

Hardening of the Categories: Taxonomy in Homeopathy

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Abstract: A simple way to organize remedies is now popular. The homeopathic medicines are divided into categories determined by the sciences of zoology and botany. There are numerous, significant limitations when these traditional scientific categories are applied to homeopathic materia medica. Note: for those who cannot read the whole article, start with the section called "Farrington's Bosh."

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Introduction

It is impossible to go to homeopathic seminars these days without hearing about remedies that are divided into categories determined by the sciences of zoology and botany or mineralogy. This style of organization of the homeopathic materia medica seems to excite the speakers and audience. It offers a seemingly new, simple way to understand remedies. Information from known remedies is extrapolated to remedies in the same group for which not much is known.

There are numerous reasons why this methodology is limited and misleading. First, we will hear what mainstream scientists in the field of taxonomy say among themselves. Second, I will mention other possible ways of organizing the materia medica. Third, I will quote exactly what Hahnemann had to say on the subject.

Language of Categories

We will start with definitions of the basic words in this field of study. Categories "assign things to classes based on what they have in common — or their sameness — and your explanations will apply equally to all things in a class." (1) Classification permits us to assign some common knowledge to a large number of things rather than have to learn it over and over again for each new individual. Category membership provides a kind of default knowledge for interpretation. It reduces the complexity. (2) It summarizes information and defines relationships, such as when symptoms are called by a named disease.

In this paper, I will discuss categories and classifications of living organisms. "**Systematics** is the comparative study of biological diversity... es-

pecially as that diversity is related to relationships among individuals, populations, or higher taxa." (3) "A taxon is any specifically defined group of organisms;" (4) e.g., family Felidae (cats) or Homo sapiens. Taxonomy is defined as the science of naming organisms, the theory and practice of classifying living and extinct organisms, and efforts to find similarities and differences within and between groups of organisms. (5) Taxonomy describes and names new taxa, arranging them in convenient, formal classification schemes and provides means of identifying them. (6) In the science of biology, the biologists arrange their groups by taxonomy. In the cognitive psychology field, the experts arrange their subjects by category. (7) Scientists achieve the same purpose whether they call it categorization or taxonomy.

Linnaeus's system

In about 1753, Linnaeus developed a classification system of plants based on two names, genus and species. The genus was the larger grouping of plants sharing a common reproductive (flower and fruit) structure. The species consisted of a number of groups in each genus distinguished by non-reproductive characteristics, such as leaf structure, which must be distinct in that they reproduce true to type. (8) This binomial, two name, genus and species system of classification introduced order and precision into nature. This precision in science was not a mathematical measure, but exact qualitative observations. Everyone in Europe was studying it by 1770, (9) before Hahnemann graduated from medical school. Linnaeus also introduced divisions among the animals. For instance, mammals and birds have a heart with two auricles and two ven-

tricles with blood warm and red. Amphibians and fish hearts have one auricle and one ventricle with cold, red blood. The hearts of insects and worms have one auricle and no ventricle and circulating fluid is cold and white.(10)

The identification of plants and animals in this way accomplishes several purposes. It identifies characteristics common to several objects. A conceptual order of similarities in nature is introduced. Nature is ordered in a hierarchy of concepts; it isolates likenesses and differences; it analyzes abstract ideas of organisms into a number of simple elements.(11) The result is orthodox systematics arrived at by an analysis of set patterns based on number, figure, proportion and situation of each part. This results in a static representation of ideal types, and then the types are grouped.(12)

Not everyone accepted this classification system. Linnaeus's arch enemy was Buffon, but it is not true that toads were named after him. *Bufo* really is the Latin word for toad. "Systems abridged labor, aided memory, and offered an interesting sequence of ideas, but they also led men to judge wholes on the basis of parts, to assemble arbitrary groups, and to divide nature at points where she was indivisible...A false structure of relations into the order of nature, producing a spurious and straited regularity."(13) A modern botanist comments, "Morphological characteristics are abstractions, conceptually separated from the plant as a whole. They are a view of the plant through a particular conceptual lens. This is one reason why different scientists studying the same taxon describe different characters. The whole can be broken up in many different ways."(14)

Abstractions cause trouble in homeopathy. By definition, "Abstraction is an attempt to leave out many of the concrete details of the subject by creating a simpler figure whose structure is still roughly analogous to the original."(15) It is the concrete symptoms that we want in homeopathy, not stereotypes or archetypes.

Darwin's Evolution

Living organisms are no longer grouped simply by form or visible structures. Now the evolutionary history, called phylogeny, is considered. Groups of organisms thought to have descended from a common ancestor based on a common set of physical characteristics or phenotype are classified together.(16) Groups that share common derived features through evolution are called clades. An example is that all mammals have three inner ear bones.(17) However, if metabolism is used, birds and mammals are close cousins because they are warm-blooded, and crocodiles are unrelated. If skull and heart structure is used, birds and crocodiles are close cousins,

and mammals are unrelated to each. "This proves that despite being an attempt to construct a more objective system than the Linnaean one, cladistics still has to fall back on the same subjectivity and arbitrariness...they were based on the consideration of a small number of characters, most of them were 'pet characters,' and the 'minor' characters that contradicted them were...simply not considered."(18) The same problem exists if categories are used to classify remedies in homeopathy. Common characteristics are emphasized and unique symptoms are ignored.

Genetic taxonomy is another type of classification. Gene sequences (genotypes) that determine the physical characteristics (phenotype) are investigated. ATP, RNA, amino acid sequences, enzymes and other molecules are studied with new biochemical and electron microscope techniques. Some biologists want to integrate phylogenetics and genomics; that is, to consider all the characteristics, so many such that only a computer algorithm can do it. This is called phenetics.(19)

Darwin himself said that taxonomy is a scheme for arranging together those living objects which are most alike, and for separating those which are most unlike, or "artificial means for enunciating, as briefly as possible, general propositions — that is, by one sentence to give the characteristics common..."(20) What does Darwin mean when he says "artificial?"

Arbitrary Categories

Many authors challenge the reality of categories. Categories may simply be part of a common culture. That is, they are messages from the media or our parents. Categories may be only in the mind: they are only a belief held by a group of people with common motivations. Maybe categories are real world properties. If so, are they immutable categories of existence? This would be incompatible with evolutionary theory that shows change over time. Does each category have an abstract or ideal quality not perfectly realized by each individual specimen in the real world? For instance, which plant is the perfect wandering plant and which plants do not move well enough to be called wandering? Do kingdoms or families describe natural perceptual discontinuities or is there gradual change between each life form? Several authors state that each organism belongs to numerous natural kinds, and that there is no single real category.(21) This would mean that the origin of homeopathic remedies does not determine its category, and so does not allow simplified groupings of its symptoms with other remedies of seemingly similar origin.

Here are some further quotes: "It is necessary to admit that classification systems contain much that

is arbitrary. The vagueness of the demarcations between one group and another means judgments colored by their own prejudices. It reflects little more than the personal predilection of the person, whether "lumper," or "splitter." (22) "Some think that organisms should be grouped according to differences or similarities in the way they look or act. Others argue that classification should be based on characteristics derived from a shared evolution. Conflicting philosophies about classifications have resulted in a variety of classification methods, each with their own set of assumptions and results." (23)

"All classification schemes are hypotheses. As we learn more, we may rearrange groups. That is why we no longer put hippos, rhinos and elephants together as pachyderms. Hippos are more closely related to pigs, rhinos to horses, and elephants to manatees." (24) This means that they found no thick-skinned, heavyweight, non-ruminant (don't chew their cud) common mammal ancestor. The category looked right, but it was false. "Classifying is particularly hazardous, since we are so often warned that classifications are convenient constructs rather than attributes of what is under study." (25) Are categories of living organisms a way of selectively seeing, that is a belief system; or is classification the way that nature really is? Goethe answered, "I therefore felt justified in concluding that Linnaeus and his successors had proceeded like legislators, less concerned with what is than what should be, giving no consideration to the nature and requirements of individual citizens, but intent rather upon solving the difficult problem of how so many unruly, inherently unfettered beings can be made to exist side by side with a degree of harmony." (26)

Kingdoms Divided

In the old way, nearly everyone classified members of the living world into two kingdoms, plant and animal, and unicellular organisms were placed in one or the other or both. (27) The twentieth century reveals more modern proposals. The five-kingdom taxonomy divides life into plants, fungi, animals, a bacteria type and very small life forms with a nucleus. (28) The most recent classification creates three domains above the kingdoms. In this system, two of the domains are bacteria types; the old bacteria are called Archaea; the newer bacteria are termed Eubacteria. All other life with a nucleus is called Eukarya. This vast group includes all plants, fungi and animals and divides them into multiple kingdoms. The three domains are based on rRNA sequences of three fundamental sorts, (29) but even here there are fuzzy borders.

The concepts of classification shift over time. "Every taxon—class, order, phylum, kingdom—is

artificial based on the study of relationships." (30) The studies are based on "varying, fragmented, and often inconsistent professional literature." (31) Relationships among the animal phyla continue to change based on ultra structure, developmental biology, morphology and molecular sequences. For instance, "Ribosomal RNA sequences and evidence from proteins tell us that the closest relatives of animals are fungi; plants are more distant relatives." (32) Another example is that crocodiles, alligators and caymans are more closely related to birds than to other traditional reptiles such as lizards and turtles. (33)

The division of life into kingdoms continues to shift, evolve and produce uncertainty. How can a homeopathic practitioner say that each kingdom's remedies has a different pathology? (34) No such static agreement exists about kingdoms in mainstream science. Homeopaths cannot claim such a generality.

Species Uncertainty

Pachyderms, reptiles, fungi and kingdoms may not be what they seem to be, but is a family still recognizable? Just as in society in general, the old (nuclear) family concept is being adjusted. One author points out, for example, that there is no basic body plan for the pea family. There are herbaceous members like garden beans and peas, and there are members that are trees, like the honey locust tree. (35)

Perhaps the genus taxa are useful. Here is a story about worms. "The two nematodes *Caenorhabditis elegans* and *C. briggsae* are so alike that only experts can distinguish them. Microscopic in size and transparent to light, the simple worms have near-identical biology...yet...the genomes of the two worms turn out to differ from each other on a scale that dwarfs the differences between the human and mouse genomes. That is, genomically speaking, a human being and a mouse are much more alike than *C. elegans* and *C. briggsae*. (36) So much for similar appearances and function in a genus.

Maybe species are more certain. "The number of live species concepts in the modern literature ranges from 7 to 22 depending on the ways concepts are divided and grouped...No consensus has emerged, despite the species problem being a core issue in evolutionary biology and taxonomy for decades if not centuries...There appears to be no single set of causal mechanisms that define all and only species. (37) Here are a few of the different concepts:

The morphological species concept differentiates based on size or color, etc. However, male and female birds often look a lot different, and adult and child forms may be very different. Think of a caterpillar and a butterfly, or a worker ant and a soldier

ant.(38)

The biological species concept is very common. This concept posits reproductive isolation. It holds for animals much more than plants. "Half of all flowering plants and nearly all ferns and fern allies happen to be hybrids, often between relatively unrelated species - within families, but not necessarily the same species."(39) There are many modalities of reproduction in the living kingdoms, not just animal sexual reproduction. These modalities include nuclear fusion of yeast, vegetative fusion of algae, conjugation in amoeba, viral crossover, asexuality, etc. Even in animals, lions and tigers would interbreed if put together.(40)

Some experts use the ecological species concept where each species occupies a niche and has a unique role in that environment. But the same species can look and act different in a different climate, like the rabbit that changes its color and its feet on the snowy climates, or the small shrub in Siberia that became a large tree in St. Petersburg. The phylogenetic species concept traces branches in lineage, but many branches are unknown and the fossil record is incomplete.(41)

This sampling of species concepts points out the uncertainty of categories. Uncertain categories do not lead to reliable information about homeopathic remedies.

Species are real only in the living context of nature. Isolating characteristics, whether form or function, never reveal the living whole. "The plant is not something fixed, something that we have understood and now merely have to place within a classification scheme. The plant is something that we are continually in the process of understanding...the plant is beyond all categorical interpretations of it...It can never be finally and completely known."(42)

Taxonomy around the World

Scientists compare how the different peoples around the world classify nature in order to prove that classifications are real. One group of scientists believes that underlying universal principles govern biological category organization all over the world. "Take it as a given that humans spontaneously organize categories into hierarchical taxonomic systems...[taxa] stand out as beacons on the landscape of biological reality—waiting to be named."(43) The actual investigation of folks around the world yields a variety of results. Ethnocentric taxonomy is not hard and fast. Different cultures arrange and group differently. For instance, virtually no culture considers humans and non-humans in the same category.(44) Many groups of people consider the main categories as human, non-human animal, plant and inanimate. But to

Israeli children, plants are not alive. They are only food for animals as taught in the book of Genesis. In contrast, Japanese children view plants as alive and as having a mind according to their Buddhist upbringing.(45) In the Maya idiom, there is no plant kingdom as such. "Plants generally fall under one of four mutually exclusive life forms."(46) Loosely translated, trees, vines, herbs and grasses are distinct and exclusive life categories.

Basic level categories reflect discontinuities in the natural world, but each culture sees them differently. It is a function of their cultural interests. The basic categories for undergraduate college students in Berkeley are usually like trees and fish. In comparison, a local folk group uses the basic categories of maples and trout.(47) The folk specific groups perceive natural variations differently. The color, size, shape, habitat or functions like flying or swimming of life forms changes throughout the world. The typical bird does not stay the same throughout the world. The ostrich seems like a grazing ungulate since it does not fly. The penguin acts like a dolphin and has no feathers. The moth is mistaken for a hummingbird. The bat flies like a bird.

Modern, western style science is not the only "authoritative arbiter of categories." "In a biology premised on variation and change, there is no reason to expect any unique answer to questions about how organisms should be grouped together, and...there is no reason to expect science to provide such answers."(48) Mainstream science arranges categories by several different methods, such as morphology, evolution or genetics. Folk classifications do not match scientific taxa, but they should be treated as equally valid. All these classifications are real in their own right; they just start with different motivations. Scientific classifications are not more fundamental or important than the rationale underlying folk classifications.(49) Here is an example: "Webster defines whales as 'any of the larger marine mammals of the order Cetacea, esp. as distinguished from the smaller dolphins...' Scientifically dolphins and whales are not official sub groups. Instead, toothed whales and Baleen whales are the named divisions. In sum, then, the category of whales is a biologically arbitrary one."(50)

Biological language is just one more variation of the reality of nature. Cultures with direct and regular interaction with nature demand equal standing. Most categories are culturally specific, not universal. Most classifications are artificial schemes and products of the mind rather than natural.(51) Homeopathic remedies cannot be accurately fixed in biological categories, because such taxa are arbitrary according to cultural preference, and the categories constantly change according to new knowledge.

Similar Organisms

Still, there is no escaping the observation that some organisms are similar. "When one compares the structure of various organisms it becomes obvious that some resemble each other more closely than others. If the reasons for this are examined, some version of the concept of common plan must emerge... The plan reduces many different things to transformations of one thing, and becomes a constant within variation... The logical relation between organisms begins to clarify, even if the ultimate nature of the organisms is as yet unknown." (52) Each similar group is recognized by a description of "repeated phenomenal relations" or pattern independent of explanation. (53) "It is not enough for organisms to be similar. Similarity alone is not a guarantee of evolutionary relationship. For this a special type of similarity is needed..." (54) In today's science there is no consensus on what is similar enough. For example, mice should be just mice, but are marsupial mice of Australia related to placental mice? (55)

One of the standard texts on taxonomy says, "Classification schemes help us comprehend life on this blue and green planet. But classification schemes are an invention, the human hand attempting to sort, group, and rank the types of life that share Earth with us... Every taxon—class, order, phylum, kingdom—is artificial based on the study of relationships. We recognize that only the species is a natural taxon." (56) Homeopathic remedy groups may help the memory, but the group does not predict symptoms for any one species or any one remedy.

Species seem real. Rana frog species recognize their own differences in mating calls. A malaria parasite recognizes one mosquito. (57) If I look at a dandelion barely growing between the cracks of cement, one inch tall with sickly green leaves, and compare it to the eighteen inch specimen with rich green large leaves in my wife's organic garden, are they the same species with the same homeopathic proving? The late evolutionist, Stephen Jay Gould, posed two possibilities. "Species are real units, arising by branching in the first moments of a long and stable existence," or species are arbitrary segments of the resulting continuum." (58) Another expert in the field answers, "It would seem a bit strange to argue that one and only one way exists to divide up the world... The world can be divided up into kinds in numerous different ways, and the results are all equally real." (59) So far we have described classifications that seek to "carve nature at her joints." (60) Does nature actually have joints?

Continuum of Individuals

All life is interconnected. Commonalities between arbitrary categories create artificial boundaries be-

tween the each and the all. Boundaries on a map are an illusion. When does day become night? "It is human nature to put things into categories, but nature rarely cooperates. What, precisely, is the dividing line between a hill and a mountain? A rock and a boulder? A stream and a river?" (61) "The more one increases the number of divisions in natural things, the closer one will approach the truth, since there actually exist in nature only individuals... The Genera, Orders, and Classes exist only in our imagination." (62)

Quantum mechanics and chaos theory provide examples of the complexity of nature where there are infinite gradations marked by singularities. Photons have properties of a wave or field as well characteristics of a particle. The wave state is the continuity characteristic, and the particle state is the discontinuity state. The photon is both at once. (63) Chaos theory teaches that categories mislead. The ends of the continuum are of a piece with the middle, such as when arteries become arterioles. (64)

Since ancient times, people have observed that nature forms an intricate web of life. In Hindu mythology, "The god Indra has a net of infinite expanse representing the universe, and in it are set an infinite number of perfect gems, each of which reflects the light given off by all the others. This light plays mutually and simultaneously between all of them—no one object has priority or superior position. In this play of reflected appearances there is nothing behind what appears..." (65) Each earthly or heavenly substance is itself. Each individual gem is each species. Each symptom pattern or gestalt of each species is unique. There is a pattern, but no causes. This is the phenomenology of symptoms. The homeopathic remedy Sulphur reveals the symptoms of desiring sweets and inclination to uncover the feet. No hidden cause must exist for these symptoms to be related.

The net image has no boundaries. There are knots or nodes in the net representing singularities or particular entities, but no divisions into your plant kingdom or my animal kingdom exist in this image of reality. Each jewel or point in the net is mutually related to one another. This plexus or network is not two-dimensional. The net is many dimensional and manifold in all directions. (66) The affinities between each individual can extend in any direction. In homeopathy, each remedy can belong to many different groups, depending on the arbitrary first assumptions.

Classifications carve out a defined discontinuity from the continuous product of nature. (67) Classifications try to divide an endless variety of imperceptible gradations. (68) Nature shows continuous change and continuous difference. (69) One can

never say when one pattern becomes a new one. Take the example of the rodent type. Some are carnivorous—rats; others are ruminants—rabbits; some are swinish swamp dwellers—beavers; there are even ape-like rodents that sit upright—squirrels, and bat-like members—flying squirrels.(70) The homeopathic remedies Belladonna, Hyoscyamus, and Stramonium are botanically related and have some similar symptoms. What is the next closest related remedy? Every remedy has “nearest neighbors,” but in multiple different directions. Belladonna can be grouped with Aconitum in considering suddenness of symptoms. Hyoscyamus compares to Lachesis in the jealous category. Stramonium has destructive anger like *Tarentula hispanica* perhaps.

Each remedy in homeopathy is unique but not independent. It is part of a continuity. Native Americans use the Medicine Wheel to show how humanity with nature co-create the living sacred whole.(71) “In many ways this Circle, the Medicine Wheel, can best be understood if you think of it as a mirror in which everything is reflected...The tiniest flower can be such a Mirror...it would be perceived differently as it reflected the feelings of the different people who perceived it.”(72)

A well-known parody points out the Circle of Life: “In a minute or two the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and yawned once or twice, and shook itself. Then it got down off the mushroom, and crawled away into the grass remarking as it went, ‘One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.’ ‘One side of what?’ thought Alice to herself. ‘Of the mushroom,’ said the caterpillar, just as if she had asked it aloud, and in another moment it was out of sight. Alice remained looking thoughtfully at the mushroom for a minute, trying to make out which were the two sides of it; and, as it was perfectly round, she found this a very difficult question.”(73)

Dividing life into rigid systems is an invention of the mind. “Nature has no systems; she has—she is—life and development from an unknown center toward an unknowable periphery...there are characterless genera in which species may become hard to distinguish as they dissolve into endless varieties. If we make a serious attempt to apply the scientific approach to these, we will never reach an end; instead, we will only meet with confusion, for they elude any definition, any law.”(74) The many-dimensional web of wholeness more accurately describes nature; not an imposed scheme of carved out categories.

A further example of arbitrary categories is naming constellations of stars. Some people see a group of stars and call them the Big Dipper. Another group of people may name the similar group of stars Ursa

Major or the Big Bear. These stars are not actually related to each other in size or proximity. They only seem connected to each other from certain positions on earth, and only in some people's minds. It is an illusion to group these stars together, just as it is an illusion to group remedies by a few common external characteristics. The true similarities between remedies reveal themselves through provings on healthy people, verified clinically.

Manifold Dimensions of Categories

Various dimensions of knowing nature exist. Distinctions in botany or zoology are only one avenue. “Taxonomies pull diverse instances under a single label, thereby treating them as if the same—and this not the only logical system possible (i.e., the universality is not required by logical constraints.)”(75)

People in the flower essence field use twelve different dimensions of classification:(76) 1) The shape or form of a flower—a star shape is more cosmic; a cup shape takes in life; a bell shape is more grounding. 2) Orientation in space—a vertical sunflower represents the ‘I am;’ the along-the-ground vine shows the social dimension. 3) Botanical family—extends from reproductive parts. 4) Rhythms— includes grouping by diurnal, seasonal, annual, perennials, for centuries. 5) Ecological environment—whether the plant is from the desert or alpine areas, etc. 6) Four element quality—“Creatures of the air soar above the earth, leaving the past behind. Earth residents rely on the earth element itself to remain grounded. Tree dwellers promote a calm, tranquil home as a sanctuary. Water inhabitants draw strength from the size and magnitude of their home.”(77) 7) Kingdom relationship—the four kingdoms of human, non-human animal, plant and mineral. 8) Color—i.e., yellow plants like St. John's wort or mustard address depressed states of consciousness. 9) Fragrance, texture and taste. 10) Folklore use as medicine. 11) Chemistry in the substances. 12) Mythology.

Even mainstream science applies different categories to classify life. An example comes from the most recently discovered domain of life forms, usually called Archaea. These microorganisms were first isolated since 1977. “It seemed that the available criteria, such as cell shape, physiology, and metabolism [form and function] didn't work...They apparently didn't reflect evolutionary reality in any meaningful fashion.”(78) They use ecological categories instead. Some of the organisms are classified as thermophilic or heat loving, others are halophilic or salt loving and others are named methanogenic. These life forms do not stay alive easily in laboratory conditions or under the microscope; so most of what is known about them is determined by how they live in their natural environment. The

ecological categories are not taxonomic categories because they do not represent evolutionary history; they simply reflect lifestyle.(79)

A subspecialty in biology is called biogeography. In general, biogeography studies the distribution of the ranges of plants and animals. The patterns of distribution do not seem to be random. What is the import of these distributions? Controversy in this science exists. One group follows Darwin who said that each species emerged from a specific geographic location as a center of origin. They believe that a similar evolutionary history means that taxa came from a common place and dispersed.(80) Under their analysis, "Reptilia are presently considered to be not a valid historical and evolutionary group within the Linnaean taxonomic classification scheme."(81) The animals that we call reptiles do not have a single common ancestor. Another group of biogeographers believe that each area of the world has its own distinctive inhabitants because there is co-evolution between the land and the organisms.(82) For the homeopath, this implies that that the common taxa will not reveal similar symptoms, but common location is more significant. For instance, all the sub-Saharan life forms are to be studied as a similar category.

Deciding what is most important about medicines results in different organizations of *materia medica*. The first edition of Merck's Manual in 1899 arranged the medicines in three different ways in three sections of the booklet. The first way is alphabetical by name; the second listing is according to known physiological actions; and the third part of the book divides medicines by therapeutic indications.(83) The current "Physicians Desk Reference" lists medicines in the major portion of the book by manufacturing company. Commercial interests are most important in this arrangement. A modern text of pharmacology emphasizes known chemical mechanisms of action in their chapter arrangement. The usual arrangement of homeopathic *materia medica* has traditionally been alphabetical. This implies that every remedy is equally important and individual in its own right. However, to help learn the vast amount of facts in homeopathy, the groupings of remedies by taxa have appeared.

Constructing Schemes by Themes

Many homeopaths reject a central dogma of mainstream biology that says manifestations of life are an accident. The Darwin interpretation says that organisms are more or less accidental accumulations of successful characteristics, grafted onto one another piecemeal, and once grafted, hard to change—shaped by natural selection. Common properties are contingently useful and relatively

fixed by shared descent.(84) That is, biological categories are determined by common history, not by a universal type. Homeopaths who reject the chance, meaningless description of life offered by materialists, are then attracted to the opposite belief. They believe that there does exist a natural order of universal ideas or archetypes. This is not a new worldview. It existed long before homeopathy. In the western world, it goes back to at least Plato. This paradigm states that the rich diversity of life forms resulted from a rich diversity of final ends or purposes that reflected the intentions of a Universal Mind. Each life has a design and a function. Each type of life has a fixed meaning described by a theme, and the organisms fit an order full of symbolism. Each archetype has subdivisions based on commonalities, such as the animal type with declensions of fish and mammals. The materialistic laws may form constraints on potential variations, but homologies of composition still exist. For instance, the bones covering the gills in fish are homologous to the bones of the middle ear in mammals—the malleus, stapes and incus.(85) In this world of ideas, every organism fits perfectly in an environmental niche. The individual organism is only an example of the ideal. The individual loses its unique importance.

However, any center of a category has marginal cases, unpredicted anomalous appearances and atypical members. An example is the mammal that resembles a fish, called whale.(86) Natural kinds are not natural, but reflect grids imposed upon nature by humans. Nature is amorphous until structure is imposed upon it by us: "Nature is equally amenable to any such scheme."(87) There are many possible ways of classifying naturally occurring objects that reflect real divisions—far too many. An organism may belong to many different natural kinds. There is no unique best system of classification scheme even for biological sciences; there are many partially overlapping and intersecting hierarchies.(88)

It is only a philosophy that "each family represents a combination of similar thoughts, and that every great division of the animal kingdom may be considered as a particular train of reflection upon a fundamental idea."(89) It is a transcendental philosophy because it is beyond the senses. It is an essentialist philosophy because it believes in preordained natural kinds. Moreover, it is a metaphysical philosophy because one must accept a world of duality, one physical and one hidden in the mind. If the idea/theme is more important than the specific, then the imagination is more important than the perception. This duality is rejected in the real homeopathic method. Homeopathy rejects a mind-first metaphysics, and homeopathy also rejects the materialist mechanism. The signs and symptoms

of disease are not mere things. They are a dynamic process of nature. Remedy pictures are not themes outside of time and space, but concrete facts of the whole human dynamis.

If themes are defined as ideas imposed upon the data of symptoms, then this is not the homeopathic method. If themes are just the name of a real symptom pattern, then it is a real symptom. For instance, a patient with sudden onset of symptoms has a theme that is a concrete symptom. Many homeopaths do not distinguish between the idea as a symptom and the real symptoms. George Vithoulkas's essences are a case in point. Originally, the essences were a revealing summary statement of actual symptoms that did not go beyond the symptoms themselves, but, in the mind of some students, the summary became a theme that was more important than the concrete signs and symptoms of the body. Mind became more important than Nature.

Similar Source, Similar Symptoms

In his book, *The Substance of Homeopathy*, Sankaran, on page 256 says that, "the symptomatology of any drug is intimately related to the source it is drawn from." And the reason for classifying into kingdoms is: "this certainly makes our task simpler." It is a very unproven presumption that categories are real and that the artificial taxonomies have any accurate relationship to the effects of drugs on the human organism. The organization of another field of science cannot be grafted onto the science of homeopathy. Does quantum physics teach us how to drive a car? The limits of the knowledge of one field apply to another field in unknown ways. The animalism of animals and the planthood of plants concern biologists, but have no relevance to how the derived substance reacts homeopathically.

Another homeopath dividing remedies into kingdoms says that remedies from the same category share a common pathology. A few common symptoms are mentioned.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Common symptoms are not definitive in homeopathy. The whole discipline of homeopathy is to train to see the unique and individual, not the easy, everyday seeing. If the purpose of kingdom classification is to make things easier, it only makes the knowledge superficial. Kingdoms do not reveal a deeper meaning or deeper understanding of the nature of remedies. Does "deep" mean some other unknown reality beyond the symptoms themselves—a metaphysics—which can be made up in the mind; and anything that does not agree with this hidden concept is ignored? Does deep mean a theory, a symbol or a generalization? The constructs of the intellect are not more useful than the unique individual symptoms of each person in homeopathy.

Modern taxonomy systems are not interested in the direct experiences of agriculture or gardening or medicines. Classifications shifted from similar medicine values or similar plant usefulness to an organization based on universal rules and universal methods.⁽⁹¹⁾ Modern family categories are similar in historical ancestors, not similar in medicinal usefulness. Historical relationships as an organizing framework do not mean similar medicinal effects. Drug effects do not determine the science of taxonomy. We cannot generalize prematurely from one field of study to another. According to the science of bioregionalism, it would be logical to predict that similar source of the remedy by geographic location would yield similar symptoms of medicines. The cactus and the snake of the desert should have similar symptoms in this way of thinking.

Farrington's Bosh

In the history of homeopathy, E.A. Farrington used family relations of remedies. Here is what he wrote: "Arrange remedies according to some system in your mind and so be enabled to recall facts as you need them...[Remedies] hold certain relations to each other. You will find five relations. The first I have called the family relation, derived from their similarity in origin."⁽⁹²⁾ Where are the extensive discussions of the other four relationships? It seems that some homeopaths are so entranced by the knowledge of a fifth, that they are oblivious to the other four fifths. Why is only twenty percent of knowledge expanded from a small cottage industry for experienced homeopaths to an out of proportion international business monopoly?

The other categories of relationships are no less important: 2) Concordants are "drugs which present marked similarities in action though dissimilar in origin." There are many remedies in this category. 3) Complements - "one drug completes a cure which the other begins, but is unable to effect." *Belladonna* and *Calcarea carbonica* are his example. 4) Antidotes. 5) Inimicality - remedies do not follow each other or else they mix up the case.⁽⁹³⁾

Here is one more quote from that same book: "Now, it is a principle of Homeopathy, to which there is no exception, that you shall learn the action of a drug on the healthy organism before you use it in practice. That is a rule which you cannot neglect. You cannot be too careful, otherwise you throw yourself into confusion, doubt and empiricism, and help to fill the *Materia Medica* with 'bosh,' of which there is enough already there."⁽⁹⁴⁾

Category of One

Hahnemann specifically and in detail discusses the classification of remedies. Why do so many to

tally ignore what he says, as if what was true then is not true now for homeopathy? "Perhaps, however, botanical affinities may allow us to infer a similarity of action? This is far from being the case, as there are many examples of opposite, or at least very different powers, in one and the same family of plants, and that in most of them." (95) He then lists numerous exact specific examples. Read it for yourself.

"I am far from denying, however, the important hints the natural system may afford to the philosophical student of the materia medica and to him who feels it his duty to discover new medicinal agents." These are students who make hypothesis. "But these hints can only help to confirm and serve as a commentary to facts already known." Facts are from provings. "Or in the case of untried plants they may give rise to hypothetical conjectures which are, however far from approaching even probability. What business has the mild, slimy, white lily (*Lilium candidum*) beside the garlic (*Allium sativum*), or the squill (*Scilla maritima*); what the asparagus (*A. officinalis*) beside the poisonous white hellebore (*Veratrum album*), in the family 'Liliacea?'" (96) There is nothing of certainty in conjectures.

Botanical affinity is not a sure principle. "Though I readily admit that, in general, similarity of action will be much oftener met with betwixt species of one genus, than betwixt whole groups of families... and that an inference drawn from the former will have a much greater degree of probability attached to it, than one from the latter; yet my conviction compels me to give this warning... It cannot be considered as a sure principle to guide us to the knowledge of the medicinal powers of plants. Nothing remains for us but experiment on the human body... What difference betwixt the mushroom (*Agaricus deliciosus*) and the agaric (*Agaricus muscarinus*); betwixt the woody stone moss (*Lichen saxatilis*) and the powerful Iceland moss (*Lichen Islandicus*)." (97) He cites many more examples of close relatives with different actions.

"Conclusions relative to similarity of action betwixt species of a genus become still more hazardous, when we consider that one and the same species, one and the same plant, frequently shows very various medicinal powers in its different parts." (98) Some of the examples mentioned compare the cooling camphor in the root of the cinnamon laurel with the burning cinnamon oil; the poppy head versus the poppy seed; the corrosive stalk of the ranunculus from its mild root. The only sure category for medicinal use is a category of one. Each case belongs to its own category unlike any others. The only category is to find the most similar remedy - a category of one.

"Desultory Classifications of Teachers"

Only exact trials and actual experience determines real information. "Indispensable as a knowledge of the particular form of plants is to the true farmer, and the power of distinguishing them by their external appearance, which constitutes botany, yet botany will never teach him whether a given plant is suitable... for his sheep or swine... the botanical systems of neither... Haller nor Linnaeus... can tell him this; pure, careful, comparative trials and experiments on the different animals themselves can alone give him the requisite information... No science can pretend to that which can only be explained by another science, without rendering itself ridiculous... Each science can decide on such matters only as are within its own province." (99)

In the following quote by Hahnemann, the word "desultory" means random and superficial: "The acquaintance with these remedies being derived solely from their deceptive outward appearance, and from the preconceived notions and desultory classifications of teachers of materia medica, there is the greatest danger of deception, of error, and of falsehood." (100) The form and function of living organisms cannot be a reliable indicator for medicinal use: "In all ages the mania for simplification has been the chief stalking horse of system manufactures of the first rank." (101)

At the end of a lifetime of experience, Hahnemann wrote in §119 and §120 of the *Organon*: "As certainly as each kind of plant is different in its outer form, in its own way of life and growth, in its taste and smell from every other plant species and genus... just as certainly are they all different and divergent from one another in their morbid, thus also, in their curative actions. Each of these substances work in its own different but determinate way which forbids all confusion... Therefore the medicines which the life and death, the disease and health of human beings depend must be exactly, painstakingly distinguished from one another. For this reason, through careful, pure experiments, they must be tested as to their powers and true actions in the healthy body." (102) We can never know what symptoms a remedy produces in a healthy person before the proving.

Individualization of Remedies

A primary principle in homeopathy is to individualize each person's disease manifestations. Individualizing each remedy is just as indispensable. It is exactly as important to individualize people as to individualize remedies. If each person's disease is unique, then singularity is more significant than commonality in finding the remedy.

Categories "assign things to classes based on what they have in common or their sameness... [It] will

lack particularity [instead of] every detail may count.”(103) It is untrained, undisciplined human nature to make an easy, fixed order in the world. Instead, our job as homeopaths is to record all the observations without a filter that selects the facts and transforms them into a rigid system that resists further questioning.

The proper domain of taxonomy in explaining symptoms is to aid the memory, to arrange the knowledge into a system to study in an organized way. However, there are many ways of organizing. Some homeopaths use common pathologies, such as all the remedies for an abscess. Other homeopaths arrange remedies and compare them through a common rubric, such as burning feet. For others, it is easier to learn all the remedies for a disease type, such as allergies. A geographer may want to study all the remedies that originate in Australia. An artist may sort the remedies by color.

Specification, not homogeneity is the homeopathic method. The focus, the center, the point of departure in true homeopathy is the primacy of the individual person's unique disease. To this we must add the irreducible primacy of the complete, individual disease expression of each remedy.

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