopathic and other holistic doctors and practitioners have tried to show how scientific their approach is, and that the functioning of our arts can be proven by scientific standards. We have not achieved much by that - just kept our bare existence in most countries, not being supported in any official way.

I propose to do the opposite. Let us prove we are not scientific but base our art on a totally different view of the world, a different *Weltanschauung*, which is *not* compatible with science. The point in this is: As citizens of a free world we are allowed to believe in and to practise any kind of world-view or religion that we are convinced of. And at least the Universal and the European Declarations of Human Rights guarantee this to us.

So consequently no government is entitled to judge over the wisdom or truth or correctness of our own world-view or to prefer the scientific one against ours in their laws. This is what we can fight for. Such a position seems more truthful to me, as it is historically and philosophically more correct, and it is a much better strategy than what we have tried up to now.

A provocative conclusion

Let us be honest with what we do and claim our real tradition and ancestry. (You lose your power if you lose contact with your ancestors, as all indigenous people would say.)

Why not take other social minorities as a model? The gays became acknowledged only after they came out of hiding and stopped trying to behave 'normally' and said: 'Yes I'm gay, and I'm fine with that' - or black, or lesbian, or feminist, or working-class or whatever. So let's just say: 'Yes, homeopathy is as much witch-craft as you have ever suspected it to be. And we're fine about that and, what's more, we're entitled to it! Maybe you haven't heard yet, but there are international human rights, which allow us to live according to our own world view (and our patients, too) and not be discriminated against for that, thank you so much.' Let's have a homeopathic Coming Out!

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