

# Psychosomatic Healing

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*Transcribed by Richard Moskowitz, MD  
Delivered at the NCH Annual Conference, April 1988*

**Abstract:** The efficacy of homeopathy requires modern medicine to revise its mechanistic paradigm of the human body-mind and its physiology. Scientists such as Sheldrake and Schrödinger have demonstrated that the reality of shape or organization (i.e., the organizing patterns of Nature) supersede the apparent material reality of matter. This Pattern is equivalent to relationship or context, which ultimately confers meaning to existence. "Morphic" fields are postulated by Sheldrake to surround each natural system and can linger as a kind of memory even after the system has disintegrated. Whitmont suggests that in the same manner Disease represents a field, as it were, that must be reckoned with by the afflicted organism – either by shielding against it, succumbing to it, or integrating it, and in consequence achieving a new 'evolutionary' form. The concepts above all stem from the phenomenon of the infinitesimal dose, which reduces substance to 'experiential memory.' Additionally, the Law of Similars phenomenon, in revealing the similarity of form between the patient and remedy, reveal the implicate order (or meaning) underlying each. Thus existence is imbued with a sense of meaning. Similarity is demonstrated as a healing principle not only in homeopathy but also in successful psychotherapy.

**Keywords:** meaning in life and the infinitesimal dose; meaning in life and the Law of Similars; implicate order; explicate order; homeopathy and psychotherapy; morphic fields.

The view of the body prevailing in modern medicine is that of an electrochemical machine composed of solid or separable parts and therefore capable of being repaired with appropriate ingenuity and skill. A slightly more sophisticated version adds the brain as the principal activator, which pushes all the parts around, and whose physiological activity creates the phenomena of "mind" and "emotions."

From this viewpoint, homeopathy is obviously nonsense on two major counts: 1) how can nothing create or do something (the problem of infinitesimals) and 2) how can the smasher unsmash the smashed (the Law of Similars)? But the fact that homeopathy works turns the tables: it shows that our assumptions are wrong, that we need a more accurate view of the human organism. Unfortunately, mere facts may not prevail, as long as they are ruled out by Scripture, by what passes for science these days.

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an expression of Nature's creative and artistic play, simply because the experience of healing supports no other hypothesis. However it is also possible to use homeopathy's two great principles - the Law of Similars and the infinitesimal dose - to arrive at the same conclusion.

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Consider first the "immaterial dose," the 10M, 50M, CM, DM, and MM potencies, the highest potencies of our remedies, which are not only far beyond the Avogadro limit, but can even be "grafted," as we all know, by simply adding a few medicated pellets to a vial of unmedicated pellets and giving the vial a few good shakes! Orthodox scientists like Benveniste are presently trying to explain these phenomena on the basis of some sort of chemical "memory" residing in the solvent.

But the theology of medicine remains antiquated and cumbersome in comparison with the more progressive scientists of today. Rupert Sheldrake, for instance, the great biologist who was recently excoriated in the pages

of *Nature*, teaches that memory is literally everywhere in the natural world, and that the brain merely follows and indeed often distorts it. Likewise the physicist Schrödinger showed long ago that the individuality of atomic and subatomic particles is simply a gratuitous or mystical assumption, and that what is permanent is shape or organization, not the material in which it is manifest. In other words, what is "real" is pattern, prior to any matter or substance filling it.

These ideas have been carried still further by the physicist David Bohm, who regards the atomic particle as the product formed out of – and subsequently dissolved back into – movement; i.e., wave motion (or the Tao perhaps?). Pattern is equivalent to relationship or context, which in turn implies meaning, so that for Bohm meaningful patterns are the basic units of existence. Nor can these units be adequately defined as "energy," because they represent nothing but pure information encoded into "things;" i.e., forms of information that carry pattern and are prior to substance, rather like Jungian archetypes.

For Bohm, then, everything there "is" in the world of phenomena or appearance represents an expression or explication of an underlying "implicate order." A recent experiment confirming this sort of idea involves two concentric cylinders with glycerin filling the space between them. If a spot of purple dye is placed in the glycerin medium and the cylinders rotated in opposite directions, the dye diffuses throughout the glycerin and soon becomes invisible. But if the directions are then reversed, the dye becomes visible once more, and eventually reconstitutes itself into the original spot, a mystery reminiscent of our infinitesimal doses.

In Sheldrake's view, these patterns of information are known as "morphic fields." Each natural system – a rose, a molecular species, or a set of social customs or personal or cultural habits – "has" or comprises a field of influence, which is located in and around the organism until it dies, and then "disappears," yet still it remains behind with the potential for reappearance, as a kind of memory, and continues to resonate with other fields by repetition over eons of time, until they accumulate as something which is habitual, unchanging, and indeed for all practical purposes "eternal."

Some such idea could help explain why the first discovery or synthesis of a new drug or chemical, for instance, is often quickly followed by others, and often by scientists working independently without any knowledge of their colleagues. Another sort of confirmation may be the remarkable accuracy of predictions based on sources such as the *I Ching*, approaching 99% in my own experience of 60 years or so, whose "awareness" or "memory" has nothing whatever to do with contemporary neurophysiology and appear to come from "nowhere."

Let me give another example from my clinical experience.

A man with unusually severe acne was given *Calcarea carbonica* 10M and almost immediately developed hypocalcemic tetany of the fingers. Only then did he remember that as a young child his fingers had been tied by his parents to prevent him from masturbating. He was rapidly cured according to Hering's Law, not only because of this return of his old symptoms, but also from inside outwards, because acne is universally associated with – and therefore "represents" – feelings of shame. Moreover, the "memory" which connected all these elements was evidently centered in the calcium metabolism rather than in the brain, inasmuch as the patient had completely forgotten it all those years.

In the 1930's Dr. William Boyd of Glasgow discovered that a blood specimen placed close to the body of an experimental subject would regularly alter the tonus of the abdominal muscles; that this effect could be abolished by placing a vial of the simillimum or appropriate homeopathic remedy in the subject's hand; and that the effect of the remedy could be blocked by placing a lead screen between the vial and the abdomen. Boyd's experiments demonstrated both the existence of a force field surrounding the patient and the ability of an immaterial version of a substance to reconstruct or strengthen it.

The phenomenon of "projective identification" in psychotherapy appears to be rather similar in that the field of the patient is disordered, such that the therapist must learn how to "read" it through recognizing the changes induced in his or her own person, rather than merely erect a shield against them.

Like all healing work, psychotherapy teaches that change is regularly required for us to fulfill our own inherent field pattern, which is "given" to us a priori or predetermined very early in life. It can be modified or deflected by outside forces, such as anger, which is invasive and generates conflict through attempting to impose its own pattern. The organism can then either shield itself and ward them off, or become "immune" by integrating them into itself, which we define as growth, or be overwhelmed by them, resulting in death or chronic disease.

Disease, in other words, represents a field that by definition cannot be warded off, that must be integrated, and that therefore becomes a precondition for growth. But growth is not simply a battle for survival. It also involves a story, indeed a play, in which new forms are created essentially for their own sake. On the evolutionary scale, this play is beautifully illustrated by the descent of the human testicle, which is the reverse of an advantage and actually endangers survival.

In psychotherapy, the process of storytelling is utilized to disclose the patterns of meaning embedded in the patient's experience or history. The play of forms inevitably entails a certain amount of conflict and the possibility or risk of illness, which may come from ex-

exercising either too much control over them or too little. Another way of saying this is that illness is growth, arising out of an attempt to grow in some way, and that it continues until that growth is accomplished.

Those elements which are not yet ready to be assimilated into our psychic growth may therefore have to be somatized temporarily as illness, or actualized as a catastrophic "external" event. But even here the model remains that of an illness, implying no fault or blame, of some inner element striving for awareness, but not yet ready for it.

The message here is that we all have our limitations, and that nobody can avoid experiencing them. For we are embodied spirits, such that our experience is necessarily mediated through our bodies. This continues to be true, all the way from ordinary muscle tension, which may refer to emotions not yet conscious, to those times when our adaptive limit is reached, and the only possible healing left to us is death.

All this is evoked by our concept of the infinitesimal dose, the reduction of "substance" to experiential memory. What is the comparable meaning of the Law of Similars? Similarity implies a sameness of pattern qua pattern, of some essential or implicate aspect, even though the manifestation in the explicate order remains different.

Thus in the psychotherapy of war neuroses, or "shell shock," the illness appears precisely because and to the extent that the patient has forgotten something, so that the task of therapy becomes simply to help him remember and thereby relieve it in a controlled setting, a simulation "as if," through the use of fantasy, guided imagery, hypnosis, and the like.

Likewise, all psychotherapy harks back to the universal "shell shock" of early childhood, and heals by regression to a primitive form of re-experiencing

it; namely, to the dematerialized "as if" of fantasy, a kind of "potentized" memory of the original event. The therapist thus functions as the simillimum of the parents, siblings, and others, administering himself or herself, and thereby pointing to the implicate order behind them all.

Psychotherapy thus follows the assumption of Viktor Frankl, the assumption of meaning in human life, as the basis for re-establishing such health as is possible. It is precisely the information of similarity that conveys the healing effect, just as in spiritual healing we are connected to the source of our being, as in Christianity, for example, where we "eat" the essence of God and the ceremony "works" precisely to the extent that it has meaning for us. That is why people are healed at Lourdes, and indeed everywhere else.

The quintessential teaching of homeopathy is likewise that for every illness there is some substance that can replicate it; i.e., that the body of the earth is the source of all relevant information, and that the human body is its microcosmic replication.

For both disciplines, we are ill not only because of something, but also in order to something, so that the healing path is not so much to worry about why it happened as to learn what it is trying to teach us. For that which can be made conscious can also be borne, and that which cannot as yet be endured can easily make us ill.

*About the Author: Edward C. Whitmont, M.D. was a Jungian psychoanalyst and a classical homeopath. He was the President Emeritus, a former board and faculty member of the C.G. Jung Institute of New York and has published several papers and books, among them "Psyche and Substance" and "The Alchemy of Healing." AÆH*