

# “The Cat in the Hat Comes Back”: Homeopathy as Explained by Dr. Seuss

Karin Cseak, DO

Abstract: Dr. Seuss’s classic *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* is presented as a metaphor for the homeopathic concept of symptom suppression and the power of the infinitesimal dose.

Keywords: “The Cat in the Hat Comes Back,” as metaphor for disease suppression

Accompanying cartoons taken from *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* <sup>TM</sup> & (c) Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. 1958. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Quite a few years ago, as a third-year osteopathic medical student, I was learning about homeopathy from one of my mentors, the late Michael Somerson, DO. I’d only recently had my first bolt-of-lightening comprehension of homeopathy and was thrilled to realize that it was possible to rise above the severe limitations I’d already come to accept as inherent in a conventional/allopathic approach to disease. I was, at the time (as I am still), quite filled with wonder at Hahnemann’s genius. I was fascinated at discovering the Law of Similars at work in the world.

As I was sitting in Mike’s office one day over lunch, I picked up *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*, by Dr. Seuss, and read it.

“This is homeopathy,” I said to Mike.

He read the book and laughed. Mike had a great sense of humor.

Skip ahead about fifteen years. I’ve just read this book again to my kids at bedtime. My five year-old says, “That Cat makes big messes!” I’d just seen quite a few patients today with some pretty serious ‘messes.’ I’d been thinking about the suppression of disease symptoms in these patients’ pasts and how it relates to the more deeply-seated chronic diseases they present with.

It is not that I lack respect for the wonders and miracles sometimes wrought by modern technological/surgical approaches...but this Cat’s messes are a fair representation of the course disease takes when it is ‘killed’ by suppression. Luckily, this is a story fit for kids, complete with happy ending. The Cat also carries

the cure with him in his Hat. Let me remind you of the story:

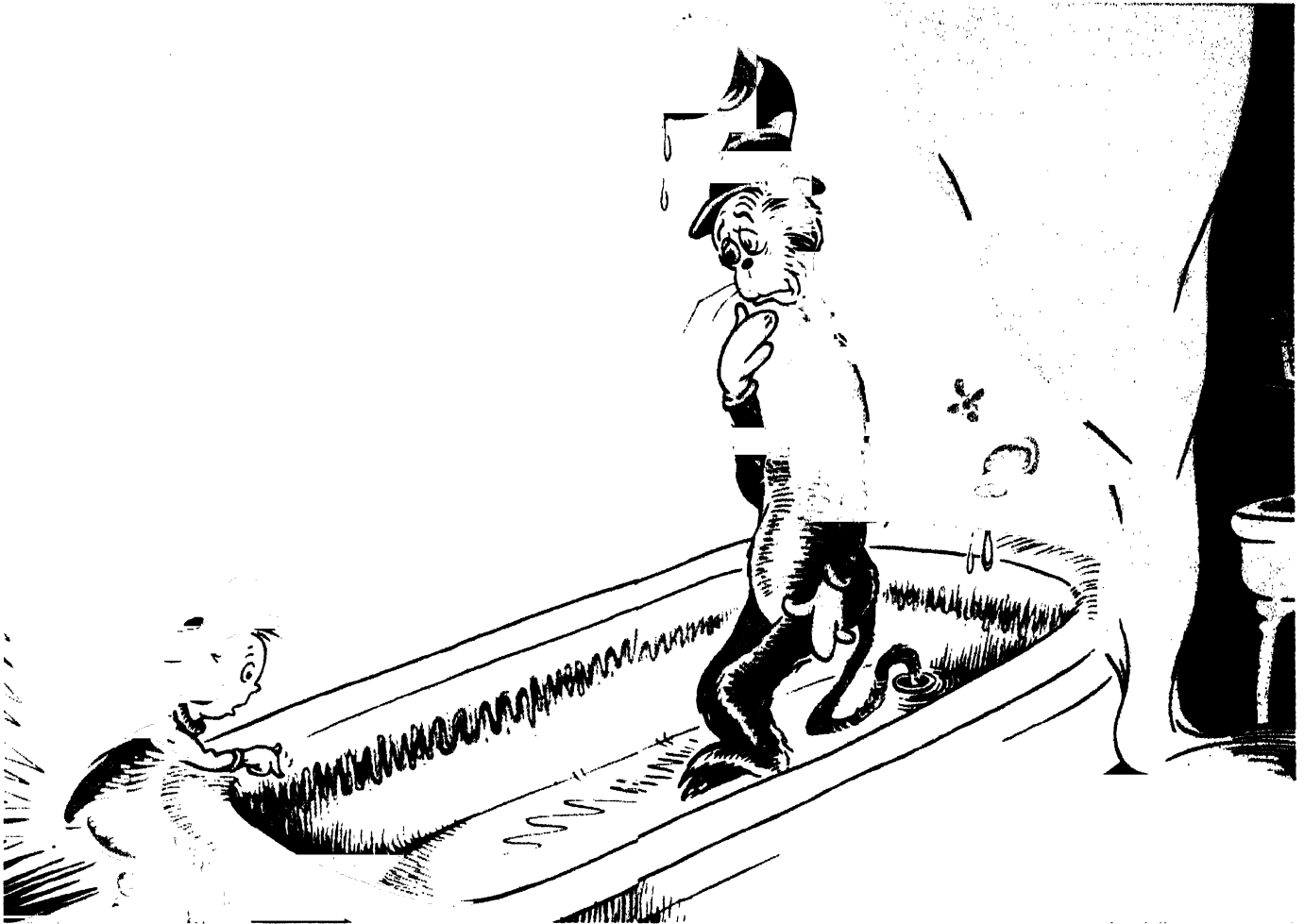
The Cat comes to visit while the kids are shoveling snow<sup>1</sup>.(1) He goes into the house (houses, in dreams, can represent the physical body), and starts to eat cake in the tub (a poor health habit, wouldn’t you agree?). The boy tells him to get out, but when the tub is drained, the cat has left a pink cat ring (Disease). How will they get the stain out? [See Cartoon One]

Now the cat embarks on a haphazard (though direct) approach to getting out this stain (allopathic approach of your choice). First it gets rubbed onto Mother’s white dress (here I’d love to point out a possible reference to the commonly held belief/myth of woman as the source of original sin/loss of innocence/disease...but maybe I’m stretching things a bit). Then the Cat wipes his mess around various other places in the house...until it ends up on Dad’s bed. Now the mess is too big for the Cat to clean up without help.

So the Cat gets help from other little cats he keeps

---

1 One can get carried away in making analogies in this story. I’ve always been fond of the ideas of C. G. Jung, specifically the idea that symbols from the collective unconscious often appear in our dreams, art, poetry, fantasies, and stories. So here the Cat obviously represents our animal nature. In fact, from a Jungian point of view, cats are often symbolic of our sexuality. Hmmm... this troublesome Cat in the Hat just may carry within him the origins of miasmatic disease... (A fair warning is given to anyone literal-minded to just stop reading here.)



Cartoon One

in his Hat. These are smaller and smaller cats who keep trying to remove the spot in much the same way as the Cat in the Hat. In fact, the more little cats that keep coming out to help, the more the mess gets spread around, until finally it is covering the snow all around the house. (While the taint all over the snow here corresponds to the ultimate worsening of disease in an individual through a direct 'kill it' kind of suppressive approach, we can also consider the ubiquity of disease or miasmatic taint within each of us as unique individuals/snowflakes; i.e., within each unique crystallization pattern of water. I suggest trying to potentize this analogy with a spot of bourbon.) The Cat in the Hat lets the children know that his little cats can 'kill' the mess with their 'good guns.' To this idea, the boy says:

"All this does is make MORE spots!"  
 We yelled at the cat.  
 "Your cats are no good.  
 Put them back in your hat."

The Cat pulls out littler and littler cats from his

hat, and they keep trying to kill the pink spots. Pretty soon, the entire yard is covered with the 'spot.' What a mess!

Luckily, the Cat also expresses an inherent wisdom. He reveals to us his knowledge that a higher purpose is served by the making of all this mess (disease):

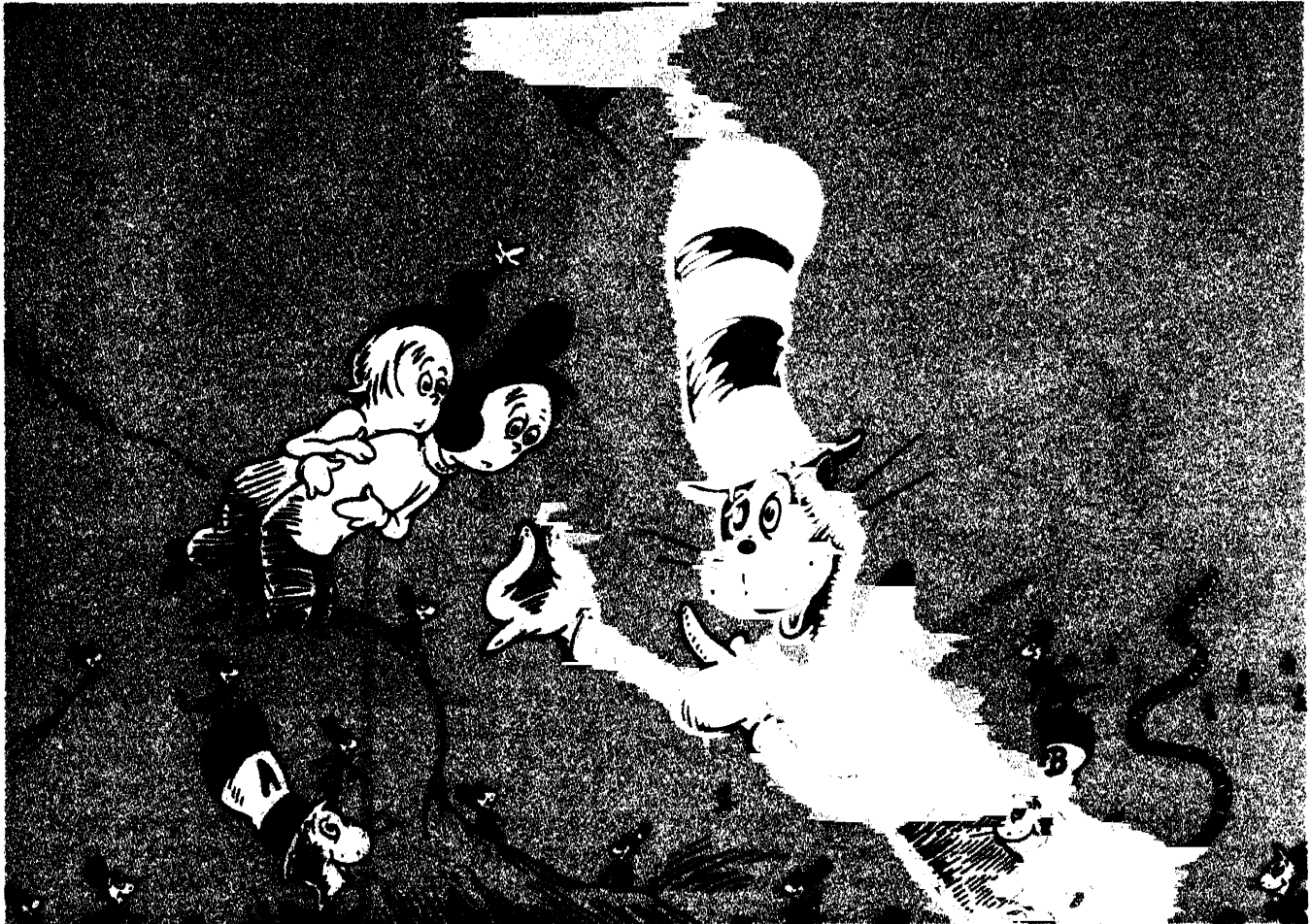
But the Big Cat stood there  
 And he said, "This is good.  
 This is what they should do  
 And I knew that they would."<sup>2</sup>(2)

2 As an interesting perspective, from an anthroposophical point of view, the life-building forces within us can not lead us to a "conscious development of an inner life of soul. For this to happen, constructive development has to be countered with destruction." (Steiner, Rudolf, and Wegman, Ita, MD. *Extending Practical Medicine*. 1925.) Disease here ultimately carries within it the opportunity for healing on many levels.

And he has all along carried in his Hat the cure for this malady. The LAST little cat he pulls out of his Hat is one so small that we cannot see it, but the Cat tells us that THIS is the cat that will clean up the mess! (The potency of being treated by the hair of the dog that bit you?) This invisible little cat carries VOOM in his hat!

point of view, cats are often symbolic of our sexuality. Hmm... this troublesome Cat in the Hat just may carry within him the origins of miasmatic disease... (A fair warning is given to anyone literal-minded to just stop reading here.)

(2) As an interesting perspective, from an anthroposophical point of view, the life-building forces within



*Cartoon Two*

The Cat tells us that no one knows what VOOM is, but when that littlest cat takes his hat off, in the shortest possible time, the mess is cleaned up, the clean snow is neatly shoveled, the path is clear to the house, the work is done. Health is restored.

There you have it. The genius of Dr. Seuss! So the next time you need to explain homeopathy to a five year old...

(1) One can get carried away in making analogies in this story. I've always been fond of the ideas of C. G. Jung, specifically the idea that symbols from the collective unconscious often appear in our dreams, art, poetry, fantasies, and stories. So here the Cat obviously represents our animal nature. In fact, from a Jungian

us can not lead us to a "conscious development of an inner life of soul. For this to happen, constructive development has to be countered with destruction." (Steiner, Rudolf, and Wegman, Ita, MD. *Extending Practical Medicine*. 1925.) Disease here ultimately carries within it the opportunity for healing on many levels.

*About the author: Karin Cseak has been an osteopathic and homeopathic physician for ten years. She has held and currently does still several offices in the Ohio State Homeopathic Medical Society. Further, she is an Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. She lives and practices in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. ATH*