

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

Source: <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.med/2008–02/msg00108.html>

- *From:* rpautrey2 <rpautrey2@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 21 Feb 2008 14:13:31 –0800 (PST)
-

KENT'S METAPHYSICAL LEGACY: VITAL FORCE & MIASMS
by Peter Morrell

"..beware of the opinion of men of science. Hahnemann has given us principles, which we can study and advance upon. It is law which governs the world and not matters of opinion or hypothesis." [Lectures, p.18]

Preamble

This essay attempts first, to identify and disentangle the central themes of Kent's philosophy of homeopathy; second, to place these themes into a more modern context and comment upon them; third, to defend Kent against those modern homeopaths who adopt an essentially allopathic view of the miasm theory, contending that miasms are little more than bacteria and that the vital force is a totally redundant concept in homeopathy, no longer applicable and which can be dispensed with.

We can summarise the three central questions that Kent repeatedly addresses in all his writings. Firstly, what force powers the organism? Secondly, what is disease cause? Thirdly, what is a potentised remedy? As we shall see, though his ideas weave this way and that, his philosophy always returns to these central themes and attempts to bring all three points together within the same circle. He always places them all in a spiritual framework or schema. Repeatedly, he returns to these three fundamental aspects of homeopathy, and he never tires of explaining and defending them. These issues have not gone away, they are still with us. They are still central and dominant aspects of homeopathy. Nor have they been resolved or integrated into modern ideas of physiology. Kent provides one possible model, one all-embracing and consistent model to explain them all. It may not suit everyone, but it is still a sound and interesting model.

This essay does not address any aspect of Kent's technique. It merely

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

considers his ideas. The practical application of his philosophy and its effectiveness, or otherwise, must comprise an entirely separate subject of study. Nor do we address Kent's third theme: the nature of potentised remedies.

Introduction

Homeopathy is always changing and new ideas are being introduced today which would have appeared unthinkable a generation ago. C'est la vie. Recently, I was asked to comment upon the ideas of Sarkar, Choudhury, Kanjilal and Dimitriadis, who see the miasms as little more than bacteria and infectious agents. Some examples of this essentially allopathic view are as follows:

"Whatever the dictionary meaning of the term 'miasm' may be, Hahnemann clearly specified the meaning as "parasites", "germs", "viruses" and "minute living bodies", etc. in different chapters in his epoch making books "Chronic Diseases" and "Lesser Writings". Elsewhere Choudhury says..."It is evident that Hahnemann's miasms are nothing but bacteria and other micro-organisms according to modern terminology." [Choudhury, pp.5–8]

"True natural Chronic Diseases are those which owe their origin to a chronic parasitic miasm or germ" i.e. a parasitic micro-organism in our terms..." [Tyler, p.2]

"Thus we come to the inevitable conclusion that psora is not a predisposition to disease (as many still assert) but the diseased condition itself..." [Sarkar, pp.507]

"Thus miasm has never meant a disease or predisposition to disease; however, a miasmatic disease can produce an increased susceptibility to other disease producing stimuli." [Dimitriadis, pp.15–16]

"Hahnemann repeatedly speaks of the psora disease as being acquired through infection with the miasm. His whole model revolves around the infectious nature of external disease producing stimuli, and their effects on the human organism. He never suggests that (internal) psora, the disease is hereditary." [Dimitriadis, p.41]

"... the child born of parents who have suffered psora (or any other disease) will be influenced in some way, even if it were only behaviourally, since the child will be affected by the parent's behaviour, circumstance, habits (all of which will be modified by their state of health or disease) etc., especially during its early development." [Dimitriadis, p.43]

When I first read these views I was puzzled how anyone could regard them as a sound account of the Miasm theory. I thus set about looking

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

at this subject again and trying to trace my own views on this topic, and where I had obtained them. I disagree pretty fundamentally with the view expounded above about miasms. I do not believe it is a sound account of this matter at all, but a bowdlerised, allopathic version: a fake, an impostor.

I started out as an avowed Kentian and have always been a vitalist in my beliefs about biology. In more recent years, I have expounded against Kent as a dogmatist and a person opposed to change and experiment. I still stand against that aspect of him. However, I have recently been able to see more of his positive side once again. His religious views have never offended me, and though I do not agree with them, it is clear that he spent a lot of time thinking deeply on matters homeopathic and formed many conceptual bridges connecting his religious views with his homeopathic views.

The Lectures, which he published in 1900, and his Aphorisms both stand as living testament to that deep thinking he did. It is still a very rich source of ideas for modern homeopaths, and it is doubtful if anyone has truly digested them, sorted them out, or placed them into any kind of modern conceptuality. They also desperately need integrating into some kind of more modern framework and placing into the right context with modern ideas about physiology. Thus, I have started a process of re-examining this aspect of homeopathy.

'Homeopathic medical science views the facts of the universe...from a vitalistic...standpoint...which regards all things and forces, including life and mind, as substantial entities...' [Close, p.88]

Having very thoroughly absorbed the fundamental ideas of homeopathy, Kent then re-framed them, both in relation to the medicine of his day, and against his own personal religious beliefs. Thus, what we find in Kent, are parts of the 5th Organon viewed through a religious lens, and also viewed against a background of the main issues of medicine c. 1900. Yet surprisingly, none of the issues he addresses have been resolved, and thus what is interesting about Kent is that much that he says is still highly relevant and exceptionally profound – philosophically and physiologically.

Vital Force

'The vital force is that which sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the plant, awakens in the animal and becomes fully conscious in Man.' [Anon]

While Kent can seem to be way off-mark in certain respects, possibly due to his religion, but he is also very often 'spot-on' about the precise and fundamental nature of what a miasm must intrinsically be in the organism. In addition, maybe his religion led him to where he

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

ended up. His strong religious beliefs had clearly forced him into a certain position where he was duty-bound to think more deeply of all aspects of homeopathy and to try to build conceptual bridges between it and Swedenborg. That in essence is what his Lectures are. They stem from that bridge-building process, and very profound thinking. He uses the one [Swedenborg] to inform, enhance, deepen and fertilise his understanding of the other [homeopathy].

Like Hahnemann before him, Kent was clearly first and foremost a vitalist:

That which we call disease, is but a change in the Vital Force expressed by the totality of the symptoms.

We do not take disease through our bodies but through the Vital Force; likewise with a true cure.

He loved the concept of the vital force; it fitted his hand perfectly like a warm and comfortable glove. He adored this concept with an unparalleled and touching devotion. For Kent, it was the great secret, the very touchstone, which enabled him to make sense of the whole of homeopathy, and without which he would probably have seen little sense in it. For him, the vital force drew tightly together all the main threads of the subject. The potentised remedy, spirituality, disease causation and the action of the remedy. Thus, these threads which form the very warp and weft of Kentism [and indeed, of homeopathy itself], are founded upon and rooted in the concept of the vital force. It is one of his most oft-repeated themes and runs like a red line through all his writings and was apparently his homeopathic map and compass. Whenever he is unsure, confused or in doubt, he goes back to the vital force to seek help and guidance for a new direction. He does it repeatedly.

Kent thus has very clear ideas on what the vital force is and what its functions, properties, powers and qualities are too:

"The Vital Force dominates, rules and co-ordinates the human body.

The Vital Force holds all in harmony, keeps everything in order when in health; just as Electricity in its own natural state is a bond of order.

"There is no cell in man that does not have its will and understanding, its soul-stuff, limbus or simple Substance."

We must remember that Vital Force is Simple Substance, and that which cures must be Simple Substance.

"All matter is capable of reduction to its radiant or primitive form.

Simple Substance is continuously endowed with intelligence from first

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

to last, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms.

We do not take disease through our bodies but through the Vital Force; likewise with a true cure.

The real holding together of the things in this world is by Simple Substance.

The Simple Substance is the means of identification in nature. The mineral, the oak, the wheat, are all identified by their Primitive Substance, and exist, only, because of their Primitive Substance, which makes them what they are.

This Primitive Substance abides in everything that forms, grows, feeds, or has individuality, or identity, it is that which intimates an exterior form similar to its own existence. That causes the Aconite plant to be Aconite, and nothing else to the end of the world.

What things can we predicate of the Simple Substance? It cannot be found by Chemistry, nor seen with the eye, nor felt with the fingers. It must have a medium of operation, in order that it may become manifest to the Sensations.

Weight cannot be predicated of the Simple Substance, neither time, nor space.

No power known to man exists in the concrete substance, but all power exists in the Primitive Substance.

The Primitive Substance, or Radiant form of matter is just as much matter as matter in its aggregate form.

Everywhere this Simple Substance is a bond of order. 'The Vital Force like Electricity, is a bond of order. It builds in accordance with its necessities because of that which was prior to it.

It is unthinkable to speak of Motion or Force without a simple, primitive substance. Force, or action of a nothing is unthinkable.

It is insubstantial, immaterial, it cannot be seen, touched or weighed, but it is that force which powers the organism and maintains its integrity and healthy functioning in the face of continuous change and the forces of disorder.

'...the vital body is the vehicle that builds, maintains and repairs the physical body...' [Miles, 1992, p.26]

'Throughout life the vital body builds and restores the dense form, counteracting the abuse to which the dense body is subject. Without this the dense body would quickly fall into decay. During sleep...the vital vehicle or part of it remains, restoring the physical body ready

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

for the next day's activity.' [Miles, 1992, p.143]

It is manifestly present and active in the living organism but quite absent from the corpse.

All motion, harmony and order are due to Simple Substance. It not only operates all things, but is the cause of operation of all substances that are material. The very Sounds of the forest have harmony and cooperation.

Primitive substance abides in everything that forms, grows, feeds or has Individuality or identity, It is that which ultimates an exterior form suitable to its own existence; what causes the Aconite plant to be Aconite and nothing else to the end of the world.

There is no cell or tissue so small that it does not keep its soul and life force within it.

It is from this primitive Substance that man is created, his intellect made, his life formed.

In this quote, Kent clearly suggests a transcendence of the vital force even over the dynamic structures of the organism and thus presumably over genetic mechanisms too. This is also of interest as Kent elsewhere refers to homeopathic cures of Diabetes, Cancer and Haemophilia, what are all—but universally regarded as genetic, or semi-genetic disorders. He also declares a form of vital force universally present in and powering all living things. The vital force makes sense of disease causation and Kent uses it to make sense of miasms and physiology too. It was his most often-used weapon to defend homeopathy against the encroaching ideas of allopathy.

Dynamic wrongs are corrected from the Interior by dynamic agencies.

Man cannot be made sick or be cured except by some substance as ethereal in quality as the Vital Force.

An inflamed liver is not the disease. The liver is not the cause of itself. It is under the control of the Vital Force and it becomes what the Vital Force makes of it.

There is nothing in the world, which does not exist by something prior to itself. With the grossest materialistic ideas, man can demonstrate this.

Here he responds to the materialist diktat of 1900 medicine by denying their ideas and by reasserting homeopathic dogma regarding the vital force.

The Idea that an organ like the liver, which is under the control of the Vital Force, is able to set up a disease itself and thereby make

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

the patient sick is preposterous.

I feel in these quotations great sense, great beauty and a serene spiritual form of majesty. That is the sensation I had upon first reading them twenty years ago. Kent was talking from the heart, from his deep sense of direct realisation, as well as from conviction and understanding; a conviction and understanding borne from many years of useful practice and deep reflection upon the central themes of the Organon.

Disease Cause & Subtle Physiology

'Hahnemann...refers all the phenomena of health and disease...under two names: 'the dynamis' and 'the life force'. This is Hahnemann's greatest discovery, and the absolute bedrock of his system.' [Close, p. 32]

Like Hahnemann before him, Kent avers that the organism is controlled by a subtle Dynamis, or vital force, or simple substance, what today is often called the 'matrix', defence mechanism, or bio–electric field, and what was in ancient times called the 'Vis medicatrix naturae', or healing power of nature. It probably also links to the meridians of acupuncture, the polygraph lie detector and Kirlian photography.

'In its original form acupuncture was based on the principles of traditional Chinese medicine. According to these, the workings of the human body are controlled by a vital force or energy called "Qi" (pronounced "chee"), which circulates between the organs along channels called meridians...Qi energy must flow in the correct strength and quality through each of these meridians and organs for health to be maintained.' [Vickers & Zollman, pp.973–976]

As a vitalist, I agree wholeheartedly with this concept. Thus miasms, as agents of disease cause, must be resident within the vital force itself, a part of its subtle being [what I have called 'a mist in the being' and what Ploog calls 'invisible stigmata'] and thus on this basis I fail to see how it can be truly regarded as a physical entity or as infectious agents, like bacteria and viruses.

'The vital body may suffer damage much like the physical. It is weakened by chronic disease and by drug suppression which it holds like a shadow in its structure...it is the vital body and its link with the physical, via the nervous system, that determines the health of the immune system. It is through direct contact with the nervous system that the vital body acts on the physical. The dynamic substance of the homeopathic remedy is absorbed into the nervous system, usually sub–lingually.' [Miles, 1992, p.28]

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

Kent had much to say about bacteria, which sheds a flood of light on our current understanding, and it relates to miasms too. Kent had so much to say on this subject because at that time it was being greeted by allopaths as the saviour of medicine: the Germ Theory of Disease. It was regarded as THE realm of disease causation. Because Kent was a thoroughgoing vitalist, he vehemently rejected the Germ Theory and castigated all those who adhered to it. He rejected this materialistic notion of disease causation as a thinly veiled direct assault on his own religious beliefs and upon the fundamental conceptual fabric of homeopathy. Thus, he regarded it as a vile and deceptive evil, which had the potential to trick homeopaths into becoming allopaths.

The following quotes from Kent's 'New Remedies, Clinical Cases, Aphorisms and Precepts' convey very clearly his rather disparaging view of the alleged importance of bacteria in medicine:

"The tendency for the human mind to run after the visible, that can be felt with the fingers, leads one to adopt foolish theories like the Bacteria doctrine and the molecular theory. [p.649]

"Most doctors have gone crazy over the vicious Microbe as being the cause of disease, and think the little fellows are exceedingly dangerous. As a matter of fact they are scavengers. Shortly after death, a prick with a scalpel is a serious matter, but when the cadaver has become green and is filled with bacteria, it is comparatively harmless. [p.663]

"The microbe is not the cause of disease. We should not be carried away by these idle allopathic dreams and vain imaginations, but should correct the Vital Force. [p.663]

"It is not from external things that man becomes sick, not from bacteria nor environment, but from causes within himself.

"Save the life of the patient first and don't worry about the bacteria. They are senseless things. [p.663]

"The Bacterium is an innocent feller, and if he carries disease he carries the Simple Substance which causes disease, just as an elephant would." [p.663]

There is a state of insanity in the Sciences of the present day. They put all laws aside, in order to accept, for instance, the Molecular theory, because they want something that in its aggregate will be large enough to be felt with the fingers. [p.643]

Here again we see Kent taking up and responding to the ideas prevalent in 1900 medicine and dismissing such materialist ideas of disease causation as nonsensical, when viewed through the lens of his profound knowledge of homeopathic principles.

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

Every body has its atmosphere, just as the earth has its atmosphere. It is not the Smallpox crust that is so dangerous; it is the Aura, which emanates from it.

The microscopist has failed to show that there is no Vital Force, no Simple Substance, no Dynamis in drugs seen, and how can we expect him to foretell when the substance cannot be seen?

It is not from external things that man becomes sick, not from bacteria nor environment, but from causes within himself.

When a microscopist can examine a grain of wheat, and tell whether it will grow if planted in favorable soil, he may be of use to Homoeopathy. When he can examine a smallpox crust and tell whether it is still contagious, or whether its power has been destroyed by heat, then he may be of use. When he can examine the Aconite root and tell how it will affect man, we can do away with provings, but we have to enter by a different door.

Whenever a man settles all things by his eyes, and fingers, pseudo-science and theories, he reasons from lasts to firsts; in other words, from himself, and is insane.

Here again we see the important implication being underscored by Kent time and again that 'disease cause' is internal not external, and is invested in the vital force itself, not in external or infectious agents like 'germs'.

That which we call disease, is but a change in the Vital Force expressed by the totality of the symptoms.

We do not take disease through our bodies but through the Vital Force; likewise with a true cure.

Disease is clearly and emphatically portrayed as a derangement in the vital force itself [and true cure as a correction of the vital force] and even external causes are portrayed merely as 'exciting causes' that trigger already internal predispositions [miasms].

So long as man relies upon the senses to settle what is scientific and what is not, and does not use his understanding, so long will he be in confusion, and sciences will oppose each other.

The finest visible objects are but the results of things still finer, so that the causes rest within.

Every feature what can be seen, that can be observed with the aid of the finest instrument is but the result of disease; but the cause of disease is a million times more subtle than these and cannot be seen by the human eye.

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

Here he again returns to his favourite theme, a clear advocacy of a subtle and ethereal 'realm of disease causation' which is internal, inherent to the vital force and the organism, and which lies just behind the physical. It is always noumenal, and never physical in character. How could this realm be reached by anything other than a potentised remedy? And the higher the potency, the deeper it reaches into this realm of disease causation?

Higher means interior in quality.

The lower potency corresponds to a series of outer degrees, less fine and less interior than the higher.

The physician who thinks in quantities only has such a crude mind that he cannot realize the true homeopathy.

If we have material ideas of disease we will have material ideas of the means of cure.

The rational mind can go far beyond the idea of a molecule.

The physician is not called upon to cure the results of disease, but the disease itself; all pathological changes must be regarded as the results of disease since all disease is dynamic.

The above quotes illustrate very firmly the way in which Kent responded to the ideas of the medicine of his day, dismissing and reframing them all in the light of his deeper understanding of homeopathy; and his repeated rejection of the physical and material in favour of the subtle and ethereal.

'Hahnemann at first apparently had the distinction between power and force pretty clearly in mind in his use, in the Organon, of the two terms: 'dynamis', the life power, the substance, the thing itself, objectively considered; and 'life-force', the action of the power; but he failed to maintain the distinction uniformly in his subsequent use of the words.' [Close, p.34]

In modern terms, there seems to be some evidence that the vital force might be congruent with the 'unconscious mind', and which in turn controls, via the brainstem [medulla], the autonomic nervous system, and thus all the subconscious processes of the organism. This is my conception of what the vital force is.

"The Simple Substance is again dominated by still another higher substance which is the Soul."

"This Primitive Substance abides in everything that grows, or has individuality or identity. It is the vice-regent of the Soul.

It is also of interest that Kent calls the vital force the 'vice-

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

regent of the soul'. This is a very interesting point and illustrates very clearly that he was regarding it as a mental entity, a conceptual abstraction or mind rather than anything remotely physical.

'Samuel Hahnemann spoke of the 'vital force' and how it exerted power and influence over the physical body...the homeopathic remedy appears to act directly on this vital force, which ultimately brings about changes in the physical body...it is the manifestation of life energy, and without it the physical vehicle has no animation or sensation. It is the vehicle of disease and disorder, expressing them through the physical body by means of morbid disease symptoms.' [Miles, 1992, p. 25]

If the vital force is the vice-regent of the soul, as Kent suggests, then it follows that it is a kind of soul or mind, and has a grip on the body's functioning through the DNA, RNA, and a battery of enzymes, to control the cellular processes. Moreover, all these processes cease at the point of death:

"It is the imperfect machine that causes death. The vital force is of the Soul and cannot be destroyed or weakened. It can be disordered but it is all there.

When you have discovered that this Life Force resides in a simple substance you see at once that death is not an entity. The body has no life of its own and therefore it cannot die.

Therefore, there is no death, but we do observe and perceive that there is a separation, of one that is alive from another that never was alive; a disjunction of that which lives from that which never lived.

It stands between mind and matter and is clearly an 'immaterial entity'. It can thus be regarded as the 'director of metabolism' and is what I termed the "invisible finger" which moves the molecules of all life processes:

"The doctrine of the Vital Force is not admitted by the teachers of physiology, yet without the vital force, without simple substance, without the internal as well as the external, there can be no cause and no relation between cause and effect."

Miasms

"Hahnemann talked of this pandemia (psora) and it was easy for me to accept. Then I read Kent and I could not share his religious point of view, the miasms as the first sin." [Christoph Ploog, 1999]

Once again, and in modern parlance, we can say that the vital force is

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

in control of the processes of cell division, of embryo development, detoxification, cellular regeneration, organ formation, tissue maintenance and all bodily processes, which are directed through hormones and enzymes. I think this very vividly conveys how we can use these concepts of Kent to get right to the heart of this matter and place them into a modern context. In addition, of course, it reveals the essentially vitalistic nature of homeopathy. Nowadays, arguments even break out about Hahnemann and whether he was a vitalist. However, here we can clearly see that he must have had some vitalist leanings to have even conceived of a vital force or Dynamis in the first place. This suggests that he preferred vitalistic ideas to physical ones.

For example, I agree with him that the miasm is an invisible force retained by the organism [like a hidden stain] from the original [and infectious] disease, but subtly capable of diverting the vital force's control of the chemical machinery of the organism. This seems to me to be the crux of the matter. The miasms thus disturb the pure or smooth functioning of the vital force. They impede its smooth action or control and this leads to symptoms of disease.

Thus, the miasms can be seen as an "unwanted accessory" [or negative component] of the vital force [what Miles so aptly calls a 'shadow'], which deviates or inhibits or restricts its pure control [over the organism] and hence creates disease symptoms where there should be none. In addition, it follows that only potentised remedies can delete these 'engrams' we call miasms from the vital force and thus restore to pure function the vital force and its control of the organism. We might therefore even see miasms as negative 'racial memories' or archetypes. Only potentised remedies are "raised to the same degree of subtlety" as that of the vital force itself. Kent himself says exactly this:

Man cannot be made sick or be cured except by some substance as ethereal in quality as the Vital Force.

"Low potencies can cure acute diseases because acute diseases act upon the outermost degree of the Simple Substance and the body. In chronic disease the trouble is deeper seated, and the degrees are finer, hence the remedy must be reduced to finer or higher degrees so as to be similar to The degrees of chronic disease.

We potentise our medicines so as to render them simple enough to directly influence the Vital Force itself, to be drawn in, so to speak by its influx.

Higher means interior in quality.

When the third potency cures there is something higher in it. No substance permeates the Vital Force when it is coarse enough to be seen.

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

The lower potency corresponds to a series of outer degrees, less fine and less interior than the higher."

That which we call disease, is but a change in the Vital Force expressed by the totality of the symptoms.

We do not take disease through our bodies but through the Vital Force; likewise with a true cure.

Most certainly it was his religion that led Dr Kent, 'bull by nose', in the direction of these ideas, and without which he might never have dreamed of his hierarchies and octaves. We certainly have Swedenborg to thank for that. It also follows that only certain remedies can do the deleting spoken of above. These are the miasmatic remedies and certain nosodes. No other remedies are apparently capable of doing this.

I would happily walk even further down this road with Dr Kent in also saying that the miasms can therefore be seen as mental or archetypal rather than physical. They are disorders of the vital force, not of the cells and tissues per se. That seems to me to be the crux of this matter. How can they be material entities or infectious agents, when it is the vital force that controls all the cellular processes and is the 'director of metabolism'? Thus, stated plainly, if you believe in vital force then you must accept the immaterial nature of the miasms. The one comes in with the other; they form inter-connected parts of the same territory.

Bacteria and viruses can still be accepted as real disease causes, but more subordinate to the subtle internal 'real causes'.. More as external stimuli, that switch on or trigger the internal acute miasms.

"This is something hidden in the mist of mankind...I indeed think we have invisibly carried stigmata that resulted from the chronic miasms and I think too that we get a miasmatic touch from our parents, I don't think that your 'fog in the being' and the bacteria theory exclude each other." [Christoph Ploog, 1999]

Well, it does seem difficult to be a materialist AND a vitalist at the same sitting! The key point here seems to be 'invisibly carried stigmata' and also 'an hereditary aspect in the miasms'. I agree. Yet, they seem to stand on the very borderline of what is truly physical and cellular and what is abstract and conceptual i.e. residing within the vital force or matrix? Personally, I prefer to regard them NOT as physical entities but as essentially mental/vital – as part of the matrix. The child is touched by the miasm of the parents, as said above.

What is still left unanswered at this point is why the two venereal and one skin disease should be the causes of the three miasms. In other words, what is it about these particular diseases, which makes

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

them able to imprint themselves so deeply and powerfully upon the vital force and its mode of functioning? And thus generate such deep-seated and insidious miasms. What is it then about the VF which caused it to suffer a 'collapse of power' sufficient for the formation of these miasms? They clearly represent a loss of control on the part of the VF. This is quite clearly also a question that troubled Dr Kent, and, after thinking it over deeply, he opted for the moral and religious answer typical of his times:

"You cannot divorce medicine and theology. Man exists all the way down from his innermost spiritual to his outermost natural" [p.641]

"A man who cannot believe in God cannot become a homeopath." [p.671]

'The body became corrupt because man's interior will became corrupt.' [ibid., p.681]

'Man...becomes disposed to sickness by doing evil, through thinking wrong...' [ibid., p.664]

'Psora is the evolution of the state of man's will, the ultimates of sin.' [ibid., p.654]

'This outgrowth, which has come upon man from living a life of evil willing, is Psora.' [ibid., p.654]

'Thinking, willing and doing are the 3 things in life from which finally proceed the chronic miasms.' [ibid., p.654]

'..had Psora never been established as a miasm upon the human race...susceptibility to acute diseases would have been impossible...it is the foundation of all sickness.' [Lectures, p.126]

'Psora...is a state of susceptibility to disease from willing evils.' [ibid., p.135]

'The human race today walking the face of the earth, is but little better than a moral leper. Such is the state of the human mind at the present day. To put it another way everyone is Psoric.' [ibid., p.135]

'Psora...would not exist in a perfectly healthy race.' [ibid., p.133]

'As long as man continued to think that which was true and held that which was good to the neighbour, that which was uprightness and justice, so long man remained free from disease, because that was the state in which he was created.' [ibid., p.134]

'The internal state of man is prior to that which surrounds him; therefore, the environment is not the cause...' [ibid., p.136]

'Diseases correspond to man's affections, and the diseases upon the

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

human race today are but the outward expression of man's interiors...man hates his neighbour, he is willing to violate every commandment; such is the state of man today. This state is represented in man's diseases.' [ibid., p.136]

'The Itch is looked upon as a disgraceful affair; so is everything that has a similar correspondence; because the Itch in itself has a correspondence with adultery...' [ibid., p.137]

'How long can this thing go on before the human race is swept from the earth with the results of the suppression of Psora?' [ibid., pp.137–8]

'Psora is the beginning of all physical sickness...is the underlying cause and is the primitive or primary disorder of the human race.' [ibid., p.126]

'...for it goes to the very primitive wrong of the human race, the very first sickness of the human race that is the spiritual sickness...which in turn laid the foundation for other diseases. [ibid., p.126]

Thus, man is what he wills. As his love is, so is his life. When man thinks about the neighbor, he wills one of two things, he wills good to his neighbor or the opposite.

The Soul, which is the most interior of man, cannot be affected by drugs. This can only be affected by man's own will.

This outgrowth, which has come upon man from living a life of evil willing, is Psora, is the life of Psora. [Aphorisms, p.654]

Now in proportion as a man falsifies truth or mixes or perverts truth; in proportion as he mixes willing well with willing evil, so does he adulterate his interiors until that state is present.

When Psora had become a complete, ultimatum of causes, it became contagious.

It is a law that if man does not think from firsts to lasts, he becomes disposed to sickness by doing evil through thinking wrong. This state precedes susceptibility." [Aphorisms]

Unfamiliar, perhaps, and old-fashioned as these ideas now sound, I think it is wrong to dismiss them too lightly. Rather than dismiss them outright as dogmas, it is perhaps preferable in fact to keep them in mind as a possible model of explanation. The fact remains that no-one can with certainty state why these particular diseases were so important and affective to the vital force.

An interesting question has always been whether other infectious diseases do not also create chronic miasms. Modern writers have

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

contended that Tuberculosis and Cancer have a similar power to create new miasms. In which case it might be the scourge-like nature of all these diseases that has led them to create miasms. Maybe it is an aspect of their great vigour, their powerfulness and their persistence.

'The next step consisted in [Hahnemann] collecting into a class all the phenomena known to be due to those ancient, widespread and malignant scourges of mankind, the venereal diseases.' [Close, p.90]

In which case one imagines that Plague and Leprosy in ancient times, must also have been deep, miasmatic disorders. Similarly Elephantiasis. In addition, in this century, possibly Influenza too. Cholera and Typhus [1800s], Diphtheria [1930s] and Tonsillitis [1950s] might also be regarded as suitable candidates for miasm status. Maybe it is the sheer life-threatening power of such diseases to overwhelm the vital force that leads them to attain their status as miasms? Leprosy would clearly stand close to Psora, while Influenza and Plague seem closer to Tuberculosis – though all four are fundamentally Psoric conditions. Thus, Psora clearly still forms the basis for all other miasms, as Kent says.

I still return to my basic Kentian notion that a miasm, though originally derived from an actual infectious disease, is essentially a derangement of the life force, a component of the living entity which controls the organism and moves molecules in the biochemical processes.

'...Hahnemann invariably uses the term, vital principle instead of vital force, even speaking in one place of 'the force of the vital principle', thus making it clear that he holds...that life is a substantial, objective entity, a primary originating power or principle and not a mere condition or mode of motion. From this conception arises the dynamical theory of disease...that disease is always primarily a morbid dynamical or functional disturbance of the vital principle; and upon which is reared the entire edifice of therapeutic medication, governed by the Similia principle...' [Close, p. 88]

It is thus immaterial and spiritual in character, like the vital force. Could not a miasm be some kind of zeitgeist which the whole race absorbs at the time of the epidemic, regardless of actual infection or not? Thus it might be seen as an episode in human evolution resulting from pandemics passing through in different historical epochs. If the miasms are essentially more mental than physical, then Kent is right in one important respect, that they represent a point of interface between homeopathy and psychotherapy. Then the question arises how they can be removed by psychotherapy as well as by potentised remedies?

That which we call disease is but a change in the Vital Force

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

expressed by the totality of the symptoms.

We do not take disease through our bodies but through the Vital Force; likewise with a true cure.

The miasm is also very often distanced in time from that original infection and also usually passed down to descendants. In a certain sense, therefore, it is abstracted from physicality and must therefore be fundamentally mental in structure and form. Well, some people regard it as genetic. I also return to my idea that it is an 'innate predisposition' and a vestige of an ancient disease which has imprinted itself very powerfully and deeply upon the 'matrix', and left a stain [like a bruise or deep hurt, an engram] which is carried forward not in the cells and tissues [or genetically] but through that part of the matrix which is passed down the cellular line to progeny.

Kent also argues here that ONLY through the vital force do we become sick and become cured. To modern eyes, this is a very curious point, as it completely ignores material factors in health like poisons, radiation, physical injury, heat, bacteria and viruses, and overtly genetic factors, which most certainly do have a health impact. To some degree they damage the physical fabric of the organism and thus cause symptoms. But to a strict vitalist, like Kent, they cannot be allowed as true causes and must carry with them a subtle, ethereal cause as well, which impacts directly upon the subtle vital force and hence elicits disease symptoms. Most modern clinicians would find such an idea perversely unacceptable, provocatively vitalist and manifesting an unnecessarily anti-materialist position.

'The vital body may suffer damage much like the physical. It is weakened by chronic disease and by drug suppression which it holds like a shadow in its structure...' [Miles, 1992, p.28, my emphasis]

Thus, in this important sense, a miasm has to be regarded as a part of the fabric of the vital force itself, pure and simple.

To deny that the miasms are dyscrasias or predispositions towards certain types of patterned disease states seems to deny the theory in its entirety. We only have to consider the characteristics of the three miasms themselves that run down in families. Sycosis people are pale, cachetic, marasmic, waxy, with a strong tendency [= predisposition] towards mucus and pus problems, cystitis, warts, infertility and asthma, worse for damp weather. Syphilitic families quite clearly manifest examples of alcoholism, blindness, deafness, insanity, bone and brain disorders, cleft palate, necrotic and destructive, etc. Psoric families tend to manifest allergies, circulation disorders, haemorrhoids, and skin complaints, functional disorders of every description. To deny that these observations constitute innate predispositions to certain predictable patterned disease states derived from vestiges of ancient family illnesses seems to completely demolish the theory itself and all the countless

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

observations Hahnemann himself had meticulously compiled, and which led him to formulate the theory of Chronic Diseases in the first place.

'The next step consisted in collecting into a class all the phenomena known to be due to those ancient, widespread and malignant scourges of mankind, the venereal diseases.' [Close, p.90]

If we accept, and the evidence seems overwhelmingly strong, that the organism is controlled by a vital force, then the miasms must be seen as derangements in it; they are blockages, taints or stains which are carried invisibly within it as part and parcel of it. They drain its energy and impede its smooth action, and hence generate symptoms of disease.

'...that disease is always primarily a morbid dynamical or functional disturbance of the vital principle; and upon which is reared the entire edifice of therapeutic medication, governed by the Similia principle...' [Close, p.88]

Thus Kent conceived the important viewpoint that a perfectly clean and healthy person is a person completely cured of their miasms; mentally and physically pure and free; a spiritual being who is no longer susceptible to disease because they have had erased within them the root causes of disease which the miasms are. In this sense, Kent also conceived that the miasms are the foundation of all sickness and all possible sickness.

"There are two worlds, the world of thought, of immaterial substance, and the world of matter or material substance.[p.648, also in Lectures, p.69, p.75 and p.85–6]

"There is an innermost to everything that is, or else the outermost could not be [Aphorisms, p.645].

All disease causes are in Simple Substance. We must enter the realm of causes in order to see the nature of disease.

We potentize so as to render the remedy simple enough to be drawn in by influx by the Vital Force.

The dynamic plane is more interior or above the nutritive plane; it presides over it and commands it. This is the plane of provings.

There are degrees of fineness of the Vital Force. We may think of internal man as possessing infinite degrees and of external man as possessing finite degrees.

The interior man is superior to the external man. Through this outer instrument everything is reflected or rather conducted.

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

The external man is but an outward expression of the internal, so the results of disease (i.e. symptoms) are but the outward expression of the internal sickness.

Arsenic, for example is capable of identification from its outermost to its innermost. In the external form the degrees are limited. When it has passed to simple substance, the Radiant form of matter, it has infinite degrees. To express the degrees from the Outermost to the Innermost, we might say a grain of Silica is the Outermost; the Innermost is The Creator.

One who thinks from the material, thinks disease is drawn in from without, but it is drawn out from within.

And we can also point to Kent's wonderful assertions about 'the realm of causation' and the 'internal man' which again amplify this idea that miasms and vital force are united and dwell together in 'mystical union' within a spiritual realm of causality which sits just behind the physical and which touches it only through the hierarchies of biochemical processes.

'The administration of the homeopathic remedy stimulates the vital force to perform its work, on itself and its physical counterpart...here is revealed the true nature of the potentised homeopathic remedy – it is itself vital not physical...vital, or etheric, and by its very nature acts directly on the vital body. The energy of the remedy...is unleashed on the vital force and this is transmitted to its physical vehicle.' [Miles, 1992, p.27]

Thus, my point of the vital force being the finger that moves the molecules fits hand-in-glove with Kent's ideas.

Adopting a more modern chemical basis, we can say that the defence mechanism or vital force, can be identified a little more 'physically' than in Kent's day as the immune system, composed of antibodies, phagocytes, immunoglobulins, recognition molecules and lymphatic cells. But if Kent himself were alive today he would still dismiss even this as still not nebulous enough by half! He would still assert a finer more ultimate level of causation residing in a non-physical vital force, along these lines:

"The outer world is the world of results. The inner world (of causes) is not discoverable by the senses but by the understanding. [p. 657]

The Outermost has all within into the infinite in degree.

'Radiant substances have degrees within degrees, in series too numerous for the finite mind to grasp.

The signs are visible, yet the inner Essence is invisible.

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

In this way, therefore, Kent would still re-affirm the fundamentally numinous, ethereal and invisible nature of the three central components of homeopathy: vital force, disease cause and potentised remedies.

'The energy of the homeopathic remedy is made available for the vital body via the nervous system, and by return the vital force acts upon the physical body, using the nervous system as a means of transmission.' [Miles, 1992, p.28]

Each in their way therefore, are metaphysical and cannot be discerned in the physical realm even with the most powerful microscope we could conceive of.

The finest visible objects are but the results of things still finer, so that the causes rest within.

And as soon as we talk of the immune system, we link up with another subject Kent was keen to expound upon at length: susceptibility. But that can wait for another time.

Sources:

[All quotations in the text are to Kent's Aphorisms, unless otherwise stated]

Allen, J. H., 1910, The Chronic Miasms– Psora, Pseudo–Psora And Sycosis [In 2 Parts]

Assilem, M., 1991, Folliculinum: Mist Or Miasm?, The Homeopath, Vol. 11/1, p.5

Banerjea, S.K, 1991, Miasmatic Diagnosis

Choudhury, H., 1988, Indications of Miasm, 1st Edition, 1988, B. Jain Close, Stuart, 1924, The Genius of Homeopathy, Lectures and Essays On Homeopathic Philosophy, Indian Reprint (1988) Ed., B. Jain Publishers, N. Delhi

Cohen, H, 1997, Medorrhinum, Miasms And Morality In Homoeopathy, The Homeopath, Vol. 65, Jan 1997, pp.698–703

Cook, S., 1997, Mercurius, The Syphilitic Miasm And Spiritual Awakening, The Homeopath, Vol. 66, p.755

Danciger, Elizabeth, 1993, Letter re Vital Force, The Homeopath, 50, pp.92–4

Dimitriadis, G., 1992, The Theory of Chronic Diseases According to Hahnemann, Hahnemann Institute of Homoeopathy, Sydney.

Green, Julia M, 1982, Development Of Miasms In Family Groups, The Homeopath 3/1, 1982

Grimmer, A H, 1995, Miasms And Remedies, Homeopathic Heritage 20, pp. 415–16

Haehl, Richard, 1922, Samuel Hahnemann, His Life and Work, Vol. 1

Hahnemann, Samuel, 1828, The Chronic Diseases, Jain reprint

Hahnemann, Samuel, The Mode and Propagation of Asiatic Cholera

Jain Pub, c.1970, Chronic Diseases And The Theory Of Miasms, Jain, New

VITAL FORCE AND MIASMS – Homeopathy

Delhi

- Kanjilal, J. N., 1977, Writings on Homoeopathy, Dr. Abinash Ch. Das Publishers, Calcutta, Vol. 2.
- Kent, James T, New Remedies, Clinical Cases, Aphorisms and Precepts
- Kent, James T, 1900, Lectures on Homoeopathic Philosophy
- Miles, Martin, 1992, Homeopathy and Human Evolution, Winter Press, London
- Miles, Martin, 1995, Homoeopathy In The 21st Century, Prometheus Unbound 2:1, Autumn 1995, pp.35–37
- Morrell, Peter, 1983, On The Nature Of Life, The Homoeopath 3:3, London
- Morrell, Peter, 1984, Homoeopathic Health Revolution, The Homoeopath 4:3, London
- Morrell, Peter, 1987, Psorinum, The Homoeopath, 6:4, London
- Morrell, Peter, 1998, From Cooper Club to Flower Essences, Homeopathy Online #6, August 1998
- Norland, Misha, 1991, The Roots of Suffering: Buddhism and the Miasms, The Homoeopath 11:3, Sept. 1991, pp.77–82
- Ortega, P.S., 1983, Chronic Miasms, BHI 72:1, [Jan 1983, pp.8–19]
- Paterson, J, & E.M Paterson, 1935, The Chronic Miasms In Prescribing [1935],
- Ploog, Christoph, 1999, Email to P Morrell re Miasms, Dec 1999
- Sarkar, B.K., 1968, Essays on Homoeopathy, Hapco, Calcutta.
- Seror, Robert, 1999, Kent's Aphorisms Online, <www.homeoint.org>
- Shemmer, Yair, 1993, Vital Force: A View To The Future, The Homoeopath 13:2, June 1993, pp.66–70
- Singh, S P, & J G Roy, 1996, Hahnemann's Miasm, Homeopathic Heritage 21, pp.465–72
- Speight, P., 1948, A Comparison Of The Chronic Miasms, C. W. Daniel Co, Saffron Walden, UK
- Twentyman, L. R., 1952, Miasms And Archetypes, BHI, 41:4, pp.130–139
- Tyler, M. L., c.1940, Hahnemann's Conception of Chronic Disease as Caused by Parasitic Micro–Organisms, B. Jain Publishers, N. Delhi.
- Vickers, Andrew and Zollman, Catherine, 1999, ABC of Complementary Medicine: Acupuncture, BMJ 1999; 319:973–976, 9 October 1999
- Whitney, Jerome, 1995, The Source Of The Miasms, The Homeopath 57, April 1995, p.398

Homeopathe International

.