

# The Alchemy in Homoeopathy

by

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*Then of the venome handled thus a medicine I did make;  
Which venome kills and saveth such as venome chance to take. Glory be to him the graunter of  
such secret wayes,  
Dominion, and Honour, both with Worship, and with Prayse.*

George Ripley

*O poison, which is not cured save by poison!*

St. Augustine

Homoeopathy—as distinguished from allopathy—is a system of medical treatment through minute doses of substances which cause in healthy people the same symptoms as those produced by the disease in question. In contrast to “ordinary” medicine which aims at curing the outward symptoms, it aims at healing the disequilibriums in the “vital” structure which permit entrance of the disease in the first place.

There is a freely confessed ignorance, with both practitioners and patients who have verified and experienced the efficacy of homoeopathic healing, as to exactly why or how it works. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) himself, the German founder of what has henceforth been termed the homoeopathic system of medicine, said: “It matters little what may be the scientific explanation of *how it takes place*; and I do not attach much importance to the attempts made to explain it” (*Organon of Medicine*, 5th & 6th Ed., New Delhi, n.d., Sec. 28).

Harris L. Coulter, one of America’s foremost lay exponents of homoeopathy, uses the established term *empirical* medicine to describe the Hippocratic system of prognosis followed in homoeopathic practice; and indeed, Hahnemann developed his therapeutic knowledge of drugs through the experimental procedure of testing their properties by so-called “provings” on healthy persons.

But proven effects presuppose commensurate causes, and no science can enhance its standing through the admission that its efficacy is based on hit-or-miss procedures. Not that homoeopathy lacks laws to go by: there is the Law of Similars, Hering's Law (concerning the evolution of symptoms), the Avogadro Law (concerning dilutions), the Law of the Minimum Dose, and that of the Single Remedy—to cite but a few. Yet these laws concern contingencies within a medical perspective which leaves begging the question of fundamental origins.

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Here Hahnemann combines apparent evasiveness with that note of vanity frequent among innovative practitioners convinced by obvious results but always on the defensive against their more orthodox colleagues. “In this investigation I found the way to the truth, but I had to tread it alone, very far from the common highway of medical routine,” he writes in his Preface to the First Edition of the *Organon*. In Section 62 of the same, he states that the efficacy of homoeopathic treatment is a thing “which no one before me perceived.” Again, “I was the first that opened up this path” (Sec. 109). “Homoeopathic *dynamizations*...were unknown before me” (*Chronic Diseases*, Philadelphia, 1896; Calcutta, 1975; Part 5).

The founder of homoeopathy prudently stressed that he had fallen upon nothing new, in that a therapy effective now must have been equally so throughout human history: “For truth is co-eternal with the all-wise, benevolent Deity” (*Org.*, Introd., 5th Ed., p.25, n.). But apart from a passing reference to Hippocrates, and the naming of several later physicians who had fleeting premonitions of cure by analogy, Hahnemann credits a sole Danish army physician in the eighteenth century by the name of Stahl with having briefly come anywhere near to the *similia similibus* principle. “But it was dismissed with a mere passing thought, and thus the indispensable change of the antiquated medical treatment of disease...into a real...healing art, remained to be accomplished in our own times” (Introd., p.30).

By no means, however, does the evidence fully support this contention. Hahnemann was a widely-read scholar, with a working knowledge outside his native tongue of Greek, Latin, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic, and Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup> The medical views of the most illustrious among his Renaissance predecessors could hardly have escaped his attention—a supposition corroborated by his motto, *simila similibus curantur* “like is cured by like”, which comes from the Swiss physician and alchemist, Paracelsus (Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, born on 17 December 1493 at Maria-Einsiedeln near Zürich and died in 1541), whose outstanding medical contribution was to disclose the curative powers of mineral substances when reduced to their quintessential properties. This work in iatrochemistry was developed by the Belgian chemist, physician, and alchemist, Jan Baptista van

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<sup>1</sup> See Elinore C. Peebles, *Hahnemann and Homoeopathy*, N.Y., 1955; and Julia Minerva Green, *The Heart of Homoeopathy*, Washington, D.C., n.d.

Helmont (1577-1644) into a pharmacological system. It was Hahnemann's genius to rationalize the elements of this *materia medica* into a praxis based on the Law of Similars, the Minimum Dose, and the Single Remedy. Why, then, the seeming dissimulation about the sources from which he must have drawn his knowledge?

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The answer most probably lies in the character of the age in which he lived. The Renaissance had replaced the otherworldly stamp of the Middle Ages with a Titanesque humanism; the civilization that emerged in the wake of the Black Death during the fourteenth century was irremediably impoverished spiritually, although figures like Marcilio Ficino, Thomas à Kempis, Nicholas of Cusa, and Pico della Mirandola amply testified to a spiritual legacy in the fourteen hundreds still very much alive. And amidst the ferment of the Reformation came a certain flowering of the sacred with esoteric doctrines re-emerging in new quarters. But the climate of scientific enquiry gaining ground in the seventeenth century struck a mortal blow, and one can say that this century really was in its way the "end of a world", with a phenomenon like Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) towering as a watershed between two cosmic views—the ancient and the modern: a colossus in the scientific domain, while concurrently a secret alchemist with deep religious convictions.

By the time of Hahnemann's birth the rationalist mentality was well entrenched with the materialistic and self-sufficient complacency of its "one-world syndrome". Higher orders of reality now counted for little save in the monasteries, and homoeopathy's founder faced the paradox of having to promulgate in scientific fashion a medicine based on "prescientific" principles. To have invoked an alchemical source for his procedures would have been like a biologist in our days presenting for his doctorate an emanationist—let alone creationist—theory of the universe.

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In a three-volume work entitled *Divided Legacy: A History of the Schism in Medical Thought* (Washington, D.C., 1977), Coulter traces the descent in the West from classical times to the present of two roughly parallel but inimical schools of medical theory and practice. The first stems from the semi-legendary Greek physician Hippocrates (c. 460 B.C.) and is called *empirical*, in the sense that it is an open system based on observation and prognosis; it regards the human organism as being governed by a *physis* or vital principle, which is the true physician that the doctor only aids. Morbific influences are handled by "coction"—an old medical and alchemical term defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "The 'ripening' of morbific matter, which fits it for elimination from the living body"—a process the physician stimulates through the administration of what are termed "similars". This is expressed by a Law of Cure attributed

to Hippocrates, which states: “Through the like, disease is produced, and through the application of the like, it is cured.”<sup>2</sup>

The other current derives from the Greek physician Galen (fl. 2nd century A.D.), the reputed founder of experimental physiology, and is known as *rationalistic*, being a closed system based on diagnosis; the organism is regarded as determinate, and not spontaneous or autonomous, in its behavior. Here the physician treats illnesses through the administration of what are called “contraries”, the aim being to suppress morbid influences through the administration of agencies that counteract the symptoms of the illness. Hahnemann invented the term *allopathy* for this system to distinguish it from his *homoeopathy*.

The Galenic method views things *ab extra*: it works by analysis; the word anatomy itself is from the Greek *anatemein* to dissect. Disease is considered as an “entity” attacking the organism from without. The Hippocratic method by contrast sees things *ab intra* and works more by intuition. To these Empirics or *Empirici* (a word that has come to be equated in orthodox medicine with quacks, charlatans and imposters), the *communia* or general symptoms of a disease are less interesting than the *propria*—the unique symptoms of a given patient. From their perspective the illness (within the relative standpoint of sickness) *is* the afflicted person himself, whose aggregate of idiosyncrasies identifies his disease, and by consequence the corresponding remedy.

Holistically speaking there need be no fundamental incompatibility between these two schools of medicine. Indeed, each secures its legitimate sufficiency from its interpenetration with the other, although this is more crucially the case with the Galenic than with the Hippocratic therapy, since the former discipline *de principio* admits only mechanistic causes, while the latter being vitalistic has no reason *a priori* and *de facto* to deny the physiologically evident. In actual practice, however, the Galenic current anticipates the methodology of modern scientific enquiry by categorically rejecting all causes which do not have verifiable origins; while the Hippocratic persuasion for its part tends to draw into its orbit, along with those who are highly endowed intellectually, a fringe element of absolutists, occultists, and sectarians of divers hues. It must be stressed that Galen himself, a genius in anatomy, was an Aristotelian and a pneumatic physician by lineal descent, and is no more responsible for the limitations later attaching to his name medically than can Aristotle be held to blame for the aberrations of rationalism that developed in later European philosophical systems.

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The synthetic approach of the Empirics to medicine is attested by Plato (*Phaedrus*, 270 c):

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<sup>2</sup> Green, op. cit.

Hippocrates the Asclepiad says that the nature even of the body can only be understood as a whole.

And that Plato supports this view is confirmed in *Charmides* (156 D ff.):

As you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul; and this is the reason why the cure of many diseases is unknown to the physicians of Hellas, because they are ignorant of the whole, which ought to be studied also; for the part can never be well unless the whole is well... The great error of our day in the treatment of the human body [is] that physicians separate the soul from the body.

And this has been the great error much of the time since those words were spoken. In the first century A.D. a Roman encyclopedist named Aulus Cornelius Celsus put out works on agriculture, medicine, military science, law, and philosophy, of which his eight-volume *De medicina* alone is extant. Although this treatise was ignored by the physicians of his day, it became one of the most popular medical textbooks of the Renaissance when reprinted in 1478. What Theophrastus Bombastus thought of it is eloquently demonstrated in his choice of the cognomen Paracelsus, meaning “beyond Celsus”, who stands here for the type of medical rationalism rife in the early sixteenth century. This was the age of Martin Luther and of general spiritual and social ferment in Europe. In a Foreword to the 1976 reprint of Arthur Edward Waite’s *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus* (Berkeley, California), Charles Ponce describes the Swiss spagyrist—called by his followers “the German Hermes”—as “an intrusion of archetypal powers onto the human stage.” Indeed, Paracelsus was one of those figures who from time to time storm out of heaven to shake the world’s complacency and subvert false doctrines:

You [physicians] have entirely deserted the path indicated by nature, and built up an artificial system, which is fit for nothing but to swindle the public and to prey upon the pockets of the sick. Your safety is due to the fact that your gibberish is unintelligible to the public, who fancy that it must have a meaning, and the consequence is that no one can come near you without being cheated. Your art does not consist in curing the sick, but in worming yourself into the favor of the rich, in swindling the poor, and in gaining admittance to the kitchens of the noblemen of the country. You live upon imposture, and the aid and abetment of the legal profession enables you to carry on your impostures, and to evade punishment by the law. You poison the people and ruin their health; you are sworn to use diligence in your art; but how could you do so, as you possess no art, and all your boasted science is nothing but an invention to cheat and deceive? You denounce me because I do not follow your schools; but your schools can

teach me nothing which would be worth knowing. You belong to the tribe of snakes, and I expect nothing but poison from you. You do not spare the sick: how could I expect that you would respect me, while I am cutting down your income by exposing your pretensions and ignorance to the public?<sup>3</sup>

He cured, and impressively, where other doctors could not; on the recommendation of Erasmus and Oecolampadius (Johannes Heussgen, professor of theology at Basle University), Paracelsus, who received his medical degree from the University of Ferrara in 1516, was appointed City Physician of Basle with a professorship at the university in physics, medicine and surgery—a function which he inaugurated on St. John’s Day in 1527 with a public burning of the works of Avicenna, Galen and other authorities in a brass pan with sulphur and nitre. “If disease put us to the test,” he declared, “all our splendor, title, ring and name will be as much help as a horse’s tail.”

For this and other indiscretions he was run out of the city, whereupon he resumed a nomadic mode of life which had already led him throughout Europe and regions further east, all the time adding to his considerable store of knowledge and performing marvelous cures. Finally in 1541, through the invitation of the Prince Palatine, Archbishop Duke Ernst of Bavaria, he secured a haven at Salzburg, where his life was brought to a premature end at the age of forty-eight years, presumably by his enemies the jealous physicians, druggists and apothecaries who it is conjectured arranged to have him flung down a precipice, they for their part claiming that he died in a drunken debauch. The propensity, in fact, of his biographers to associate the alchemical reformer’s name with drinking led Eliphas Levi in his *Dogma de la Haute Magie* (Introd.) to exclaim: “Marvelous Paracelsus, always drunk and always lucid, like the heroes of Rabelais.” If drunken he was, it came from the *mania* of his inspirations, plus the dithyrambic fury that seized him when he blasted the ignorance of his colleagues.

In religion, Paracelsus kept clear of the controversies provoked by the Reformation, but his sympathies were close to Luther: “The enemies of Luther are to a great extent composed of fanatics, knaves, bigots and rogues,” he said. “Why do you call me a ‘Medical Luther’? You do not intend to honor me by giving me that name, because you despise Luther. But I know of no other enemies of Luther but those whose kitchen prospects are interfered with by his reforms. Those whom he causes to suffer in their pockets are his enemies. I leave it to Luther to defend what he says, and I shall be responsible for what I may say. Whoever is Luther’s enemy will deserve my contempt. That which you wish to Luther you wish also to me: you wish us both to the fire.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cited in *The Life and Doctrines of Paracelsus*, by Franz Hartmann, M.D., 1887; 4th Ed. N.Y., 1932, pp. 203-4.

<sup>4</sup> In Hartmann, pp. 18-19.

Apart from an apprenticeship in medicine and metallurgy under Sigismund Fugger at Schwaz in the Tyrol, Paracelsus had for teacher the Abbot Trithemius (Hans von Tritenheim, 1462-1516) of the Benedictine monastery of Sponheim, and later abbot of St. James at Würzburg—a theologian skilled in alchemy and astrology; this person was likewise master of Theophrastus’ illustrious contemporary, the Neo-Platonist, Kabbalist, and Hermeticist Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa (1486-1535). Furthermore, according to van Helmont,<sup>5</sup> Paracelsus received the Philosopher’s Stone at Constantinople in 1521 from his countryman the alchemist Solomon Trismosin, known for his book *Splendor Solis*, which exists in vellum manuscript in the British Museum.

But Nature above all was his true instructor, as he affirms in his usual unequivocal manner:

O you hypocrites, who despise the truths taught you by a great physician, who is himself instructed by Nature, and is a son of God himself! Come then, and listen, imposters who prevail only by the authority of your high positions! After my death, my disciples will burst forth and drag you to the light, and shall expose your dirty drugs, wherewith up to this time you have compassed the death of princes, and the most invincible magnates of the Christian world. Woe to your necks on the Day of Judgment! I know the monarchy will be mine. Mine, too, will be the honor and the glory. Not that I praise myself: Nature praises me. Of her I am born; her I follow. She knows me, and I know her. The light which is in her...and not the lamp of an apothecary’s shop, has illuminated my way.<sup>6</sup>

Far from this being the ravings of a madman, Paracelsus—a humble person, whose intercourse was as much with “executioners, barbers, shepherds, Jews, gypsies, midwives and fortune-tellers” (Hartmann, p.6) as with the noblesse—was baiting the personal vanity and ostentation of the physicians of that age; and we have it on the authority of van Helmont, that “Paracelsus was a forerunner of the true medicine. He was sent by God and endowed with knowledge. He was an ornament for his country, and all that has been said against him is not worthy to be listened to.”<sup>7</sup>

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The corpus of writings attributed to Paracelsus is enormous: most of his works were dictated to, and later edited by, his disciples, and come in a mixture of Latin and old German, with the assumption moreover that spurious elements were added—which compounds the difficulty of deciphering genuine from apocryphal elements in what is already a disconcerting amalgam of

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<sup>5</sup> *Tartari Historia*, Sec. 3

<sup>6</sup> In E. J. Holmyard, *Alchemy*, Penguin Books, 1957, p. 164; and Hartmann, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> In Hartmann, p. 28.

fact with allegory. Despite all these impediments, however, the basic tenets of his message are unmistakably clear.

Paracelsus founds his doctrine on Hermes, in declaring: “It is a great truth, which you should seriously consider, that there is nothing in heaven or upon the earth which does not also exist in Man, and God who is in heaven exists also in Man, and the two are but One” (In Hartmann, p.67). “Nature (Heaven) is Man, and Man is Nature, all men are one universal Heaven and Heaven is only one universal Man. Individual man is part of the universal Man, and has his own individual heaven, which is a part of the universal heaven... Thus, there are many points in a circle, and each point constitutes a circle of its own, and yet they all belong to the great circle, and as each little circle may expand so as to encompass the whole, so the heaven in man may grow, so as to expand towards the whole or contract into his own center and disappear” (p.256). These remarks bear on the relationship between accident and Essence—a theme furthermore which is fully developed in the writings of Frithjof Schuon.

“Nature being the Universe, is *one*, and its origin can only be one eternal Unity. It is an organism in which all natural things harmonize and sympathize with each other. It is the Macrocosm. Everything is the product of one universal creative effort; the Macrocosm and man (the Microcosm) are one. They are one constellation, one influence, one breath, one harmony, one time...one Firmament, one Star, one Being, although appearing temporarily in a divided form and shape” (*Liber Paramirum*, ii; Hartmann, pp. 61-2, 69). “Man is not a body, but the heart is man; and the heart is an entire star out of which it is built up. If, therefore, a man is perfect in his heart, nothing in the whole light of Nature is hidden from him” (In Waite, II. p. 308).

“The Bible tells us that Man is made out of nothing; that is to say, his spirit, the real man, is from God, who is not *a thing*, but the eternal Reality; but he is made into three somethings or ‘substances’, and these three constitute the whole of Man” (In Hartmann, p. 278). “These three substances [Hermes] names Spirit, Soul, and Body... They signify nothing else than the three principles, Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt, from which all the seven metals are generated. For Mercury is the spirit, Sulphur is the soul, and Salt is the body. The metal between the spirit and the body, concerning which Hermes speaks, is the soul, which indeed is Sulphur. It unites those two contraries, the body and the spirit, and changes them into one essence... Hermes said that the soul alone is the medium by means of which spirit and body are united” (*Generat. Rerum*, i; Waite, I. p. 125; Hartmann, p. 286). “The body comes from the elements, the soul from the stars, and the spirit from God. All that the intellect can conceive of comes from the stars” (In Hartmann, p. 312). By “stars” is understood cosmological archetypes and principles, and planetary influences.

“It is, therefore, above all, necessary that we should realize the nature of the three Substances as they exist in the Macrocosm, and recognize their qualities, and we shall then also know their nature and attributes in the Microcosm of man,...and as the whole constitution of



man consists of these three Substances, consequently there are three modes in which diseases may originate, namely, in the *Sulphur*, in the *Mercury* or in the *Salt*. As long as these three Substances are full of life they are in health, but when they become separated disease will be the result. Where such a separation begins there is the origin of disease and the beginning of death” (In Hartmann, p. 294). The foregoing is called the *Tria Prima* theory.

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Such, according to Paracelsus, is the view of the whole man required, at least implicitly, of the physician who is to be true to his calling and efficacious in his practice. “It is the spirit that holds concealed within itself the virtue and power of the thing, and not the body. For in the body is death, and the body is subject to death, and in the body nothing but death must be looked for” (*De natura rerum*, iv; Waite, I. p. 135). “By dividing and dissecting the external body, we can learn nothing about the inner man, we merely destroy the unity of the whole” (*Paramirum*, i.6; Hartmann, p. 236). “The physical body has the capacity to produce visible organs—such as the eyes and the ears, the tongue and the nose—but they all take their origin from the invisible body, of which the external visible form is only the outward representation... If we know the anatomy of the inner man, we know the *Prima materia*, and may see the nature of the disease as well as the remedy” (pp. 226, 236). “For this inner sight is the Astronomy of Medicine, and as physical Anatomy shows all the inner parts of the body, such as cannot be seen through the skin, so this magic perception shows not only all the causes of disease, but it furthermore discovers the elements in medicinal substances in which the healing powers reside” (p. 71).

“That which gives healing power to a medicine is its ‘Spiritus’ (an ethereal essence or principle)... Each plant is in a sympathetic relation with the Macrocosm and consequently also with the Microcosm, or, in other words with Constellation and Organism (for the activity of the organism of man is the result of the actions of the interior constellation of stars existing in his interior world), and each plant may be considered to be a terrestrial star. Each star in the great firmament and in the firmament of man has its specific influence, and each plant likewise, and the two correspond together. If we knew exactly the relation between plants and stars, we might say: this star is ‘Stella Rorismarini’, that plant is ‘Stella Absynthii’, and so forth. In this way a *herbarium spirituale sidereum* might be collected, such as every intelligent physician, who understands the relationship existing between matter and mind, should possess, because no man can rationally employ remedies without knowing their qualities, and he cannot know the qualities of plants without being able to read their signatures” (pp. 71, 74-75). What is said here of plants is equally applicable to mineral substances in general.

“Even the ignorant knows that man has a heart and lungs, a brain and a liver and stomach; but he thinks that each of these organs are separate and independent things, that have nothing to do with each other, and even our most learned doctors are not aware of the fact that these organs are only the material and bodily representatives of invisible energies that pervade and circulate in

the whole system; so that, for instance, the real liver is a force that circulates in all parts of the body, and has its head in that organ which we call the liver. All the members of the body are potentially contained in the center of the “vital fluid, which has its seat in the brain, while the activity which propels it comes from the heart” (*De Viribus Membrorum*; Hartmann, pp. 263-4).

“The origin of diseases is in man, and not outside of man; but outside influences act upon the inside and cause diseases to grow. A physician who knows nothing about Cosmology will know little about disease” (p. 257). “Those who merely study and treat the effects of disease are like persons who imagine that they can drive the winter away by brushing the snow from the door. It is not the snow which causes the winter; but the winter is the cause of the snow” (p. 255).

“To understand the laws of nature we must love nature. He who does not know *Maria* does not love her, he who does not know God does not love Him” (p. 258). “It is not the physician who heals the sick, but it is God who heals him through nature, and the physician is merely the instrument through which God acts upon the nature of the patient” (p. 281). “God does not go to see a patient; if he comes to him, he comes in the shape of a man. If a town possesses a good physician, people may look upon him as a blessing from God; but the presence of an ignorant doctor is a public calamity and a curse to all... God kills no one, it is nature which causes people to die. God is Life, and the physician in whom the power of God is manifest will be a fountain of life and health to the sick. To God belongs the praise and to man the blame” (pp. 275-6, 282).

What Paracelsus has been conveying in these passages is that man’s outward body is but the clothing or form of an inward, invisible, and true body wherein the life-principle resides, and that to cure an ailing outward body efficaciously means treating the inward body through the appropriate “inward bodies” of medicinal substances, namely, their subtle essences wherein their curative powers lie. True healing in sum is a sacred calling, and the practitioner should be a man of probity and piety with recourse to *Philosophy*, *Cosmology* (Astronomy/Astrology), and *Alchemy*—these together being the “four pillars” on which Dr Theophrastus Hohenheim says his medical system is founded.

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Whatever the plane on which it operated—spiritual, medical, or chemical—alchemy meant transmutation, and this could only be had by reducing properties to their subtle prototypes, namely, to their quintessential nature, which is that non-differentiated potentiality whence forms begin. Transmutation here is not to be understood so much as the *transformation* of one element into another as it is the *sublimation* of any property into its seminal or highest essence. Figuratively Gold can be considered as the Mother of all metals, representing the perfect elemental equilibrium of which the base metals are but limited reflections owing to their “loss” of this equilibrium, or lack of a wholeness which they “strive” with the alchemist’s aid to regain. Thus, theoretically and somewhat allegorically speaking, a metal brought back to its prototypal

substance is in a state of receptivity to the “tingeing” power of the primordial *materia prima* underlying all matter, and hence capable of assuming a “glorified body” of gold. But more apt to our purpose is the statement on transmutation given by Thomas Vaughan in his *Anima Magica Abscondita*:

Question not those imposters, who tell you of a *sulphur tingens*, and I know not what fables; who pin also that narrow name of *Chemia* on a science both ancient and infinite. It is the Light only that can be truly multiplied, for this ascends to, and descends from, the first fountain of multiplication and generation. If to animals, it exalts animals; if to vegetables, vegetables; if to minerals, it refines minerals, and translates them from the worst to the best condition.

According to Paracelsus, “The purpose of alchemy is not, as it is said, to make gold and silver, but in this instance to make arcana and direct them against diseases; as this is the outcome, so it is also the basis... It is not the physician that controls and directs, but heaven, by the stars; and therefore the medicine must be brought into an airy form in such a manner that it may be directed by the stars. For what stone is lifted up by the stars? None save the volatile. Hence many have looked for the *quintum esse* in alchemy which is nothing else but that thus the four elements are taken away from the arcanum, and what remains afterwards is the arcanum. This arcanum furthermore is a chaos, and it is possible to carry it to the stars like a feather before the wind” (*Liber Paragranum*, iii; Holmyard, pp. 167-8).

To attain the arcanum through the removal of the four elements is the whole of the spagyric art, this word itself coming from the Greek *span* to separate + *ageirein* to assemble. It is the ancient alchemical theme of *solve et coagula*, dissolve and coagulate, volatilize and fix. This is the Grand Magisterium of alchemy. The “universal solvent” used for transmutation is a menstruum called the Alcahest. The arcanum is nothing other than “the virtue of a thing in its highest potency” (*Archidoxes, De Arcanis*; Hartmann, p. 283), “an invisible fire, which destroys all diseases” (*Tinct. phys.* vii; p. 295). To obtain this arcanum, says Albertus Magnus, one has “to make the fixed volatile and the volatile fixed”<sup>8</sup> —a dictum more especially applicable to spiritual alchemy but relevant by transposition to all levels.

Concerning the preparation of medicine, Paracelsus tells us that “it is created, indeed, by God, but not fully prepared for its final end. It is, so to say, hidden in the ore. Now, the work of Vulcan is to separate the ore from the medicine itself... That which the eyes perceive in a herb is not Medicine, nor what they see in stones and trees. They see only the ore; but inside the ore the medicine is hidden. First of all, then, the ore has to be removed from the medicine. When this is done, the medicine will be ready to hand. This is Alchemy; this, the special office of Vulcan, who superintends the pharmacopoeia, and brings about the elaboration of the medicine”

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<sup>8</sup> E. J. Langford Garstin, *Theurgy or the Hermetic Practice*, London, 1930, p. 67.

(*Labyrinthus Medicorum*; Waite, II. p. 166). As an example, he says iron will cure anaemia, “because the astral elements of iron correspond to the astral elements contained in Mars [the sanguine planet], and will attract them as a magnet attracts iron. But we should choose a plant which contains iron in an etherialized state” (In Hartmann, p. 245).

Paracelsus further says: “The quintessence, then, is a certain matter extracted from all things which Nature has produced, and from everything which has life corporeally in itself, a matter most subtly purged of all impurities and mortality, and separated from all the elements. From this it is evident that the quintessence is, so to say, a nature, a force, a virtue, and a medicine, once, indeed, shut up within things, but now free from any domicile and from all outward incorporation... The very smallest quantity of saffron tinges a vast body of water, and yet the whole of it is not saffron. Thus, in like manner, must it be laid down with regard to the quintessence, that its quantity is small in wood, in herbs, in stones, and other similar things, lurking there like a guest. The rest is pure natural body... Nor must it be supposed that the quintessence exists as a fifth element beyond the other four, itself being an element... The fact that the quintessence cures all diseases...[arises] from an innate property, namely, its great cleanliness and purity, by which, after a wonderful manner, it alters the body into its own purity, and entirely changes it...

“As every animal contains within itself the life-spirit, yet the same virtue does not exist in each, simply because they all consist of flesh and blood, but one differs from another, as in taste or in virtue, so it is with the quintessence... Thence it happens that some quintessences are styptic, others narcotic, others attractive, others again somniferous, bitter, sweet, sharp, stupefactive,” and so forth. “In this place it should equally be remarked that each disease requires its own special quintessence” (*Archidoxies*, iv; Waite, II. pp. 22-24).

These observations also apply to the “hypostatical principles” or *Tria Prima* theory mentioned earlier. For although the Sulphur is One, the Salt is One, and the Mercury One, yet as there are many kinds of fruit, so are there as many sulphurs, salts, and mercuries as there are metals and minerals; and these are still further divided, “as there is not merely one kind of gold but many kinds of gold, just as there is not merely one kind of pear or apple but many kinds. Therefore there are just as many different kinds of sulphurs of gold, salts of gold, and mercuries of gold” (In Holmyard, pp. 170—171).

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As regards the practice of medicine, the alchemical remedies are for constitutional diseases, those which “radiate from the center”; “that which is localized—i.e., circumscribed or confined to a certain locality, belongs to Surgery.” Paracelsus divides the cause of all diseases into five classes: (1) *Ens Astrale*, those provoked by astral causes, such as plagues and acute diseases; (2) *Ens Venenale*, those provoked by poisonous substances and impurities—diseases like rheumatism, gout, and dropsy; (3) *Ens Naturale*, those provoked by psychological causes, or

diseased states of mind; (4) *Ens Spirituale*, those provoked by passions, evil desires, disordered thoughts, or a morbid imagination; and (5) *Ens Dèale*, those originating from divine, or what the Hindus would call karmic, causes.

As there are five categories of diseases, so are there five ways of curing them, and hence five classes of physicians: “1. *Naturales*. i.e., those who treat diseased conditions with opposite remedies; for instance, cold by warmth, dryness by moisture, etc., according to the principle *Contraria contrariis curantur*. To this class belonged Avicenna, Galen, etc.” (Allopathy, Hydrotherapy); “2. *Specifici*.—Such as employ specific remedies, of which it is known that they have certain affinities for certain morbid conditions. To this class belong the *Empirics*” (Homoeopathy); “3. *Characterales*.—The physicians of this class have the power to cure diseases by employing their will power” (Magnetism, Hypnotism, Mind-cure); “4. *Spirituales*.—The followers of this system have the power to employ spiritual forces, in the same sense as a judge has power over a prisoner in the stocks, because he is in possession of the keys. Such a physician was Hippocrates” (Magic); “5. *Fideles*. i.e., those who cure by the power of Faith, such as Christ and the apostles.”

“Among these five classes, the first one is the most orthodox and narrow-minded, and they reject the other four because they are not able to understand them.” Paracelsus goes on to say that the five causes of diseases overlap and give rise to many subdivisions. For the rest, “Each physician, no matter to which sect he belongs, should know the five causes of diseases and the five methods of treatment; but each method may be in itself sufficient to cure all diseases, no matter from what cause they originate” (*De Entibus Morbosum*).<sup>9</sup>

The physician must be aware that “each man’s constitution differs in some respect from that of another” (*Paragranum*; Hartmann, p. 223); as for the role of diagnosis, “The true physician sees the constitution of his patient as if the latter were a clear crystal, in which not even a single hair could escape detection. He sees him as he would the stones and pebbles at the bottom of a clear well” (pp. 316-17).

Lastly, Paracelsus lays great stress on the therapeutic role of faith: “The curative power of medicine often consists, not so much in the spirit that is hidden in them, as in the spirit in which they are taken. Faith will make them efficacious; doubt will destroy their virtues” (p. 268). “The fear of disease, he said, is more dangerous than disease itself.”<sup>10</sup>

“Oh you doubtful man, you Peter of little faith, who are moved by each wind and sink easily! You are yourself the cause of all such diseases; because your faith is so little and feeble, and your own evil thoughts are your enemies. Moreover you have hidden within yourself a

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<sup>9</sup> Hartmann, CH. VII.

<sup>10</sup> Kurt Seligmann, *The Mirror of Magic*, N.Y., 1948, p. 322.

magnet which attracts those influences which correspond to your will” (*Philos. Occulta*; Hartmann, p. 273).

“Even Christ could not benefit those who were not receptive of his power. This power is Faith, and it should be present in the patient as well as in the physician. Christ did not say to the sick, ‘I cured thee,’ but he said, ‘Thy faith made thee whole.’... The patient should therefore have faith in God, and confidence in his physician” (*De Virtute Medici*; p. 281).

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Turning now to homoeopathy, we can start with this dictum by Hahnemann: “The spirit of the drug acts on the spirit in man.”<sup>11</sup> Paracelsus says what amounts to the same, in his axiom, “The star is healed by the star.”<sup>12</sup>

“The action of [homoeopathic] medicines in the liquid form upon the living human body,” says Hahnemann, “takes place in such a penetrating manner, spreads out from the point of the sensitive fibers provided with nerves whereto the medicine is first applied with such inconceivable rapidity and so universally through all parts of the living body, that this action of the medicine must be denominated a spirit-like (a dynamic, virtual) action” (*Org. Sec.* 288).

“For this more than perfect medicine,” in the words of Paracelsus, “is all-powerful, penetrates all things, and infuses health at the same time as it expels all diseases and evil. In this respect no medicine on earth is like it” (*Manual concerning the Philosophers’ Stone*; Waite, II. p. 105).

It is the “spirit-like action” of the medicines, Hahnemann taught, that reverberates on the spirit-like vital principle or life-force, which alone animates the human body and regulates all its functions. “The material organism, without the vital force, is capable of no sensation, no function, no self-preservation” (*Org. Sec.* 10).

This vital force, which the author refers to as the *vital principle* in the Sixth Edition of the *Organon*, is what Paracelsus calls the *Archaeus*, or the formative power of Nature, and microcosmically, corresponds to the *Anima Mundi* or World Soul of the macrocosm as found in Plato and the Stoics. The vital force or “life substance within the body”, according to Dr James Tyler Kent (1849-1916), the “Hahnemann” of American Homoeopathy (though a former adversary until he studied the subject), “is the vicegerent of the soul.”<sup>13</sup>

We have seen that Paracelsus defines the spirit-like property in alchemical medicines as their *arcanum* or *quintessence*, which he alternatively names the *ens*, *entia*, or *Primum Ens*. This

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. William M. Davidson, *Lectures on Medical Astrology*, Monroe, N.Y., 1979.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Jacques Michaud, *Médecines ésotériques...Médecine de demain...*, Paris, 1976, p. 200.

<sup>13</sup> James Tyler Kent, A.M., M.D., *Lectures on Homoeopathic Philosophy*, New Delhi, 1977, Lecture VIII.

is intrinsically the same thing the homeopaths designate as the *Dynamis* in their medicines. Now when a person is ill and treated homoeopathically, the dynamis/arcanum, provided it is chosen correctly for the malady in question, arouses and reinforces those elements in the vital principle/archaeus that are responsible for and govern the diseased part, thus initiating a healing process. More often than not this causes in the patient a temporary aggravation of the symptoms, which is in fact indicative that the remedy has been rightly chosen.

This homoeopathic curative process flows from the subtle towards the gross, from the center towards the periphery, in keeping with what is known as Hering's Law, from Constantine Hering (1800-1880), the "Father of American Homoeopathy" (and another former adversary): namely, *cure proceeds from above downward, from within outward, from the most important organs to least important organs, and in the reverse order of appearance of symptoms.*<sup>14</sup>

Allopathic treatment takes the opposite route: it aims directly at the externals, at the diseased part, on the evolutionist-like theory that the cure of the part will eventuate in the cure of the entire person. Since its point of departure is in a scientific materialism which bases its authority on the premise that everything is ultimately answerable in physicochemical terms, it cannot but make short shrift of any perspectives which do not fall within the compass of its chosen vision, and more especially as results obtained on its own ground are often quite spectacular (penicillin, antibiotics, vaccines, and so forth).

Franz Hartmann, who was not an occultist merely, but a medical doctor and person of considerable discernment, was protesting some 100 years ago that "Modern medicine requires, so to say, a sledge-hammer for killing a fly; but the finer natural remedies...have almost entirely disappeared from the pharmacopoeia and...been remitted to the care of old women. Their action is not understood; because it is not so violent as that of the poisons used by the regular physician and therefore the effects produced are not so apparent to the eye; but while the finer forces of nature silently and noiselessly act upon the body of the patient, the poisonous drugs administered by the modern practitioner, usually serve only to drive away effects by shifting the seat of the disease to a still more interior and more dangerous place" (pp. 249-50). Hartmann expands this idea with the following example:

It would be interesting to find out how many chronic diseases and life-long evils are caused by vaccination. If the organism contains some poisonous elements, Nature may attempt to remove it by an expulsive effort caused by the action of the spirit from the center toward the periphery, and producing cutaneous diseases. If by vaccination a new herd is established to attract the diseased elements..., the manifestation of the poison on the surface of the body may disappear, but the poisonous elements will remain in the body, and some other more serious disease will manifest itself sooner or later (p. 224).

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<sup>14</sup> George Vithoulkas, *The Science of Homeopathy*, N.Y., 1980, p. 231.

“Why is the practice of medicine of Theophrastus Paracelsus almost incomprehensible to the modern practitioner? It is because the latter seeks to treat the diseased organs themselves, which are as such merely the external effects of internal causes, and he knows of no other way to act upon them except by mechanical or chemical means; while the method of treatment of Paracelsus by means of which he made the most wonderful cures, is to change the interior causes from which the outward effects grow; to treat the very essences out of which corporeal organs become crystallized and to supply them with the power of vitality of the quality which they require. To accomplish this, deep insight into the causes of disease, spiritual perception, spiritual knowledge and spiritual power are needed, and these qualities belong not to that which is human in man, but to the light of the spirit which shines into him. For this reason the *Arcana* of Paracelsus have been universally misunderstood” (Hartmann, pp. 282-3).

The same standard is clearly affirmed by Hahnemann in his Preface to the First Edition of the *Organon* (1810): “The most sacred of all human occupations [is] the practice of the true system of medicine. The physician who enters on his work in this spirit becomes directly assimilated to the Divine Creator of the world, whose human creatures he helps to preserve, and whose approval renders him thrice blessed.”

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So essential is the concept of the vital principle to homoeopathy that it merits closer scrutiny:

In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence (*Org. Sec. 9*).

Expounding this passage, Kent defines the *immaterial vital principle* (the term used in the last edition of the *Organon*) as a *Simple Substance*; and he goes on to say: “One who is rational will be led to see that there is a supreme God, that He is substantial, that He is a substance. Everything proceeds from him and the whole series from the supreme to the most ultimate matter in this way is connected. Just as surely as there is a separation, and not a continuous influx from first to last, ultimates will cease to exist.

“The true holding together of the material world is performed by the simple substance... Simple substance is *endowed with formative intelligence*, i.e., it intelligently operates and forms the economy of the whole animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms... [It] gives to everything its own type of life, gives it distinction, gives it identity whereby it differs from all other things...



“This substance is *subject to changes*; in other words, it may be flowing in order or disorder, may be sick or normal... Man may cause it to flow in disorder.

“Any simple substance may *pervade the entire material substance without disturbing or replacing it*...

“*It dominates and controls the body it occupies*... By it are kept in order all functions, and the perpetuation of the forms and proportions of every animal, plant and mineral. All operation that is possible is due to the simple substance, and by it the very universe itself is kept in order. It not only operates every material substance, but it is the cause of cooperation of all things.

“Examine the universe and behold the stars, the sun and the moon; they do not interfere with each other, they are kept in continuous order. Everything is in harmony and is kept so by the simple substance.” It is this “harmony of the spheres” which enabled Paracelsus to take account of the reverberations which astral influences have on the human microcosm.

“In considering simple substance we cannot think of time, place or space, because we are not in the realm of mathematics nor the restricted measurements of the world of space and time, we are in the realm of simple substance. It is only finite to think of place and time. *Quantity* cannot be predicated of simple substance, *only quality in degrees of fineness*...

“The simple substance also has *adaptation*... What is it that adapts itself to environment? The dead body cannot... When the vital force from any cause withdraws from the body...the body tends to decay at once... All disease causes are in simple substance; there is no disease cause in concrete substance considered apart from simple substance. We therefore study simple substance, in order that we may arrive at the *nature* of sick-making substances. We also potentize our medicines in order to arrive at their simple substance; that is, at the nature and quality of the remedy itself. The remedy to be homoeopathic must be similar in *quality* and similar in *action* to disease cause” (Lecture VIII).

Hahnemann late in his career said the function of the vital force, this “principle that animates us,” is “to preserve the vital operations in good order as long as the individual is not morbidly deranged by the inimical influence of pathogenic forces,” but that by itself alone “it is not capable, not intended, not created” primarily for this extra work of combating hostile disease. However, when aided by the true healing art to put disease to rout, “it is always the vital force that conquers, just as the native army which drives the enemy out of the country must be called the conqueror, although it was assisted by foreign auxiliary troops.” It is the homoeopathic physicians with their medicinal arsenal that can in the role of an auxiliary force “by degrees cause and compel this instinctive vital force gradually to increase its energy...until at length it becomes much stronger than the original disease was, so that it can again become the autocrat in its own organism, can again take the reins and direct the organism on the way to health, whilst in the meantime the apparent increase of the disease produced by the homoeopathic medicines

disappears spontaneously, whereon we, witnessing the re-established preponderance of the vital power, that is to say, the re-established health, cease to administer these remedies.

“Incredibly great are the resources of the spirit-like vital principle imparted to man by the infinitely benevolent Creator, if we physicians did but know how to keep it right in days of health by a properly regulated wholesome regimen, and in diseases to summon it forth and stimulate it up to the proper mark by pure homoeopathic treatment” (*Die chronischen Krankheiten/Chronic Diseases*, iv, Düsseldorf, 1838; *Org.* pp. 188-9).

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The alchemists insured the secrecy of their formulae for preparing the elixir by the very extravagance of prescriptions proffered in their treatises. One feels it is almost with a “malice” towards the curious that they spoke so freely about such matters and processes as ablution, incision, combustion, dissolution, fluxibility, coagulation, reverberation, cohobation, mollification, circulation, decension, putrefaction, and so on; of their dissolvings, calcinings, tingeings, whitenings, bathings, renewings, imbibings, and decoctings there is no end.

A pattern does nevertheless emerge. In the second treatise of his *Splendor Solis*, Solomon Trismosin quotes a saying of the Philosophers:

Dissolve the thing and sublimate it, and then distil it, coagulate it, make it ascend, make it descend, soak it, dry it, and ever up to an indefinite number of operations, all of which take place at the same time and in the same vessel (Garstin, p. 66).

Paracelsus, after taking to task the common run of physicians who “give themselves up to ease and idleness, strutting about with a haughty gait, dressed in silk, with rings ostentatiously displayed on their fingers, or silvered poignards fixed on their loins, and sleek gloves on their hands,” extols the spagyric physicians, who “find their delight in their laboratory,...[who] put their fingers among the coals, the lute, and the dung, not into gold rings,...[who] rejoice to be occupied at the fire and to learn the steps of alchemical knowledge. Of this class are: Distillation, Resolution, Putrefaction, Extraction, Calcination, Reverberation, Sublimation, Fixation, Separation, Reduction, Coagulation, Tincture, and the like” (*De Natura Rerum*, viii; Waite, I. p. 167).

In the latter part of his *Organon* Hahnemann describes the procedures required for making homoeopathic remedies, which are prepared from mineral, plant, or animal substances. The basic steps are extraction, decantation, dissolution, dilution, attenuation, and potentization or dynamization, either by means of trituration (pulverizing in a mortar) or succussion (agitation through striking a hand-held vial forcefully against a firm surface). Certain processes require distillation and the use of water baths. Tinctures preserved in alcohol maintain their potencies *indefinitely* (some of Hahnemann’s original preparations are still in use), provided they are not

exposed to sunlight or heat, which inactivates them. Globules of milk sugar impregnated with these tinctures become the *carrier* which “manifests the healing power of this invisible force in the sick body” (*Org.* 6th Ed. Sec. 270). Writes Hahnemann: “The homoeopathic system of medicine develops for its use, to a hitherto unheard-of degree, the spirit-like medicinal powers of the crude substances by means of a process peculiar to it...whereby only they all become immeasurably and penetratingly efficacious and remedial, even those that in the crude state give no evidence of the slightest medicinal power on the human body” (*Org.* Sec. 269).

We have in Paracelsus a passage which mirrors these preceding remarks:

This Philosophers’ Stone has forces of this kind, whereby it expels so many and such wonderful diseases, not by its complexion, or its specific form, or its property, or by any accidental quality, but by the powers of a subtle practice, wherewith it is endued by the preparations, the reverberations, the sublimations, the digestions, the distillations, and afterwards by various reductions and resolutions, all which operations of this kind bring the stone to such subtlety and such a point of power as is wonderful. Not that it had those powers originally, but that they are subsequently assigned to it” (*Archidoxies, De Arcana*; Waite, II. p. 42).

As regards drugs that are poisonous in the crude state, Kent gives the example of opium, which administered in large doses, flows against “the stream of the vital influx,” thus causing “a state of suspension...in the dynamic economy”; whereas by inverse analogy, the same drug homoeopathically potentized and administered, flows “in the stream of the vital action...[and] then the symptoms that arise are of the best order” (Lecture XXVIII).

Morbific matter—called nosodes—is at the base of remedies obtained from animal substances. Paracelsus provides an altogether homoeopathic description of their use, the subtilized essences of which he names *mumia*:

Who knows rightly about what God is, who knows nothing about the devil? Wherefore since God has made known to us the enemy of our soul, that is, the devil, He also points out to us the enemy of our life, that is, death... He has made known this enemy to us and also how and by what means we must escape him. For as there is no disease against which there has not been created and discovered a medicine which cures and drives it away, so there is always one thing placed over against another—one water over against another, one stone...one mineral...one poison...one metal over against another—and the same in many other matters... Hence it follows that the mumia of the flesh cures wounds of the flesh, the mumia of the ligaments cures wounds of the ligaments, etc. Thus the body which has sustained an injury carries its own cure with it” (*De nat. re.* iii; *Chirurgia Minor*, Lib. I. 1; Waite, I. pp. 130, 169).

In his well-researched work, *The Science of Homeopathy*, George Vithoulkas has a chapter on the very demanding conditions under which homoeopathic remedies must be collected and produced: “Hahnemann was a fully qualified chemist, and well-acquainted with alchemy as well, so his knowledge of how to prepare particular minerals was very specific and thorough.” “For this medicine,” says Paracelsus concerning the spagyric concoctions, “requires such preparation as mere pill-sellers do not compass, and understand less about it than a Swiss cow” (*Philosophers’ Stone*; Waite, II. p. 102).

Every care must be taken to insure that the choice and manipulation of plant and other substances corresponds exactly to the conditions followed in the original “provings”. Purity, simplicity, freshness, and chemical availability are primary concerns. Homoeopathic pharmacies now generally simplify dilution and succussion through use of machines, but even here it often requires three months to make a high potency remedy. For those readers who may be interested, an example of Hahnemann’s thoroughness is given below in his description of trituration:

In this preparation, peculiar to Homoeopathy, we take one grain in powder of any of the substances treated of in the six volumes of *Materia Medica Pura*, and especially those of the antipsoric substances following below, i.e., of silica, carbonate of baryta, carbonate of lime, carbonate of soda and sal ammoniac, carbonate of magnesia, vegetable charcoal, animal charcoal, graphites, sulphur, crude antimony, metallic antimony, gold, platina, iron, zinc, copper, silver, tin. The lumps of the metals which have not yet been beaten out into foil, are rubbed off on a fine, hard whetstone under water, some of them, as iron, under alcohol; of mercury in the liquid form one grain is taken, of petroleum one drop instead of a grain, etc. This is first put on about one-third of 100 grains of pulverized sugar of milk, and placed in an unglazed porcelain mortar, or in one from which the glaze has been first rubbed off with wet sand; the medicine and the sugar of milk are then mixed for a moment with porcelain spatula, and the mixture is triturated with some force for six minutes, the triturated substance is then for four minutes scraped from the mortar and from the porcelain pestle, which is also unglazed, or has had its glazing rubbed off with wet sand, so that the trituration may be homogeneously mixed. After this has been thus scraped together, it is triturated again without any addition for another six minutes with equal force. After scraping together again from the bottom and the sides for four minutes this triturate (for which the first third of the 100 grains had been used), the second third of the sugar of milk is now added, both are mixed together with the spatula for a moment, triturated again with like force for six minutes; it is triturated a second time (without addition) for six minutes more, and after scraping it together for another four minutes it is mixed with the last third of the powdered sugar of milk by stirring it around with the spatula, and the whole mixture is again

trituated for six minutes, scraped for four minutes, and a second and last time trituated for six minutes; then it is all scraped together and the powder is preserved in a well-stoppered bottle with the name of the substance and the signature 100 because it is potentized one hundred fold<sup>15</sup> [nowadays labelled 1c].

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A crucial axiom in the preparation of homoeopathic remedies is that *the more the substance is succussed and diluted, the greater the therapeutic effect while simultaneously nullifying the toxic effect* (Vithoukias, p. 102). Dilution without succussion adds no kinetic energy to a solution, while succussion without a corresponding increase in dilution raises the level of energy in a solution by one potency only, regardless of how many times it is succussed.

As the Hahnemannian method of dilution requires the discarding of an enormous number of glass vials, another valid solution, called the Korsakoff method, has come into practice, since it can use the same vial for each new potency.

On a decimal scale, a 1/10 dilution is the equivalent of a 1X potency (100 succussions). An eighth decimal dilution is called an 8X potency (800 succussions). On a centesimal scale, the one most commonly used, each centesimal potency, based upon serial dilutions of 1/100 and designated by a “c”, is equivalent in dilution to two decimal potencies. Thus a 30c potency is the same as a 60X in dilution (1/10<sup>60</sup>), but the 30c with 3000 succussions has only half the potency of the 60X with its 6000 succussions.

Some homoeopathy, following a system suggested by Hahnemann, use potencies based on serial dilutions of 1/50,000, called 50-millesimal potencies, or simply millesimals.

By convention, high potencies are given Roman numeral designations: a 100,000 potency is thus called CM.

According to a pivotal figure known as Avogadro’s number (from the Italian physicist Amedeo Avogadro, 1776-1856), it is statistically improbable that any dilution beyond the 12c or 24X level will retain a single molecule of the original medicinal substance. Hence dilutions inferior to this number are sometimes referred to as macrodilutions, and those superior to it, as microdilutions. Yet homoeopaths often obtain successful results with potencies over 100,000c. This is represented by a dilution of 1/100,000, or a total of 100,000 zeroes (compared with the dilution of 1/1000 that corresponds to Avogadro’s number, with a total of 24 zeroes).

The attestation of these homoeopathic physicians concerning the presence of active agencies found in high dilutions is backed up by numerous biological, chemical, and physical experiments uniformly demonstrating the existence of some form of energy in the ultra-molecular dilutions.

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel Hahnemann, *Chronic Diseases*, Calcutta, 1975, p. 147.

Coulter in his *Homoeopathic Medicine* (St Louis, 1975) says H. Junker in 1928 observed that various substances in dilutions up to  $10^{-27}$  affected the growth of bacterial cultures; that J. Patterson and W. Boyd in Scotland found the Schick test for diphtheria was changed from positive to negative by oral administration of alum-precipitated toxoid in a dilution of  $10^{-60}$  or of *Diphtherinum*, a homoeopathic preparation, in a dilution of  $10^{-402}$ .

Harvey Farrington, M.D, in his *Homeopathy and Homeopathic Prescribing* (Philadelphia, 1955) says that gold can be detected by colloidal chemistry in the 25th decimal (10,000,000,000.000,000,000,000,000) trituration; that radium in the 60th decimal affects sensitive photographic plates (which can only be explained by its force or power or dynamis).

Among examples given by James Stephenson, M.D., in a series of talks at Boston University, in 1958:

Wurmser and Loch of France in 1948, in the field of physics, recorded changes in a beam of light of fixed wavelengths when passed through various solutions of homoeopathic microdilutions, as measured by deflections of a microgalvanometer. These were obtained for quinine sulphate, *Taraxacum dens leonis* (dandelion), and *Aesculus hippocastanum* (horse chestnut) at dilutions from  $10^{-24}$  to  $10^{-30}$ .

Gay of France later obtained similar results with microdilutions up to  $10^{-60}$  of *Strychnos nux vomica*, *Pulsatilla nigricans* (the anemone), *Lycopodium clavatum* (club moss), *Cinchona officinalis* (quinine), *Ignatia amara* (St. Ignatius bean), *Castoreum* (beaver musk), *Moschus* (musk), sodium chloride (salt), and *Sepia officinalis* (cuttlefish). In collaboration with J. Boiran he accurately detected 100 times out of 100 a flask containing sodium chloride  $10^{-54}$  from 6 flasks containing distilled water.

Heintz of Germany found that microdilutions of sodium chloride significantly altered infrared absorption spectra of light.

In biochemistry W. Persson of Leningrad showed in 1930 that homoeopathic microdilutions affected significantly the rate of action of various enzyme systems.

Jannet of France in 1902 demonstrated that  $10^{-50}$  dilutions of silver nitrate significantly decreased the amount of growth in a yeast, *Aspergillus niger*. L. Kolisko of Switzerland twenty years later found that microdilutions of copper salt, iron sulphate, and antimony trioxide caused a characteristic sinusoidal effect on the growth of wheat germ seed as compared to control plants.

Among the zoological investigators, Stearns of the U.S.A. in 1926 showed that microdilutions of sodium chloride ranging from  $10^{-60}$  to  $10^{-200}$  produced in guinea pigs sterility, loss of appetite and weight, and general weakness.

In all, 23 experiments by 19 separate investigators over a 70-year period show that succussed microdilutions act under controlled, laboratory conditions as well as clinically.<sup>16</sup>

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On the therapeutic power inherent in high homoeopathic dilutions, Dr Dominique Senn, a medical genius and leading European authority in the field, has this to say: “The old refrain, proclaimed from the seat of authority, that homoeopathy is just a matter of deceitfully handing out a ‘placebo’<sup>17</sup> or distilled water, becomes ridiculous in the face of the established evidence concerning the effect of the unbelievable power in a 50-thousandth dynamized dilution of the simile remedy. The incredulous patient who has experienced this will not forget it!

“Newborn babies, and even patients in comas, respond to the controlling signals of the remedy, without the possibility of rationally bringing in a psychic influence.

“The spectacular efficacy of homoeopathic remedies on all kinds of animals, remedies more and more being used by veterinarians trained in this art, is supplementary proof of a real action on the animal organism—apart from all imagination!”<sup>18</sup>

The “infinitesimal dose” is a stumbling block for many people, even though size here is really a relative matter. Since numerous morbid agencies are discernible only through their effects, why *a priori* should certain healing agencies not be so likewise? “The doctrine of the divisibility of matter,” writes Hahnemann, “teaches us that we cannot make a part so small that it shall cease to be *something*, and that it shall not share *all* the properties of the whole... Why should there be doubts about the powerfulness of such small but still material doses of homoeopathic remedies, though their calculated weight is extremely small, since some of the most powerful counter-disease forces are quite imponderable, and yet have a great influence on the health of man? Who is ignorant of the medical powers of cold and heat?” (*Org. Suppl. to Sec. 283*).

Another medical writer, Salvador de Madariaga, observes that a minute quantity of catalyst can determine a chemical reaction; that “a change in the water one drinks, even though chemically insignificant is apt to be detected by the body, and how minute are the quantities of carbonates, sulphates, or phosphates that can make or mar a mineral water”; that a single rose can “emit for days enough aroma to affect any human being” who comes near it; that an experiment in California to grow plants on sand soaked in chemical solutions revealed that “certain metals are indispensable for certain plants, and yet, only in very small quantities (for instance, one in 500,000 of zinc for tomatoes). Moreover, I hold that the notion of ‘normal size’

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<sup>16</sup> James Stephenson, M.D., *Homeopathic Research*, Chestnut Hill, Mass., 1966.

<sup>17</sup> The term used by Nobel Prize winner J. Monod in his book, *Dans l'unité de l'homme*, Paris, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Dominique Senn, *La balance tropique*, Lausanne, 1980, pp. 183-4.

is arbitrary and that nature will have none of it. It is a pure human prejudice which decrees as *normal* sizes ranging between the flea and the hippopotamus; but the sizes of the hydrogen atom and of the Milky Way, though not normal for us, are perfectly normal for nature. For all these reasons, arguments about the infinitesimal dose do not seem to make much sense.”<sup>19</sup>

“Know, then, for a fact,” says Paracelsus, “that nothing is so small but that from it anything can be made and can exist without form” (*Philosophers’ Stone*; Waite, II. p. 100).

Present-day proponents of homoeopathic medicine, seeking explanations for the power inherent in microdilutions, turn towards quantum and relativity physics, looking for a Fourth Law of Motion, or a Fourth Law of Thermodynamics. They tend to link the idea of a vital force with the theory of an electrodynamic field “englobing” physical bodies.

From the viewpoint of traditional cosmology, the subtle domain of manifestation underlies the physical plane of existence, which is none other than the material projection of its subtle prototype. But, naturally, projection presupposes avenues of communication. And in this respect we can return to Kent’s image and say that just as the vital force is vicegerent of the soul, so then may something on the order of the electromagnetic field be considered as vicegerent of the vital principle. And here Stephenson gets close to the heart of the affair when he asks: “From a causal standpoint this field is generally considered to be secondary to the matter, and dependent upon it, but what if the reverse is true and the field is primary and the matter is secondary to it? Then, even after the matter is stripped away, the field would remain. A more holistic view would consider both matter and the field as co-functions of each other with one primary at one time, under certain conditions, and the other primary under other conditions.”<sup>20</sup> This last sentence is quoted, because although inaccurate from a causal or emanationist standpoint, it has its applications within a medical perspective.

Both Senn and Vithoukas warn against a tendency with modernist-oriented theorists and practitioners of homoeopathy to fall into a scientific fallacy. Correct homoeopathic procedure, according to Senn, “not only presupposes the assimilation of the Hahnemannian doctrine in all its amplitude and extraordinary subtlety of observation, but also that one respect it.

“There is unfortunately room to observe that certain homoeopathic schools have gone astray in the interpretation of the original principles. The concern—or excuse—to get in line with the evolution of modern science ends up in a regrettable confusion and devaluation of the doctrine. What results is a polypragmacy that scorns immutable laws, imparted by nature, which Hahnemann’s genius had perceived. The result is an allopathic homoeopathy, which is by definition an absurdity.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Salvador de Madariaga, “On Medicine”, from *Essays With a Purpose*, London, 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Stephenson, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Senn, op. cit. p. 189.



“Those prescribers who broke from the leadership of Hahnemann tended to reject not only his use of high potencies, but many of his other principles as well,” writes Vithoukas. “They favored mixing many remedies together, giving a variety of potencies at once, repeating remedies frequently throughout days or weeks, prescribing upon the organ affected or the diagnostic label, giving remedies to produce ‘drainage’ of the system, etc. In short, the low potency prescribers by and large utilized homoeopathic remedies in an almost purely allopathic manner. These practices are still in vogue in many areas of the world today and are seriously disrupting the possibilities of cure of many thousands of cases.”<sup>22</sup>

At all events, the key to keep in mind invariably, with homoeopathy, is that the remedies are “subtilized” substances that act on the “subtle body” of the subject; they function as the prototypes of plants and minerals and organic matter, or their energizing properties. To “potentize” is to “render potential”, and potential means possible—in *potentia*—not actual; latent, not manifest; capable of coming into being or manifestation. It is *mutatis mutandis* like the Ether in the First Matter, which contains the four Elements in a state of virtuality, or in an undifferentiated equilibrium prior to materialization.

Hahnemann’s trituration (Paracelsus’s *granulation*) has its precedent in alchemical procedures such as that described in a seventeenth-century tract, *The Sophic Hydrolith*, where the original Matter of the Philosopher’s Stone has to be “pounded, reduced to powder, and resolved into its three elements...and then again...be re-combined into a solid stone of the fusibility of wax by the skilled hand of the artist”<sup>23</sup>—a conversion called ceration.

His dilutions have an antecedent in the process of cohobation, or successive distillations, which alchemists were wont to repeat hundreds of times, in keeping with Trismosin’s “indefinite number of operations”.

Succussion, Hahnemann said, “is nothing less than a trituration of liquid substances” (*Org.* p. 219), which would more particularly be his own contribution, although allied to the reverberation practiced by alchemists.

Dynamization or potentization by the same token would have its correspondence in the alchemical sense of sublimation or exaltation. “If you follow me rightly,” says Paracelsus, “your medicine will be like the air which pervades and penetrates all that lies open to it, and is in all things, drives away all fixed diseases, and mingles itself radically with them, so that health takes the place of disease and follows it” (*Philosophers’ Stone*; Waite, II. p. 106).

Microdilutions bring to mind the alchemists’ insistence on the minute quantity of stone (or powder) needed for “tingeing metals”. Hence Paracelsus: “The true sign by which the Tincture of the Physicists is known, is its power of transmuting all imperfect metals into silver (if it be

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<sup>22</sup> Vithoukas, op. cit. p. 167.

<sup>23</sup> *The Hermetic Museum*, London, 1953, from Orig. Latin Ed. Frankfort, 1678; I. p. 77.

white) or gold (if it be red), if but a small particle of it be injected into a mass of such metals liquefied in a crucible” (*Rev. Natur.* ix). Now Paracelsus has already cautioned us that the purpose of alchemy is not, “as some madly assert,” to make gold and silver, but rather to make arcana for the curing of disease. The above citation on transmuting, moreover, is taken from an alchemical tract called *Helvetius’ Golden Calf* (*Hermetic Museum*, II), by Johann Friedrich Schweitzer (1625–1709), generally known as Helvetius, a cultured German distinguished for his medical knowledge, and physician to the Prince of Orange. To dispel any doubts about his intended meaning in this tract, Helvetius dedicated it to three physicians, one an intimate friend, one court physician to the Count Palatine of Heidelberg, and the third court physician to the Elector of Brandenburg. He announces furthermore on the first page that “Even in our degenerate age...the Medicine is prepared which is worth twenty tons of gold, nay, more, for it has virtue to bestow that which all the gold of the world cannot buy, viz., health. Blessed is that physician who knows our soothing medicinal Potion.”

That Paracelsus was recognized for his minuscule medicinal doses appears in the skeptic Robert Burton’s (1577-1640) *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where he mocks the spagyrist: “He brags moreover that he was the First of Physicians, and did more famous cures than all the Physicians in Europe besides; a drop of his preparations should go further than a dram or ounce of theirs, those loathsome and fulsome filthy potions, heterocritical pills (so he calls them), horse medicines, at the sight of which the Cyclops Polyphemus would shudder.”

What Paracelsus understands by “a drop” is unequivocal: “You must know that the dose of this medicine is so small and so light as is scarcely credible. It should only be taken in wine, or something of that kind, and always in the smallest quantity on account of its celestial power, virtue, and efficacy” (*Philosophers’ Stone*; Waite, II. p. 105).

The famous Catalan alchemist, Arnold of Villanova (1235?-1312?), claimed his elixir was capable of transmuting base metals one thousand times its own weight (Holmyard, p. 122), the same ratio as given in *The Sophic Hydrolith* (*Hermetic Museum*, I. p. 88), while Helmontius (van Helmont) in his *On Life Eternal* says “one grain of our powder had transmuted into purest gold 19,186 times its own weight of quicksilver—and this process can be repeated indefinitely” (*Golden Calf*).

Roger Bacon (1214?-1294) goes one better, asserting his stone could transmute a million times as much base metal into gold (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th Ed., entry *Alchemy*).

“This Philosophers’ Stone not only transmutes one weight,” Paracelsus informs us, “but this transmutes another, and this again another, and so on, in so far that these mutations might be extended almost endlessly, just as one light kindles a second, and this second a third” (*Archidoxies, De Arcana*; Waite, II. p. 43).

And the seventeenth-century English alchemist, George Starkey (Eirenaeus Philalethes), likewise writes in *The Stone of the Philosophers: Embracing the First Matter and the Dual*

*Process for the Vegetable and Metallic Tinctures* (Ch. XIII), that the virtue of the tincture “is proportioned to the number of circulations;...every time it is thus treated its virtues are increased, in a ratio of ten to one hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, etc., both in medicinal and transmuting qualities; so that a small quantity may suffice for the purposes of an artist during the remaining term of his life.” And the stone (Ch. XII) easily dissolves in any liquid, “in which a few grains being taken its operation most wonderfully pervades the human body, to the extirpation of all disorders, prolonging life by its use to its utmost period; and hence it has obtained the appellation of ‘Panacea’ or a universal remedy. Therefore be thankful to the Most High for the possession of such an inestimable jewel, and account the possession of it not as the result of your own ingenuity, but a gift bestowed of God’s mere bounty, for the relief of human infirmities.”<sup>24</sup>

Helvetius’ initial skepticism regarding small doses comes out in a story he tells on himself in his *Golden Calf*. He had suggested through a polemical tract directed against the Sympathetic Powder of Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665), English author, diplomat, adventurer, and part-time alchemist, that the Grand Arcanum might after all be but a “gigantic hoax”—which said tract provoked a visit on the 27 December 1666 from a mysterious stranger whom Helvetius refers to as the Artist Elias. On learning that for all his alchemical lore Helvetius had never been able to prepare the Universal Medicine, the stranger removed from “a cunningly-worked ivory box” three large pieces “of a substance resembling glass, or pale sulphur,” which he said contained enough “Tincture for the production of 20 tons of gold.” The curiosity of the physician was piqued, and he importuned the Artist on a subsequent visit some three weeks later, if he would not reveal the secret, at least to part with a piece of his precious Stone. The stranger finally complied in handing over a fragment the size of a rape or mustard seed, whereupon the doctor, discountenanced, had the imprudence to intimate that this crumb might not suffice to transform any appreciable mass of lead.

His visitor eagerly retrieved the particle, and dividing it with his thumb, threw one half into the fire and gave back the other, saying: “Even now it is sufficient for you.” At this point the baffled Helvetius confessed that when he had first held the ivory box in his hand he had managed to scrape away with his nail an atom or two of the substance and later to project it onto lead, which had only caused an explosion leaving behind a puddle of glassy earth. The stranger quipped that his host “was more expert at theft than at the application of the Tincture,” explaining that the experiment had aborted through a failure to envelop the spoil in yellow wax before consigning it to the crucible. More information Helvetius could not extort from the Artist, who gave a few pointers on alchemy in general, then left never to return.

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<sup>24</sup> C. A. Burland, *The Arts of the Alchemists*, London, 1967, pp. 177-8.

At his wife's insistence, however, Helvetius, did soon try the operation again, with the precaution this time to wrap his minute fragment in wax; whereupon there resulted a most remarkable transformation, with the lead turning into the purest gold imaginable.

The story on a literal plane defies credibility (the scene, for example, where the Artist casually discards half the fragment of Stone in the fire, when he had on a previous occasion rebuffed Helvetius' entreaties for a piece in protesting that preferably to sharing it he would immediately cast the entire contents into the flames, "if fire could be burnt of fire").

On a historical plane, however, the episode retains an element of mystery. Both Porelius, the general Assay-Master or Examiner of Coins at The Hague, and Brechtel, goldsmith and minter to the Duke of Orange, confirmed the high quality of his gold, which Helvetius guarded in his possession as evidence of the veracity of transmutation. Reports of the affair reached Spinoza, who later came to The Hague, first visiting the goldsmith and then Helvetius, who showed him the gold nugget and the crucible in which it had been produced, with some gold still clinging to the inside. Spinoza came away convinced of the miracle—the only fitting term for it if true. And even two centuries later Hermann Kopp, the German chemist and historian of chemistry, preferred to reserve judgment.<sup>25</sup>

One can ask why, if concocting medicines is all that alchemy is about, did alchemists cloak their art in such mystery? The answer is that fabricating medicines was only the adjunct of a much more essential goal, the healing and restitution of the soul to God, with cosmological chemistry (including certain erotic elements) as the support for this. By its nature such a Hermetic path had to be restricted to qualified adepts.

It was Hahnemann who, while fully pious, nonetheless turned the art into a substantially secular practice, in accordance with the rationalistic humanism of his times. Paracelsus with his clarity/obscurity was the predestined forerunner of this later and cosmically necessary alternative to the sweeping inroads of scientific materialism, and its physicochemical approach to all organic functioning. Senn, who follows the saying that "no poison exists without its antidote", has emphasized the providential arrival of homoeopathy on the scene just at the time when vaccination was being introduced by Hahnemann's contemporary, Edward Jenner (1749-1823). And Senn cannot be charged with a prejudiced attitude towards modern medicine, for he writes: "One has to recognize that the allopathic medicinal arsenal has in the last decades prodigiously enriched itself in weapons of all calibers. One can only acclaim the extraordinary conquests of modern medicine, both from a diagnostic and therapeutic viewpoint.

"However, means are one thing, and their use quite another." He speaks about the abuse of medicaments through medical ignorance, and through infatuation with every new fad in drugs, none of which can be taken with impunity. Preventative therapy itself can be a two-edged sword, depending on how it is understood and applied to the stresses of modern living.

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<sup>25</sup> Seligmann, p. 178, and Holmyard, p. 253.

“One has to keep away from any kind of monomaniacal and sectarian idea maintaining there is only one single therapy that can restore a patient’s health. Nature will always remain the best ally, for it has always known how to heal spontaneously.

“In other words, it seems altogether admissible, reasonable, and even indispensable to adapt a therapeutic program in the light of modern knowledge, while making a choice. The drama with official medicine is precisely that it offers no alternatives, and obstinately refuses access to other therapeutic solutions when it does not openly obstruct such access. The disconcerting powerlessness of laboratory analyses to reveal and likewise objectify the origin of certain troubles, which are nonetheless duly verified in many cases, should never justify one’s being content to tag the patient with that handy label: psychosomatic” (op. cit. Ch. XI).

The truth in such cases is that the illness has insidiously evolved to a deeper psychosensorial level. And it is here, precisely, that homoeopathy can be particularly efficacious, since it has in its nature the power to heal on the mental and psychic planes, as well as the physical. But as Senn indicates, the ways are multiple, and among other legitimate therapies that have their efficacy according to circumstances can be included thermal baths, medicinal herbs, dietary regimens, physiotherapy, and acupuncture, not forgetting the healing art of the shaman, such as practiced by the American Indian medicine men.

Helvetius recognized the latitude of options in writing that “between the different metals there exists a sympathy such as that between the magnet and steel, gold and quicksilver, silver and copper; and this sympathy is the *rationale* of the transmutation of metals. On the other hand, there are also metallic antipathies, such as that of lead to tin, of iron to gold, of lead to mercury—antipathies which have their counterpart in the animal and vegetable worlds. An accurate and comprehensive knowledge of these sympathies and antipathies is the one great qualification of every man who aspires to be a Master of this Art” (pp. 299-300). No curative system of course is immune from the mediocrity or even sheer incompetence of any who may be practicing unworthily—and this includes those physicians lacking in diagnostic skill, which deficiency will vitiate any other qualities they may possess; expert perception and judgment here depend more on intuitive synthesis than on analytical inquiry.

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Organic disease is the terrain for homoeopathy. With acute illnesses homoeopathic medicines that are judiciously chosen and applied as a single remedy (a preparation “should be made as does not consist of a number of ingredients”—Paracelsus, *Archidoxies*, X.viii) in a minimum dose can set in motion virtually on the instant, a radical healing process resulting in permanent cure. Of his arcanum, Paracelsus says: “I grant that after its preparation it is a greater and more potent poison than before; but it is such a poison as seeks after its like, to find out fixed and other incurable diseases, and to expel them. It does not suffer the disease to speed its course and do injury, but as if it were an enemy to the disease it attracts the kindred matter to itself, consumes it

from the very roots, and washes it as soap washes the spots from a foul rag, along with which spots the soap retires also, leaving the rag pure, uninjured, clean, and fair to look upon” (*Philosophers’ Stone*, Waite, II. pp. 103-4).

In the case of chronic illnesses, the cure can require a number of years, as layer by layer, hidden and deep-seated disequilibriums in the constitution—maybe going back for generations—surface to be eliminated.

Hahnemann taught that chronic disorders come from three basic diatheses (the constitutional predisposition to a category of disease) which he called *miasms*: the Psoric Miasm, the Syphilitic Miasm, and the Sycosis Miasm. These represent not individual illnesses but rather groupings of organic malfunctioning. Significantly, he found that treatment for these three miasms responded best through the use respectively of Sulphur, Mercury, and Thuja (*Arbor vitae*).<sup>26</sup> We do not know if a chemical affinity exists between Thuja occidentalis and sodium chloride, but if *Arbor vitae* here is replaced by salt, we have Paracelsus’s hypostatical principles or *tria prima*.

One advantage of homoeopathic remedies is that they leave no toxicity in the system, all residue of the original substance having been eliminated through the successive dilutions. Thus the remedy used in curing one disease cannot render the patient debilitated, or worse, create another. An inadequate prescription, moreover, leaves the patient where he was before: it engages no reaction in the organism.

A further merit of homoeopathy is that even where the diagnosis is doubtful, successful treatment still is possible provided that the single remedy prescribed corresponds correctly to the patient’s *propria* or totality of characteristic symptoms. For as was said earlier, the patient in a certain way is his illness, so that homoeopaths tend, as did Paracelsus, to define the malady by the remedy that matches the symptoms. Thus, even with an epidemic such as measles or cholera, no two patients will manifest exactly the same symptoms although the epidemic will fall within a certain class of disease. And here again, the treatment is not aimed at killing the particular germ, microbe, or virus involved (which Kent says cannot be considered the fundamental cause of the disease, but simply the scavenger immediately accompanying it), but rather at the specific metabolic deficiency that has allowed the bacteria entrance in the first place, and which when rectified will immunize the system against further ravages. It is noteworthy that in the Hindu system of Ayurvedic Medicine, “The study of medicines frequently assumed greater importance than the study of the disease. If the symptoms were prominent a medicine was prescribed for the symptoms, leaving the disease otherwise severely alone.”<sup>27</sup>

The process, we repeat, works in a centrifugal—or what amounts to an “antievolutionist”—progression, from the center towards the periphery: “Every cell in man has its representative of

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<sup>26</sup> Harris L. Coulter, *Homoeopathic Medicine*, St. Louis, 1975, p. 39.

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World*, London, 1968, entry on “Medicine”.

the innermost, the middle and the outermost,” says Kent (*Lecture IV*); “there is no cell in man that does not have its will and understanding, its soul stuff or limbus or simple substance, and its material substance.

“Disease must flow in accordance with this order, because there is no inward flow. Man is protected against things flowing in from the outward toward the center. All disease flows from the innermost to the outermost, and unless drug substances are prepared in a form to do this they can neither produce nor cure disease.” Those remedies which are correctly prepared set in motion a purificatory procedure which the alchemists called coction, whereby the residues of toxic matter are localized and ultimately eliminated by the body. This is a reason why the final stages of a disease may manifest in skin eruptions and rashes. In the case where a morbid condition is driven inward by wrong medication, it is not that it “flows” inward: what it does is re-establish itself by fastening upon a more interior organ.

As might be imagined, homoeopathic prescriptions—worked out through “provings” on healthy volunteers—have developed into an enormous pharmacopoeia running into several thousand remedies, although the ones generally used number in the hundreds. The *materia medicas* most frequently consulted here are Allen’s 10-volume *Encyclopaedia*, Hering’s 10-volume *Guiding Symptoms*, and Clark’s shorter *Dictionary*. In this domain the alchemists had a cosmological knowledge *a priori* of the inner properties or “astrological” dimensions of substances as relating to the human organism, which rendered the more experimental aspect of “provings” unnecessary for them. But Hahnemann came at a later time, when traditional sciences were no longer operative; and his boast of being the one to introduce definitively the *similimum* procedure of curing to the world is incontestable, if one understands that he is speaking in terms of official medicine, without reference to whatever might have been known and practiced in closed Hermetical circles of the past—the Paracelsian current included.

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Homoeopathy reached the United States in 1825, with the first college in Allentown, Pennsylvania. By the turn of the century about one quarter of the entire medical profession in the country was composed of homeopaths, according to Kenneth R. Pelletier, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco (Coulter puts the figure at a more modest one sixth). But concerted attacks by the American Medical Association in collaboration with the big drug companies over licensing standards, along with the Flexnor Report in 1910, brought about the forced closing of all United States homoeopathic medical schools. It is not a cause for astonishment that an article slighting Homoeopathy, entered under this heading in the 1966 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, was written by the President of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, and Director of Medical Relations; whereas an unsigned article in an earlier edition (14th, 1929) is altogether favorable, saying: “We can scarcely now estimate the

force of character and of courage which was implied in his [Hahnemann's] abandoning the common lines of medicine.”

The teaching and practice continue legally today in South America, the Orient, Europe and England, where the Royal Family from Hahnemann's time have been adherents of the regimen.

In our present world countless millions of people are afflicted with one form or another of iatrogenic disease (morbidity from physician and drug-induced causes). What is the prognosis for homeopathy's chances of revival—let alone survival—in the years to come?

In the light of our current high-intensity industrialized medicine, the prospects are at best equivocal. It partly depends perhaps on the degree of physical indisposition people are willing to tolerate before changes are insisted upon. Here is how a leading homoeopathic physician evaluates the problem:

Homoeopathy refuses to reveal its secrets to a casual enquirer. The study of an individual in his illness, though fascinating, is sufficiently time-consuming. It caters essentially to the idealistic type of mind which craves for the satisfaction that comes from “a job well done”, and which considers material gains as only incidental. It will suit the hard-working conscientious physician with a philosophical bent of mind which takes readily to the study of the emotional and intellectual sides of man. It will suit a physician who has an individual bent of mind and strong convictions that enable him to swim against the current and even isolate himself from the medical fraternity, if need be. Homoeopathy demands full adherence to its principles if consistent results are to be obtained.

Thus, it will hardly appeal to a physician with a mechanical bent of mind which is so essential for the making of a good surgeon. Persons hankering after “mass treatments” and “specifics” will be disillusioned. Physicians who look forward to a life of ease and comfort and who are “constitutionally averse to work” will abhor the practice of homoeopathy and, if at all they take to it, they will bring little credit either to the Science or to themselves. Although homoeopathy never lets down badly its faithful follower and assures him a reasonable living and standing in the community, the material gains are not such as to satisfy the more ambitious!<sup>28</sup>

It is fitting to close the present survey on alchemy and homoeopathy with the words of Elias Artista, in Helvetius' *Golden Calf*, reminding the reader that the term Universal Medicine (the Azoth of Paracelsus) has both the lesser meaning of medicines based on correspondences

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<sup>28</sup> Dhawale, *Principles and Practice of Homoeopathy*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1967, pp. 23-4 (cited in Coulter, *Homoeopathic Medicine*, p. 72).



between the outer and inner universes (macrocosm and microcosm) and the greater meaning of healing through the Divine power that can reintegrate the soul back into its archetypal essence:

It is quite true that in your common, tinkering Medicinal Art, which seeks to counteract only the separate symptoms or manifestations of disease, there is no room for an Universal Medicine. But the true physician knows that all disease (whatever shape it may assume) is simply a depression of the vital spirits, and that whatever strengthens vitality will cut off the possibility of disease at the very source, expelling the humors which each produce their own peculiar malady, and I maintain that our Universal Medicine is a remedy of this radical kind. It gently promotes and quickens the movement of the vital spirits, and thus, by renewing the source of life, renovates and quickens the whole frame, infusing new vitality and strength into every part. For this reason adepts call it the Great Mystery of Nature, and the preventative of old age and disease. By its aid any man may live the full term of days naturally allotted to him, and need have no fear of contagion, even when the plague, or some other malignant epidemic, is striking down hundreds of his neighbors.

“Blessed,” says Helvetius, “is he to whom the knowledge of our Art is vouchsafed in answer to prayer throughout all his work for the Holy Spirit! For it should be remembered that this is the only way in which our Art of Arts is vouchsafed to man, and if you would attain it, the service of God ought to be your chief business.”