

New approaches within the history and theory of medicine and its relevance for homeopathy

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Introduction

Despite its many impressive achievements during the last two hundred years, full recognition and appreciation of homeopathy by conventional medicine is still lacking.

How can this *paradox* be explained, how can it be resolved?

The thesis I am suggesting in my presentation is that conventional medicine's rejection of homeopathy's claim of being a scientific medicine stems mainly from an inaccurate understanding of the scope, prospects, and limits of science and its appropriate status in our lives. Hence, if we want to gain a fresh and uncaged look upon reality, rather than conforming to the uncritical state of conventional sciences, we may have to radicalize their approach to the point where they have to reveal their own presuppositions and restricted validity.

Theory of medicine

To summarize the results of an analysis of some modern sciences, such as *quantum physics*, *epistemology*, and *history of science*, (that can be read up in the published full version of this paper), it seems clear today that naïve realism, materialism, and objectivism, as they are still utilized in conventional medicine, are untenable and anachronistic.

The *theory of medicine*, on the other hand, has suggested progressive dynamic models of man, such as the biopsychosocial model, which outstrips the conventional mechanistic approach and suggests a functional, cybernetic, and semiotic understanding of the patient in his environment. By means of this model, the practice of homeopathy may be represented and explained in a scientific way, without being hampered by conventional materialistic objections.

However, this most advanced and scientific view of man is nothing like as well known and widespread in the medical community as the conventional, comparatively trivial, materialistic one. To answer this second *paradox*, we have to leave the medical and the natural sciences for a moment and consider the social sciences, the so-called humanities, as well.

Socio-economics

From the perspective of *sociology*, humans are social beings, i.e. they associate and socialize, building up societies – in a specific way. A critical insight here is the mutual interdependence between individual subjects and society as a whole. Since a society is not an aggregation of material things, but the result of mental processes of meaning, performed both individually and collectively, its form and existence depend on its own reconstruction process by its subjects, who in turn are constituted and influenced by an incessant collective construction and upholding of meanings.

An example from *communication science* may make this point a bit clearer. From a critical perspective, language appears to be a social phenomenon. It needs intersubjectivity, i.e. dialogue partners, and cannot be created or developed by a solipsistic person on a lonely island. Even an hermit can only converse with himself or with his God, if he has learned to speak in a social framework before: in contact with his mother, family, friends, or colleagues. We are actually born into our language, it is first and we (as its speakers) are second. That way, it constitutes us as native speakers of German (as in my and Hahnemann's case), or of English, Hindi etc. Language is a process of meaning, whose actuality depends on the performance and participation of its speakers.

- On the other hand, to understand what language is, one cannot approach it from outside, from an allegedly neutral position, but one has to participate.

Applied to homeopathy, these intermediate results from critical social sciences suggest the conclusion that analogously there can be no way to understand homeopathy without participation, i.e. without truly practicing it. Nevertheless, when language, science, and homeopathy are social processes of meaning, the questions arise: What kind of meaning is being processed, and in what mode and manner?

At first glance, *economic science* does not seem to have anything to do with this issue, but taking a deeper look, it turns out that economy has a tremendous impact on virtually every realm of our lives, from the way we view ourselves to the way we run our sciences.

From a critical perspective, it turns out that money is not a thing, a substance, or anything owning an intrinsic value, but just a form of thinking, a mode by means of which people socialize in modern capitalistic societies. Just as we always find ourselves in the midst of the language spoken in our country, we always find ourselves in the midst of a specific form of thinking in terms of money. As we cannot learn to speak without participating and thus accepting the language spoken in our infant environment, our mother tongue, we also cannot learn to think and calculate without participating and accepting the logic of money as the origin of our basic logical categories.

Together with the insights of critical sociology, theory of science, constructivism, etc., this means, that our view of the world in which we live is mainly constituted by our thinking in terms of money, since all our thought processes have ever since been infiltrated with money as a form of thinking. It is only because money is nothing more than an abstract form of thinking, that it can actually transform everything it touches into a commodity. Contrary to living beings or physical goods, however, money is free of any qualitative attributes, it is bare abstract quantity, yet can be augmented by smart trading, but also by means of interest. While natural resources cannot be infinitely proliferated, money can or, at least, has the inherent temptation to do so.

Hence, in capitalist civilizations the basic intention pervading all realms of life and culture, the utmost incentive, end, and merit is the turnover and multiplication of money, called economic growth. To that aim, everything and everybody has to be considered to be a means for financial gain. That is why physicians, as well as pharmaceutical companies (if they like it or not), have to use patients as a means to make money, why scientists (if they like it or not) have to deliver results that meet the expectations of their sponsors, and why needs for new products are incessantly created by advertising targeted at the acquisition of new customers. In fact, the gross domestic product, i.e. the grade of monetization of as many areas of life as possible, is considered an indicator of the standard of living in a country. The gross domestic product, however, is only a quantitative measurement, ignoring all the qualitative dimensions life may have.

History

The predominance of money, however, is not inevitable and is not an anthropological constant or similar. The *science of history* can show that this has not always been the case, at least not to this extreme degree. By means of a comparative approach, involving the *history of economics* as well, it becomes obvious, how many profound and dramatic cultural and scientific changes had occurred in strict correlation with the rise of modern monetary thinking during the last centuries, up to the present.

Roughly speaking, during the Middle Ages agriculture and subsistence economy prevailed and money, in the form of gold or silver coins, played no prominent role, except at the courts of dukes and kings. The majority of people lived, worked, ate and drank and helped each other mainly without interposing money or financial calculation upon their actions. The sick

and invalid were cared for in their families or in hospices of fraternities or monasteries, and healers were paid in kind.

As soon as the first stock markets were founded and bank notes printed, however, a hitherto unknown disquietness, agitation, and dynamic emerged, aroused by the incentive to proliferate money and wealth by establishing new trade connections. This resulted in the discovery and conquest of new continents, colonization and slavery, as well as exploitation and contamination of nature.

It was in the wake of these fundamental changes of living, striving, and judging, triggered by the new status of money as the predominate form of thinking, that the *modern natural sciences* emerged, by means of an explicit emancipation from traditional teleological thinking. Since Francis Bacon, in the 17th century, the basic attitude of modern scientists towards nature is no longer respect and the wish to live in harmony with her, but the temptation to prise out her secrets (with screws and clamps) and control her, because money can be made with inventions based on knowledge gained in that fashion. Quantification, mathematization, standardization, reproducibility, materialism, positivism, reductionism, etc., i.e. concepts on which *conventional modern science*, and from the 19th century, *conventional modern medicine* are essentially founded, would not make sense without the context of the socialization process in terms of money in modern capitalistic societies. To indigenous cultures, these concepts must seem absurd.

Another side effect of the dominance of money, as a form of thinking, was the acceleration and concentration of all activities in life. This can be shown in *cultural studies*, provided they are done critically. After the medieval ban on usury (gombeen) was eroded and finally abandoned, as a factor for earning (or loosing) money by means of interest, the significance of time rose tremendously in public awareness. Eventually, time was actually equated with money. Clocks and watches became omnipresent, physiological time was replaced by chronometry, and clockworks became the paradigm for any kind of scientific mechanism. Besides space, time can also be, and in fact has been, exploited by charging it with ever new opportunities to make money. This kind of time compression, known under the euphemism “multitasking”, is a direct outcome of the dominance of money in capitalist civilizations. Meanwhile, its undesirable effects have also reached medical schools and medical offices.

To bring all these insights from different sciences together to a uniform conclusion, we might say that in the modern age, especially during the last 200 years, the process of socialization in terms of money in capitalistic civilizations has tremendously transformed all realms and dimensions of life, including the sciences, in a way that only material things and quantitative, exploitable relations seem to be accepted as real, while everything else is being neglected, for example qualities, values, or processes of meaning, which are intangible by these categories.

This is the reason why within *conventional medicine* the biopsychsocial model of man has no chance to play a significant role and why homeopathy is still assessed from a mechanistic background only, by means of statistics and material measurements.

Having affirmed this, as a third *paradox* the question arises, how it is at all possible both to recognize and to free oneself of this all-embracing influence, if it really has infiltrated everybody's mind and logic.

Homeopathy

At this point, the *history of homeopathy* may provide the crucial key. To be sure, any investigation about the essence of homeopathy has to consider its founder, Samuel Hahnemann, and his own method of healing.

In contrast, conventional modern medicine is ahistorical and non-personal, constituted during the last two centuries by a variety of socio-economic conditions, incentives, and

interests, and can be practiced without knowing anyone of its historic protagonists by name or character.

In comparison, homeopaths practice a system of medicine which was founded by a single human being, who lived an exemplary moral life, free of conflicting interests, or the like.

So, homeopaths have a direct human paradigm to follow in terms of righteousness, trustworthiness, and uncompromising quest for truth.

Hahnemann actually lived before the tremendous impact of rationalization in terms of money had infiltrated all societies, cultures, and sciences, especially modern medicine. At present everybody is socialized from infancy to a way of thinking whose function is to ensure the expansion of money markets rather than to find anything like truth. When conventional medical doctors today are advised by non-medical officials, such as laboratory engineers, pharmacists, attorneys, economists, politicians, etc., what to do and what to prescribe, their decisions are almost completely remote-controlled by monetary interests.

As a counterweight, homeopaths can still learn from Hahnemann, how it was and how it would be when a doctor dares to think and act on his own account, vouching with his conscience and faith, while thus largely immunizing themselves to modern forms of thinking in terms of money and monetizing.

The homeopathic method, on the other hand, provides a powerful corrective for all those whose minds are infiltrated and dominated by money as a form of thinking. All the more homeopaths, knowing that by means of the principle of similars true healings can be accomplished, should be well-disposed to avail themselves of this method, to heal themselves from miasms of any kind, including mental ones.

Eventually, the approach I have presented in this paper, may prove to be homeopathic in a broad sense, resembling the Buddhist or Hindu approach of reducing illusions rather than the causal-analytic one of conventional modern medicine. It rests on the assumption that the late-borne children of a late capitalist era have to start thinking with bewildered minds anyway, just in analogy to psoric patients whose life-force is said to be deranged. If, according to Hahnemann (in a preface to *Chronic Diseases*, 1838), the deranged life-force faces its enemy in the form of a slightly enlarged image, i.e. as potentized remedy, it will be restored, will raise its energy, and defeat the miasm. Instead of being dominated any more, it will regain its sovereignty.

Analogously, modern subjects of heteronomy would have to detect their mental miasms, such as thinking in the form of money, and face them, in a condensed form, i.e. brought to the point, and in an uncompromising way, in order to get the chance to rid themselves of them, thus clearing their minds.

If this happens, the homeopath will finally be able to also free homeopathy from parasitic economic interests and capitalist schemes, such as incessantly introducing new competing schools, evaluation tools, and marketing strategies, and realize – on a conscious and scientific level – that homeopathy could also be perfectly practiced in subsistence economies, without significant monetary transactions on the market.

Conclusion

In conclusion, being true to Hahnemann may have more challenging consequences than just prescribing homeopathic remedies.

First of all, his righteous and strong character may inspire his followers to dare to think freely and independently.

Secondly, a comprehensive interpretation of his principle of similars may lead them to an extensive study – by means of all modern sciences – of the conditions which are limiting and distorting their free and faithful thinking and acting.

And thirdly, if they finally recognize them and get rid of them, they free themselves as well as homeopathy, whose core has been unsettled by monetary influences in the past in an exponentially increasing way.

As a coherent side-effect, the true Hahnemannian will thus embark on a way leading to the ultimate challenge of life which in ancient Greek philosophy was called: “gnothi seauton” (know yourself), corresponding to what in Vedantic Upanishads is considered the utmost wisdom: to realize “tat twam asi” (that is you).