

# Modern Biomedical Model of Miasms

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**Summary:** Hahnemann defines “miasm” in precise terms. This paper reviews the exact definitions of acute and chronic miasms. This article compares the language of a current biomedical viral model to the process described as miasms. This comparison shows that Hahnemann’s observations are still ahead of current allopathic medical explanations.

**Key words:** acute disease, acute miasm, chronic miasm, artificial chronic disease, not-true chronic disease, true natural chronic disease, retrovirus, HERV-W

## Introduction

The word “miasm” is an old term that must be updated to fit the current culture of mainstream science. Homeopaths must do this task without losing the exact original description so carefully developed by Hahnemann. This paper first restates the definitions of acute and chronic disease, acute and chronic miasms according to the original homeopathy; then the current biomedical research on retroviral models of disease is summarized. This article makes a direct comparison between the language of retroviral disease and the miasm process.

## Definition of Acute and Chronic Disease

The acute disease of homeopathy is a relatively rapid, febrile condition brought about from exposure to noxious influences. The exciting causes include more than the usual materialistic microbes of biomedical allopathy. New sickness can begin after psychological upset, exposure to weather, physical strains, etc. These illness-inducing influences are dynamic and result in a dynamic change of the whole person. The person recovers or dies after the crisis. (1)

Chronic disease is long lasting, but has another important characteristic in homeopathy: the life fundament can never extinguish the sickness by its own effort.(2) Hahnemann describes three manifestations of chronic disease: 1) artificial chronic disease caused by allopathic treatment, 2) not-true chronic disease due to improper lifestyle, and 3) true natural chronic disease originating from the chronic miasms.(3)

## Acute Miasm and Chronic Miasm

The word “miasm” was in common usage in the 1800s. A medical dictionary published at that time defines miasma as “infectious atmosphere...each infectious disease has its own, diffused round the person...liable to convey the disease at different distances.”(4) Some investigators thought that a poison chemical was carried through the air. Others

concluded that it was a microscopic life form that caused infection. Hahnemann decided on the second choice.(5)

The *Organon* defines an acute miasms as acute diseases caused by “dynamic contagions” that return in the same manner and are given established names, such as cholera or measles or whooping cough.(6)

A chronic miasm is acquired by a dynamic contagion that constantly increases suffering until the end of life despite the best of lifestyles.(7) Each of the original three chronic miasms is clinically distinguished by its own unique skin eruption at one stage in the chronic sickness.(8)

## To Miasm

Miasm is not just a thing or an entity. It is not a classification of disease. It is not just “a miasm.” It is also a process—a succession of actions that transforms the living person. It would be more complete to define it as a verb — “to miasm.” The miasm process describes a series of events that are consistent to all miasms. The progression to miasmatic illness yields endless named diseases, but each disease in each person is a modification of a unifying process.(9)

Becoming miasmatic is a sequence of steps. The first stage is the moment of infection; the contact with the contagion instantaneously begins the dynamic change of the whole organism. The second stage is the latent moment; the internal dynamic infectious process continues within the organism. The third stage is the moment of the external outbreak of the malady; the internal development of the miasmatic disease throughout the organism is complete.(10)

An acute miasm runs its course in a few days and the organism returns to its relative state of health. A chronic miasm never leaves the organism without correct dynamic treatment.

The miasm process is an action sequence that transforms the living being. At any given moment it may look like the

organism has one named disease or another, but more significant is that all true chronic diseases arise from the same progression of events.

Do these specific, observed clinical events have relevance for the current times? What follows is a current biomedical model of disease that compares closely with Hahnemann's language of the miasm process.

## Retrovirus Found in Schizophrenics

This research story starts with one scientist who does not accept the assumption that schizophrenia is only a psychological disease; he decides that it is also physical. He observes that schizophrenics have odd-looking lymphocytes, larger fluid-filled ventricles, less brain tissue, abnormal sensory exams, etc.(11) He hypothesizes that schizophrenia is a brain disease, and that an infectious agent causes the physical changes. He analyzes the spinal fluid and brain tissues of the sick people and finds a retrovirus.(12)

A retrovirus is made of RNA. It makes DNA copies of itself in the host cell. The new viral DNA integrates itself into the host's nuclear DNA. In the host chromosome, the viral structure is shielded from the host immune system. The retrovirus does not kill the host, but replicates when the host cell does.(13)

The current full name given to the retrovirus found in schizophrenics is HERV-W: human endogenous retrovirus W. The meaning of this name is startling: every single healthy person's DNA contains this viral structure many times over.

## Retrovirus as Healthy

Human endogenous retroviruses (HERVs) comprise about eight percent of everybody's genome. "Over half of human genome contains retroelements, including retrotransposons, retroviruses, and other elements."(14) Endogenous retroviruses in human DNA resulted from exogenous infection of germ cell lines. They entered the mammalian genome about twenty-five million years ago.(15) Each retrovirus survives successfully with its host for so many millennia because it serves a physiological function. The most well-known example is the retrovirus HIV that occurs with AIDS.

The viral structure of HIV is found in everyone's healthy genome more than once. It codes for the protein that prevents rejection of the fetus from the mother's immune system by modifying the syncytial layer of the placenta.(16)(17) The mother does not reject the baby's tissue as foreign because of the structure of this layer of the placenta. The viral structure that is called HIV in disease is usually a normal, even necessary part of a healthy organism.

## HERVs in Disease

Research continues to associate HERV with disease now that laboratory methods are more sophisticated. "The majority of HERVs are silent in most physiological contexts, whereas a significant expression is observed in pathological contexts."(18) Retroviruses have normal physiological func-

tion, and they can also cause disease. For example, HERV-W is "significantly expressed in multiple sclerosis."(19) At the same time, HERV-W is detected in normal brains and seems to help build the neuron sheaths. In multiple sclerosis (MS) the same HERV differs in expression and becomes as if infectious.(20)

Retroviruses are now associated with a variety of diseases in humans. A partial list includes cancers such as breast cancer, lymphoma, ovarian cancer, melanoma, testicular cancer, myeloproliferative disease; neurological disease such as schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue syndrome; autoimmune and inflammatory disease such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, Graves' disease, psoriasis.(21)

The same endogenous retrovirus participates in normal physiology some of the time, and then at other times it acts infectious. Only one retrovirus infectious agent causes many totally unrelated named diseases. Now the comparison to the homeopathic miasm process starts to become more apparent.

## Trigger the Retrovirus

Everyone has retroviruses. They are inherited. Something triggers them to change function and cause disease. "Although the body works hard to keep HERVs under tight control, infections around the time of birth destabilize this tense standoff...including herpes, toxoplasmosis, cytomegalovirus, and a dozen others."(22) Many infections can waken the HERV. "The moment of infection"(23) can occur any time earlier in life, but disease does not express itself until later in life. The original infection was never cured. Environmental triggers later in life such as pollutants or stress can provoke the genetic expression of a pathological HERV."(24) "Whether people develop MS or schizophrenia may depend on how their immune system responds to HERV-W."(25)

The retrovirus "may challenge our basic views of human evolution, blurring the line between 'us' and 'them,' between pathogen and host."(26)

## To Retrovirus / To Miasm

The pathway that activates endogenous retrovirus infection is much more common than previously thought. It is already found in many previously unrelated chronic diseases. The homeopath predicts that the cascade of events that trigger retroviral infection will be similar in many more chronic diseases. The stages that lead to chronic disease manifestation in retroviral research are similar to the description of the miasm process.

The first stage is the moment of infection. Many possible infections may start the process. Retrovirus researchers use the same phrase as Hahnemann. Biomedical doctors believe they can cure the original infection, but homeopaths say that only dynamic similar medicine can cure the dynamic of the original contagion.

The second stage is the latent time of disease. The normal endogenous virus structure transforms into a disease form.

In allopathy, the chronic disease does not appear until later in life depending on genetic influences or environmental triggers. In homeopathy, the whole organism transforms, not just one material structure. In homeopathy, we have the phrase "predisposition to disease" mentioned by G. Vitthoulkas.(27) Genetics, life events and environmental influences determine the expression of the chronic disease.

The third stage is the manifestation of the chronic disease. It is very difficult for allopaths to accept the fact that one virus triggers so many distinct different diseases. In homeopathy it is a given that each person expresses an individual, unique disease from the same dynamic infection. See Table 1 for a summary.

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7. Ibid., §72, §78.
8. Ibid., §79, §80.
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13. Tortora GJ, Funke BR, Case CL. Microbiology an introduction. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. San Francisco:Benjamin Cummings;2007. p.409.

STEPS	TO RETROVIRUS	TO MIASM
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	Moment of infection by one of many infectious agents	Instantaneous moment of dynamic infection
2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage	Transformation of one endogenous viral structure from physiological to pathological by some trigger	Dynamic transformation pervades the whole organism
3 <sup>rd</sup> Stage	Manifestation of one disease out of many possible disease names	External manifestation of whole person's individualized disease once internal transformation is complete

**Table One**

## Conclusion

The original description of miasms is based on clinical observations. The miasm process describes the stages that lead to disease. This description resulted from perceptible phenomena of the wholeness of a person.

Retrovirus research forces biomedicine to rethink the pathway to chronic disease. Allopathic comments sound more and more like homeopathic language. Hahnemann's language provided a guide map to the understanding of chronic disease two hundred years ahead of its time.

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