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Eight Themes of Hahnemann Seen Through Haehl.

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Detail from a print called 'Mad Dogs', Jack Vettriano 1994, meaning 'mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun' from a Noel Coward song of the 20s. May 1999. Peter Morrell

Eight Themes of Hahnemann Seen Through Haehl

1. What he condemned

As a young physician c.1783, "he strongly opposes the use of alcohol, coffee, the internal use of corrosive sublimate and the customary application of lead plasters and lead ointment." [30] He saw no possible hope or



usefulness in these methods.

Frustrated by the medicine of his day, "*he repeatedly complains of the unreliability of the pharmaceutical preparations.*" [32] Gradually, "*he recognised the insufficiency of medical science...which he denounced with undaunted energy and eloquence like the old prophets.*" [33] Persistently "*he fought the pernicious habit of blood-letting and purging, particularly prevalent in his time.*" [35] He "*repeatedly and unhesitatingly attacks the evil of blood-letting.*" [40] Together, his complaints against the system of his training persuade him to abandon medical practice entirely and forsake it for literary activity. To that extent, "*he withdrew more and more from medical practice, which gave him no inward satisfaction,*" [40] and he thus immersed himself "*deeper into the science of chemistry.*" [40] Yet, to medicine he remained "*strongly and closely attached,*" [40] and so it is "*only outwardly that he appears to be estranged from the art of healing.*" [40] From 1784 to 1804 approx he had "*almost entirely given up his medical activities.*" [41]

What was it that had so totally convinced Hahnemann of these views? What was the real basis for his vehement opposition to the old methods? What was this innate conviction that drive this position forwards? What had convinced him so totally and unflinchingly that the old methods were useless? Was it something in his life experience? Or, was it something in his own disposition that made him think so resolutely this way? It is not clear.

He never tired of condemning the barbaric methods of his day: "*blood-letting, fever remedies, tepid baths, lowering drinks, weakening diet, blood cleansing and everlasting aperients and clysters form the circle in which the ordinary German physician turns round unceasingly.*" [35, quote from SH in his Cullen Materia Medica translation of 1790] He carried on his "*fight against blood-letting, purging and aperients with growing zeal,*" [36] and energy. Hahnemann never tired of denouncing "*the delusions of the ordinary methods of healing,*" [64] in the strongest and most unrelenting way possible.



As far as he was concerned, ordinary medical theory comprised "*arbitrary opinions and false conclusions,*" [65] and its methods were disastrous. The method of "*contraria contrariis, healing opposites by opposites, is objectionable.*" [65] Such "*palliative treatment of constipation by laxatives, of blood surges by phlebotomy, of acid eructations with alkalies, of chronic pains with Opium...does the more*

injury the longer it is applied." [66] By contrast, in truth, "*every effective remedy incites in the human body a kind of illness peculiar to itself.*" [66] Hahnemann proposed, "*as a result of too strong doses and too frequent administration an artificial disease will arise of a more acute nature.*" [68] The patient soon becomes addicted to whatever medicines relieve their symptoms. They easily become addicted to laxatives in this way. Hahnemann was quick to realise that no drug-based treatment is other than dependency. They do not cure. Either self-healing occurs or the disease becomes chronic.

He repudiated the "*mixing of medicines...and prescription tomfoolery,*" [74] which he never tired of attacking. He took "*up arms against the prescription writing so popular at that time.*" [68] He very much tended to see allopathy and homeopathy as "*the formal opposing of two therapeutic systems, which could not be intermingled...the one excluding the other.*" [68] Those who tried to mix two systems he called mixers or amphibians or half-homeopaths. He therefore saw them as irreconcilable opposites that could not be blended. He wholeheartedly derided the "*long recipes...and medicinal hashes,*" [69] of the allopathic system. He derided "*basis...adjuvens...corrigens...dirigens and constituens,*" [69] as forming an absurd basis for an equally absurd pharmacy and in turn an absurd and injurious medicine.

Hahnemann despised the heroic allopathic measures: "*cupping, bloodletting, purgatives in the spring, and starvation cures, were believed to be all that was required to restore the balance of a disordered state of health.*" [49] He opposed them all. His "*candid and unsparing criticism of the position of medical science at that time,*" [59] engendered much resentment among orthodox physicians. He obviously said things they did not want to hear, things that were most disagreeable and uncomfortable to their ears. Hahnemann showed "*his accurate knowledge of the history of the healing art, and of its different systems. He rejects them all.*" [77] His "*sharp criticism of the customary therapeutics of the times,*" [79] was unrelenting in its ferocity and most disagreeable to regular physicians. "*Allopathy, the wide and ancient highway of school medicine...homeopathy, the narrow, new and little used pathway leading to fresh country.*" [89] He never tired of condemning "*the imperfections of the ordinary medical art...[are] an elaborately adorned monster, a misleading phantom...[and] a futile, injurious procedure.*" [79; from On the Prevailing Fever, 1808] He saw no hope and no possibility of cure from using these methods.



The aim of his contemporaries was "*always directed towards cleaning out of the organs, the diseased excess of accumulated, inflamed blood, driving out the unhealthy juices and leading them into healthy*

parts, etc." [62-3] Hahnemann entirely repudiated this humours-based approach to therapy as utterly useless and he mocked the 'unhealthy juices' concept as nothing more than a laughable and hypothetical fiction, bearing no relation to the reality of disease cause. It was precisely such so-called purificatory measures that he detested and regarded as useless because they were founded on an obsolete theory of health and sickness, as well as being injurious – in his view.

"He inveighed against the manifold compounded medicines and against the prescription of multi-mixtures." [77] Hahnemann "rejected and fought against the theories of disease origin and diagnosis, as known in his time." [290]

He resisted "*phlebotomy, emetics, purgatives, etc."* [302] The chief idea behind these methods was purificatory, to "*clear away harmful substances from the body by excessive perspiration or urination...or eruptions...to provide a mode of exit for internal poisons.*" [302] Allopathy therefore aimed to "*clean out the imagined disease substance...by emetics, purgatives, agents provoking salivation, perspiration and urination, drawing plasters, suppuratives.*" [303] It is precisely such imagined 'humoral poisons' that were regarded as the true causes of sickness and which such methods aimed to vigorously expel. Hahnemann felt these measures were way too vigorous and in any case directed against the wrong enemy – a straw man. They were illusory.

As a physician, he soon became "*convinced of the imperfections of the old healing method of healing.*" [255] His "*campaign against blood-letting...emetics and purgatives and on the compound prescriptions which were so popular,*" [273] and which he regarded as "*purely arbitrary...medicines, the effects of which depend merely upon supposition,*" [273] rather than any valid therapeutic principles, was unrelenting and vehement. What had convinced him of this position?

He felt obliged by sheer force of conscience to "*renounce the practice of a profession which was so dear to him,*" [273] but which he was forced to distance himself from because he regarded it as corrupt and injurious.

The upshot of all these criticisms is that Hahnemann clearly had some underlying, undisclosed reason or agenda that formed the real basis of his views. As if he was already driven by certain convictions, predisposed towards certain views, and was impatient merely to denounce the established methods with unrestrained vigour. This is the distinct impression he leaves on one.

2. Systems

Hahnemann had a very clear

notion of the various medical systems of his day as well as those of the past; he rejected them all as useless. He did this not on prejudice or dogma, but on long and detailed knowledge of each and a thorough practical appraisal of his own that forced him to this conclusion. He perceived more clearly than most "*what a hopeless confusion was prevailing in the therapy of his time.*" [266] The various systems had been thrown into an undignified competition with each other, "*where one tried to oust the other.*" [266] Certainly, Hahnemann saw this as a "*period of hopeless confusion in therapeutics...and it is in the midst of these contradictory systems and therapeutic tendencies that he was educated and received his medical training.*" [266] Hahnemann's time as a medical student falls precisely in "*this period of hopeless confusion in therapeutics...[and] as a young doctor...[he finds himself] in the midst of these contradictory systems and therapeutic tendencies.*" [266] At this time also, "*Leipzig had not even a clinic or a hospital of its own,*" [266] and this is why Hahnemann felt "*compelled to go to Vienna,*" [266] in order to obtain a better medical training. Thus, the young graduate was "*full of confidence...full of fervid zeal to use the knowledge and ability he had acquired in the interests of his fellow men.*" [267] But he also possessed "*a keener power of observation, a more profound reflection, a more critical appreciation of values...[and] he was soon able to realise how unreliable...how valueless, how inadequate the artificially constructed healing systems were for use at the bedside.*" [267]

3. Unhappy Wandering - a Lost Medical Career

With considerable bitterness of "*his renunciation of medical practice.*" [63] Because of "*the unhappy external conditions he was experiencing at that time,*" [63] "*his escape to scientific investigation with translations, writing and chemical research,*" [63] was clearly a refuge, an important sanctuary from the terrible despondency he felt at a lost medical career.

He engaged in "*five years of restless wandering from 1780 to 1785.*" [p.31] His "*restless inclination for travelling.*" [47] Many have wondered at "*his restless movements from one place to another,*" [63] Far from being a distraction, the wandering life seemed to feed and intensify the intellectual energies required to solve these riddles. And let us never forget that the 'softness of heart' that Haehl ascribes to Hahnemann also enshrines that same high sentiment of conscience, which prevented him from using a poisonous medical system that harmed its patients. He clearly preferred to abandon medicine entirely, for years, rather than be party to such a corrupt, dangerous and ineffective system. Yet, this decision was also a very painful one to him, because of the energy he had devoted to it as a career path or calling.

He became seized with "*an inward revulsion against the imperfections and inadequacies of the healing systems known to him,*" [266] and, becoming so intense, "*compelled him to renounce medical practice.*" [266]

He therefore expressed his "*growing horror...[at the] dangers...remedies and palliatives...[and became] filled with shame and assailed by torturing doubts...[at] how simple people knew more about the most dangerous illnesses and...how to deal with them successfully than the scientific physician.*" [267] His doubts "*grew and grew [and] his conscience for those who entrusted themselves to his care was more and more troubled.*" [267] Therefore, he decided, "*to give up his medical practice,*" [267] soon after his marriage in November 1782 [28], and so occupy himself solely "*with chemistry and writing.*" [267]

Haehl speculates that Hahnemann's "*continual migrations sprang from this softness of his emotional side, lacking, as it did, the inflexible will-power and inviolable capacity to resist,*" [122] the attacks by opponents. I do not find this view very convincing, as I think he merely increasingly saw even responding to such attacks as a tiresome and futile waste of his energies compared to the much valuable work he still had left to do refining his system still further. It is a stronger argument to propose that he preferred to direct his remaining energies in that direction, rather than wasting his time arguing with fools who were never going to change their views anyway.

4. The Miasm Theory

"Few books have stirred up more excitement in the medical world than Hahnemann's Chronic Diseases." [137] His "*Psora theory aroused the criticism of friend and foe to a tremendous extent.*" [137] Yet, the miasm theory undoubtedly in an attempt to reach into "*the deeper fundamentals of disease.*" [137] How can one overcome "*the tyrannous prejudice of the materialistic-bacteriological views?*" [138]

Psora, "*this thousand-headed monster.*" [145] "*symptoms of the underlying miasmatic malady.*" [145] Hahnemann's "*idea of Psora coincides to a large extent with that of inherited predisposition to disease.*" [151] As Haehl rightly observes, "*the appearance of The Chronic Diseases [1828] had given a perceptible impulse to further division amongst the members of the movement.*" [187] It was a further catalyst of division and in-fighting.

The whole idea of miassms must have been brewing for some years in Hahnemann's mind. It was based upon observation of numerous cases and a hunch about some deeper and internal causes of recurrent sickness patterns: "*the starting point for the main ideas [of miassms]...was the observation that certain chronic diseases...could be alleviated by homeopathic remedies, but not completely cured.*" [138] Nor could such disorders "*be eradicated by the mere vigour of a robust constitution...or overcome by the healthiest diet and order of life, nor annulled by itself.*" [138] To Hahnemann, "*Psora is a disease or disposition, hereditary from generation to generation for thousands of years.*" [144] It "*can be observed in the most variable forms imaginable.*" [145]. However, the Psora Theory "*did not receive unanimous*

acceptance from his followers even after Hahnemann's death." [150]

Homeopaths have assumed that "*the itch eruption could only develop on a favourable fostering ground, called internal Psora.*" [143] Psora as a miasma, therefore becomes "*the fostering soil for every possible diseased condition.*" [144] The miasm theory is in fact the logical extension of the vital force concept, and brings the vital force to its ultimate point. Both are subtle, nebulous and internal aspects of the organism—one the fundamental cause of health; the other the fundamental cause of sickness.

5. Religion and Philosophy

He "*proceeded to vitalism...advanced beyond this to spiritualism and for a time lost his way in occultism.*" [251]. It is not immediately clear what Haehl means by this puzzling remark. He was certainly a religious man, in the simple sense of believing in "*the infinite spirit animating the universe.*" [65] He would hardly have promoted such ideas if he had been a materialist! Yet, this simple statement reveals much about his ideas because he was never content with describing the external or outer aspects of disease or cure, but always searched the deeper, for an internal or animating spirit in the organism and a source of sickness operating on a similarly innate level. This describes very well his abiding ideas of vital force and miasms.

"There was scarcely any branch of human knowledge to which he was indifferent." [250] "*In temperament and development, both as man and as physician, he was a strong opponent of materialism.*" [251] "*As the starting point of his therapeutic reform he rejected materialism equally as an outlook on life and as a fundament of his new theory.*" [251]. As a result, we see in his development, that "*the essentially material had to yield more and more ground to the purely spiritual [the dynamic] came more and more into the forefront.*" [251]

Hahnemann was naturally attracted to philosophy, "*but the philosophers and their works offered him little satisfaction.*" [250-1] Yet, "*his whole cultural development was permeated by philosophy [and]...he was bound to return sooner or later to a more detailed study,*" [251] of it. He bore life's inconveniences and indignities with a "*stoical dignity.*" [251] He was "*undismayed by misfortune, satisfied in humble conditions...[and] always seeking and finding contentment in his work.*" [251] However, philosophically, "*it seems very questionable whether he definitely accepted any special system,*" [251] of ideas. Temperamentally, he was "*a strong opponent of materialism,*" [251] in all its forms. This non-materialistic attitude or "*point of view is clearly marked in...the development of homeopathy, in the conception of dynamisation, in potentising, in giving medicines to smell and in the very long intervals between... doses.*" [251] This might also explain Hahnemann's "*tendency towards Mesmerism.*" [251] Overwhelmingly, "*the turn of his mental development was*

undoubtedly towards the humanities." [249]

Haehl proposes that Hahnemann's "*belief in a God permeating every creature, all-benign, all-embracing, omnipresent, was the impulse of his every action and the deepest source of his philanthropy.*" [252] Certainly, he "*considered the principles of Confucius...to be higher than those of Christ.*" [252] This clearly reflects the essence of Freemasonry. His faith had a "*childlike simplicity and fervour,*" [252] to it, and was undoubtedly "*one of the poles of his life, determining his course of action in all things.*" [252] With regard to other philosophers, he saw Kant as "*too impractically abstract for him and not clear enough in his manner of presentation.*" [252] He had a high regard for everything Chinese.

In the course of time, it seems that Hahnemann became convinced that he had become an instrument of fate, that a "*living, benevolent God had chosen him as his tool in order that mankind...should be shown...a new method of healing.*" [252] He therefore regarded himself "*as the working tool of the Divine Will and was therefore full of confidence.*" [252] This sentiment filled him with "*a firm conviction that his method of healing and his remedies could help and rescue,*" [252] ailing humanity. This also explains "*the harshness of his duel with the allopathic physicians...[and] the inexorableness with which...he pursued vacillating or dissident disciples...[and why he often seemed] inexorable, impartially stern, untroubled about the consequences or the animosities of the dispute.*" [252-3] His attitude was "*not as the individual, autocratic creator of a new therapeutic process,*" [252] not, in other words, based on strong egotism, but rather that of "*the chosen representative of the All-supporting, living God.*" [252] This gave him a coolness, a sense of detachment from events and also illuminates his devil-may-care attitude towards any opponents of his mission. "*He felt himself to be the apostle of the new doctrine, appointed by fate and a gracious heaven.*" [99] Certainly as a person, "*he remained faithful to himself and his life's work,*" [264] and he regarded himself as "*the divinely inspired prophet of a new sacred science, destined to benefit...the whole of humanity.*" [264]



Hahnemann also saw that "*this conception of the Supreme Being... stood in the closest relationship to his medical reform laws...God was not visible, not estimable, not perceivable by the senses, but he was existing, All-powerful, all-permeating, transfiguring every creature. This conviction strengthened him in his idea...of the efficacy of small and extremely small doses in high and extremely high dilutions such as cannot be perceived by the senses or determined by science.*" [253] In this

regard, he probably delighted in the nebulous and infinitesimal nature of homeopathy as bringing it closer to the life-force, the soul and thus also the Divine. Kent also made a similar construction of homeopathy as a spiritual form of healing, Hahnemann therefore seemingly saw an innate resonance, an unbreakable link between homeopathy and the Divinity.

The link to Freemasonry is also of interest. As Haehl quite rightly observes, "*the unusually early age at which he entered Freemasonry obviously had its effect upon his philosophic and religious views.*" [253] Presumably this inspired an "*unceasing effort towards one's own moral perfection, the belief in the rule of an Omnipresent living God...[such ideas] were bound to attract a man like Hahnemann and fill him with enthusiasm.*" [253] Hahnemann occasionally refers to "*the ever-beneficent Godhead animating the infinite universe,*" [253] and various "*philosophic conceptions and a deep religious feeling permeated his whole line of thought.*" [253] He even makes a link between homeopathy and the divine when he says: "*a beneficent Godhead revealed this sublime, this most wonderful of sciences!*" [254] And also in the way he manifested "*an indomitable persistence and tenacity in the pursuit of his life's aim. Without regard for difficulties and disappointments, he went towards his purpose.*" [254]

The "*sublime Godhead, whose priests we are.*" [254] Hahnemann held a "*belief in a God permeating every creature.*" [252] He regarded himself as "*a man ordained by fate to a great mission.*" [255]

6. The Subtle Realm of Sickness Cause

When Hahnemann refers to "*the internal nature of every disease,*" [74, from Medicine of Experience, 1805] he plainly means its 'genotype' as opposed to its visible, phenotypic or external features. This is a very illuminating comment, as it clearly reveals his recurrent preference for the deeper and subtler perception of things, as opposed to their coarser more superficial appearances. Hahnemann also felt that the use of crude drugs was resonant with superficial non-curative treatment of the coarse appearances of sickness, while diluted remedies resonated naturally with the subtle realm of sickness cause. To some extent this view is spiritual or derives from a tenet of Freemasonry, that is, by belief in a supreme being, a moral code to be good and to help others, especially the needy. It is clear that Hahnemann easily fulfilled these basic requirements. He regarded the subtle realm of disease cause to be contiguous with the vital force.

7. The Life Force: the Core of his Medical Teachings



Hahnemann had essentially the same

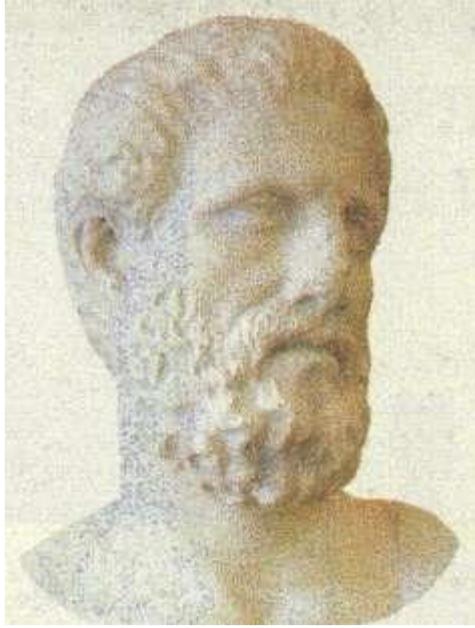
views on the natural healing powers as an illustrious band of physicians before him. According to Haehl, these include Hippocrates, Galen, Sydenham, Stahl, and the Montpellier School [282-6]. Although he believed in the vital force and built homeopathy very much around that concept, he regarded allopathy as using it only in a "*crude, unseeing, unintelligent, unreasoned,*" [287] way, whose methods were not truly enhancing of the vital powers, but in fact depleted them. "*Hahnemann's theory and ideas about vital force and natural healing power...place him close to others, e.g. the striking agreement of his views with Sydenham about natural healing power, with the basic ideas of Stahl's animism, and with the thought processes of Borda and Barthez in their vitalism.*" [289] They were clinicians prominent in the Montpellier School of France.

Hippocrates conceived of the vital force as "*an inborn power regulating... the functions of the organs and the correct relative mixture of the humours.*" [283] By the same token, "*illness is a disturbance of the healthy equilibrium.*" [283] Galen "*agreed with Hippocrates on a natural healing power inherent in the body,*" [283-4] but made many confusing remarks as well. Stahl's view was that the symptoms of "*diseases were simply the efforts of the organism...to restore the equilibrium of health.*" [284] Even in the Montpellier school, illness was seen as "*an affection of the life power and is expressed by disturbances...[it is] a reaction of the life power.*" [285]

Therefore, the primary aim of treatment is "*maintenance of those forces needed by the organism for healing, namely, those acting mechanically, chemically and dynamically.*" [285] Natural or rational treatment must therefore be conceived to assist the innate healing power, not to run counter to its own efforts. Even in Schelling's Natural Philosophy, we can see a link to Hahnemann's vital force, because he "*taught that nature was to be regarded as a self-contained whole, held together by a mental side...matter is not the origin but the result.*" [285] This view can be linked to Hahnemann's view of the vital force as the dynamic precursor of health and order at the mental and physiological level, just as he also conceived of the miasms as the dynamic precursor of disorder and sickness at the physiological level.

Clearly, therefore, in such a scenario, "*life force actuates the normal action of the body only in its healthy state and is thrown out of gear by the 'disease factor'...*" [286] which can be roughly equated with Hahnemann's miasms. There is no doubt that Hahnemann "*retained up to his death the conception of the vital force,*" [287] regarding it as a central concept of homeopathy, and as having a twofold aspect, firstly being a natural healing power "*able to transform illness into health [spontaneous cures],*" [287] and secondly, of being "*the necessary essential of all attempts at medical therapy.*" [287] That is, being acted upon by natural therapies and stimulated thereby into renewed activity. Remedies enhanced its enfeebled innate powers. Indeed, he never denied the existence of its

power, "he acknowledged the natural healing power...and saw in it a main support of his theory." [287]



Though his remarks in the Organon refer variously to natural healing and vital force in different ways, in the different editions up to "the year 1842," [287] nevertheless, there remains no doubt that he always meant the same thing and Hahnemann's meaning "remained practically unaltered," [287] throughout his entire medical career. It is roughly in keeping with the views of Hippocrates, Stahl and the Montpellier school, but not with those of Brown or Galen, Boerhaave or Hoffmann, where

the effects of the vital force are not always highly regarded or assisted or regarded as curative, or in which therapy tends to run against the natural efforts of the vital force by contrary contraries.

Hahnemann was actually violently opposed to this whole school of thought. He believed that allopathy virtually ignored the vital powers and "acted in a blind and crude way." [287] His "battle against allopathy and its methods of phlebotomy, scarification, purgatives and emetics was a battle against these false fundamental views...[which opposed] his conviction of the insufficient action of the life-force in disease." [287]

He therefore believed that in the old school the vital powers "was entirely misunderstood and wrongly construed." [288] Hahnemann came to realise that the natural healing powers of the vital force were much less than had been imagined, and that this depleted power needed the enhancement which potentised remedies seem uniquely capable of supplying it.

Hahnemann deplored the antagonistic methods of allopathy precisely because "evacuation and revulsion is not curing and does not lead to health." [288] Hahnemann says "we must go deeper," [288] in order to reach the dynamic plane of disease cause and where cure becomes truly possible. To utilise "the natural healing power is not alone sufficient." [289]

Additionally, therefore, to "external, mechanical surgical help an inward dynamic help," [288] is also required in order to overpower sickness. Therefore, "a suitable internal medical treatment," [289] is required to "support the tendency of the natural healing power," [289] to shake off sickness. On its own, it does not have this power. Hahnemann

therefore clearly believed that the vital force alone is not sufficient to overpower sickness; "*it needs help.*" [289] His views on this topic show "*what a keen observer and independent thinker he was.*" [289]

He rejected the "*purely materialistic views upon life, health and disease,*" [290] as untenable and incomplete, and preferred instead "*the theory of a spiritual origin and motive to all organic behaviour, the theory of the life force and the natural healing power as a dynamic principle.*" [290] As a consequence, he felt out of step with the medical thinking of his day, whose theories "*about the causes and phenomena of diseases lost their value for him,*" [290] as they did not accord with his own observations and experiences.

He therefore "*rejected and fought against the theories of disease origin and diagnosis,*" [290] of his own time. In fact, he regarded such theories as incoherent, "*a confused babble of inferences and unproveable assertions...a crass materialism...[bereft of] a biologically vitalistic conception.*" [290] Such views were "*distasteful to a reasoning mind like Hahnemann's,*" [291] and so he "*soon dissociated himself from the prevailing views,*" [291] of health and disease.

For example, he viewed the "*material pecans, which was then generally accepted as the cause of disease,*" [291] as nonsense. To him, the causes of disease "*are not mechanical or chemical alterations of the material substances of the body...not dependent on a material morbific substance. They are merely spirit-like [conceptual] dynamic derangements of the life.*" [291, quoting Organon 31] He declared that it is "*the morbidly affected vital energy alone [which] produces disease.*" [291, quoting Organon 12]

However, he does acknowledge and emphasise the importance of lifestyle factors that act to trigger specific episodes of sickness. These include "*excesses or deprivation, violent physical impressions, chills, excessive heat, fatigue, overstrain...psychic excitations, affections, etc,*" [292] to which he also adds "*meteoric or telluric influences and injuries,*" [292] and today we might include poor self-image, depressed spirits, stress, despair and low self-esteem, failure, sense of loss or grief, all of which can demonstrably depress immune function as precursors to sickness.

It is therefore very clear that Hahnemann makes an honest, solid and serious attempt to construct a comprehensive and detailed theory of disease cause primarily grounded in spiritual matters, but one that also acknowledges the harmful influence of "*wrong mode of living, nourishment, dwelling, clothing, lack of exercise, inordinate exertion,*" [292] etc. He emphasised that the factors "*deleterious to health...are partly psychical partly physical...[and which possess] the power to disturb unconditionally the healthy human organism.*" [292]

He acknowledged that each case of sickness is unique to each person and that "*disease is reflected in the totality of the symptoms,*" [292] rather than in a part of the body or some named entity. Thus, he rejected the

notion of specific diseases, the disease label, applicable to many cases or to only a few parts of the body as an incomplete view.

8. Credulity and Intolerance

"with extraordinary credulity Hahnemann, particularly in the seclusion of the Kothen period, listened to calumnies against the 'half homeopaths'...it was exactly on such occasions that his lack of worldly wisdom...and calm judgement was revealed...[and] an ever-growing egotism." [256] This led to an *"incapacity for charitable criticism...[and] prevented...reconciliation with friends and students,"* [257] from whom he had become estranged after having once enjoyed great friendship. There is little doubt, therefore, that *"he became narrower and more intolerant in his views."* [257] This again reflects and re-emphasises the clarity and certainty of his vision, his instinctive condemnation of allopathy and his deep focus view of medicine.

His *"excessive severity...even ridiculous...vehemence, generating hatred and even passion – was counterbalanced on the softer side by his goodness of heart and his magnanimity,"* [261] for example, *"he was always treating patients gratis...[even] at a time when he was by no means blessed with material benefits."* [261] He also possessed a definite *"kindness of heart and love towards his children."* [261]

According to Haehl, during his whole life, *"he did not have one really intimate friend,"* [255] although I imagine that Melanie came the closest to that role later in his life. However, in case we forget, *"Melanie...[was] a very decided woman in money matters."* [87] Yet in Paris, they both *"regularly treated free a number of people without means."* [260]

Haehl claims that Hahnemann maintained only a *"slack observance of freemasonry...[as exemplified by] his remarkable disinclination to form an intimate and devoted association with other men."* [255] *"Whoever was not unconditionally on his side, was considered his opponent and was rejected by him,"* [256] and there are certainly abundant examples of that in his dealings with fellow homeopaths. Haehl points to his very suspicious and distrustful nature that led him to denounce *"whoever should deviate from his theory by a hair's breadth was a traitor with whom he would have nothing to do."* [256]

There is no doubt that at times he became *"fired by a passionate intolerance and implacable hatred...[that] repulsed capable men of vigour [Moritz Müller] and scared...allopaths who would have liked to become acquainted with homeopathy."* [256] It was in this way that *"Hahnemann injured most himself and his cause."* [256] Even some of his closest friends *"realised and regretted these faults in his nature, which became the more grossly emphatic as time went on,"* [256] rearing their head more frequently and intensely. *"a mean slap in the face for the despised homeopathy and the hated Hahnemann."* [112] *"Goethe was impressed...by Hahnemann's theory of*

healing." [113]

Discussion

What we have seen is that somehow or other, for reasons thusfar unknown, Hahnemann became convinced at a very early stage in his medical career, that sickness should ideally be treated and cured at the gentlest, most dynamic and functional level, and not at the crude chemical or brute mechanical level of organism functioning. This is clearly a point of crucial significance to understanding the man and his work. It is not clear why, but he shows repeatedly a strong and inherent preference for **metaphysical views in medicine** as opposed to those confined by the visible and tangible realm of the senses. This view can be described as the **absolute core essence of Hahnemann's medical teachings**, and is the 'big idea' that he pursued all his life. Every other aspect of homeopathy can be reduced to this single crucial point. It is the single nail from which the whole system hangs. Two questions emerge from this: why did he arrive at this view, and why so early on in his career? He possessed very subtle and penetrating observational powers that took him straight to the heart of any matter he decided to contemplate.

He seems to have been blessed with an instinct, a hunch, that this somehow must be the case, and for the rest of his career he never deviates from it once. This explains the unrelenting ferocity with which he condemned, even early on, every crude chemical and mechanical approach to sickness in the medicine of his day. It also explains his interest in the gentle, subtle, and infinitesimal in medicine, his view of mental illness, his use of olfaction and interest in Mesmerism. He castigated the crude mechanical and chemical approach of his day as both fundamentally uncurative and damaging to the life of the patient. **Uncurative and damaging** – these are the two crucial points that he tirelessly repeated in every critique he made of school medicine and of the ancient methods; these are the very sticks he repeatedly beats them with.

The exact reasons why Hahnemann came to acquire this unshakeable conviction are unclear, they remain a mystery, but they might be found in his residence in Hermannstadt at the start of his career, for example, perhaps in the teachings of freemasonry, possibly in his own religious views, or in his prolonged study of past medical systems. Quite possibly, it might have been an amalgam of all these reasons that, from a very early point in his career, drove him on tirelessly in his work. Whatever the reason, **he clearly felt that the root cause of sickness - and thus its elimination – does not lie, has never lain, and will never lie in the sensible realm of the visible and the tangible, but in some more nebulous and subtle realm; he was a prophet of a**

non-molecular form of medicine. Perhaps there is a link to Plato or Kant in his attitude? For the same reason, he became convinced that **the only genuinely curative system of therapy would be one that is capable of reaching into this deeper, subtle and most secret of sickness causes and which is therefore based on methods equally nebulous and subtle, that do indeed transcend the visible and tangible realm of sense data.** The potentised single drug seems to conform, therefore, to this idea of transcending the visible and tangible. It is the answer to his original quest. He arrived there partly through predisposition, partly through study and partly through dint of experience.

Nor should we forget, that the even more crippling fall-out from this view is also both as obvious and as applicable today as it was two centuries ago. In essence, any medical practice that is solely physical, chemical or mechanical in its approach is automatically doomed, according to Hahnemann, being only capable at best of superficially alleviating symptoms [palliation] and can never stave off sickness let alone remove the subtle underlying causes which lie hidden within an assumed ‘non-physical realm’ of the living organism, and which keep throwing to the surface new disease phenomena in the life of every person like an unstoppable fountain. It can neither cure sickness nor remove the innate tendency to be sick.

Such a view is also deemed by Hahnemann to be universally valid for all times and all places and is the fundamental corollary of his damning analysis of the desultory – damaging and uncurative - medicine of his day. Thus, Hahnemann automatically dooms any physiological or chemical approach to therapy, from the outset, as fundamentally uncurative as it never gets to the root cause and at best it can only ever alleviate symptoms. That is manifestly just as true today as two centuries ago. Therefore, even though in that stretch of time, its drugs and methods having changed many times, yet, medicine itself, in its core attitude, has not radically progressed one millimetre from the same fixedly physiological and material approach to disease. Though probably less damaging than its heroic predecessor, it is still as intrinsically palliative and uncurative as in Hahnemann’s day. It fails to go to deeper causes. At the deeper, most fundamental level, from which Hahnemann instinctively prefers to speak, it is still just as blind, as suppressive and as uncurative. Disease still continues to arise and to multiply into an ever-growing diversity of manifold forms, just as it did in his day. Such is what we observe today and conforms totally to all Hahnemann’s original observations of and predictions about this matter.

What is truly remarkable about Hahnemann is that so very early on in his career he had come to adopt a certain view, had reached a definite conclusion that the external, visible and tangible ‘phenotype’ of

sickness is not the true disorder, but that it in turn stems from a deeper, invisible form of disorder resident in the dynamic or functional level of the organism. It is the latter and not the former that really needs to be cured. This was quite a startling if not unique medical perspective at that time that no-one else adopted; they were all quite satisfied with the crude approach of the day.

Hahnemann's view may in part have arisen from his religious and philosophical views, or from his predisposition, but also in large measure derives from his very keen observational powers at the bedside, in seeing how sickness develops and behaves and how patients respond to crude drugs in large doses, to bloodletting and mixed prescriptions. By innate predisposition he was profoundly dissatisfied with the view of sickness [and treatment] focused solely at the physical level of symptoms. He demanded a deeper understanding of disease. Yet that view seemed to satisfy all his contemporaries. This explains the extraordinary ferocity with which he habitually condemned mixed drugs, blood-letting and strong doses in particular, and even from such an early stage in his career. In his opinion, these methods had condemned themselves in the court of common sense by their therapeutic uselessness and the injurious effects they had continued to inflict upon countless patients.

It is also apparent that this dissatisfaction was even apparent at a very early stage of his career, because even in 1781-2 he was condemning mixed drugs, strong doses and bloodletting as uncurative and harmful therapeutic practices. This again therefore emphasises the origins of his condemnations and its basis within his life experience and his inner mental life such convinced him thoroughly that cure of sickness at the functional and dynamic level was the only true cure, the only desirable goal in medicine.

To some degree, the bitterly acrimonious dust-up with allopathy flowed naturally from Hahnemann's insistence, his unshakeable conviction, that the two systems comprised irreconcilably polar opposites.

Modern Slant

We must pause for a while and consider exactly what this all means. It means that psychotherapy, surgery and crude drugs might help your sickness, but they can never cure it. It means that a better diet and regular physical exercise might well help you feel fitter, but they can never cure you of sickness or the tendency towards sickness. It means that multi-vitamins, fish oils, osteopathy, herbal supplements and antioxidants might make you healthier and happier but they will not cure you. It means that massage, aromatherapy, colonic irrigation,

reflexology and meditation may well improve your life, but they will not cure your sickness at the deepest level or the innate tendency to be sick.

It means that homeopathy - and possibly acupuncture too – are the only truly curative medical systems that not only improve, alleviate and cure sickness, elevate health and well-being, but also remove the innate tendency to become sick at all. What Hahnemann realised was that all these other therapies that address merely the outer, physical or chemical aspects of sickness [residing only in the visible and tangible realm] never get to the heart of the matter. They are not truly curative. They cannot reach let alone remove sickness at the truly curative level and they cannot stop disease from arising from its mysterious subtle source. For these reasons, they all remain inferior and palliative systems of therapy that can only relieve symptoms at best. This was a fundamental medical discovery of Hahnemann and is still valid to this day.

Secluded in Coethen, "*he continued his medical activities...to test, observe and extend his theories by the treatment of patients. That was the higher conception of his healing science, which he always kept in sight.*" [122]

Sources

Richard Haehl, Samuel Hahnemann: His Life and Works, 2 volumes, 1922, volume 1

[Main](#)