



The Role and Purpose of Miasms

SPECIAL SUBSECTION

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ABSTRACT

The concept of miasms, as introduced and expanded in homeopathic theory, encompasses both individual and collective dimensions of disease and healing. Originating with Samuel Hahnemann's foundational work, miasms were initially framed as inherited obstacles to health, expressed as chronic diseases and caused by the suppression of infectious diseases. Over time, this understanding has evolved, integrating perspectives on their role in the human evolutionary journey and the individuation process. This paper explores miasms' function as a catalyst for growth and development. Drawing on theories from homeopathy, epigenetics, and psychology, the work highlights the transformative potential of miasms in fostering awareness and evolution at individual and societal levels. The interplay between suppression, nurturing, and trauma is examined to uncover the broader implications of miasms in health, development, and adaptation. This expanded understanding positions miasms as essential to the dynamism of life and as integral elements of the collective human experience.

KEYWORDS

miasms, suppression, collective, evolution, individuation, homeopathy.

INTRODUCTION

Extending the miasmatic theory to the societal level is a compelling concept, as Stephinity Salazar persuasively explores in her article, "*Social Miasm Theory: Revisiting Chronic Illness from the Meta-Perspective of Suppression.*" Hahnemann himself already posited that the impact of miasms transcends the finite lifespan of an individual. The step from miasms being transgenerational to playing a role on societal level is then a logical one.

However, a critical question remains: Is Hahnemann's conceptualization of miasms sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a foundation for further theoretical developments? His use of terms such as "monster," "enemy," and "hostile powers" reflects an allopathic lexicon reminiscent of Jenner's germ theory, which underpins the allopathic model of addressing infectious microorganisms. This framing raises the question of whether it limits our understanding

of miasms to an adversarial perspective, and if so, whether that has consequences for the hypothesis that suppressions are the cause of them.

HAHNEMANN ON MIASMS

The concept of a 'miasm' (from Greek 'miasma', taint, stain, pollution) does not originate from Hahnemann, (for example see Lamarck, 1744-1829) but probably no (contemporary) physician elaborated on the concept as he did. In Hahnemann's time, and before the germ theory (connecting microorganisms to diseases) was accepted, miasma was a commonly used term for the cause of diseases we now call infectious. With miasma, a dangerous influence or atmosphere was indicted as responsible for contamination or pollution causing sickness, death, or decomposition.

In his *Organon of the Medical Art*, Hahnemann (1842) explains what his understanding of the concept entails.



Hahnemann clearly describes miasms as negative forces that seemingly served no purpose other than to guarantee humans a miserable life and an untimely death. Miasmatic thinking is based on the limitations of homeopathic cure, proposed by Hahnemann to explain patient relapse, despite what were considered correct prescriptions. *"Their beginning was promising, the continuation less favourable, the outcome hopeless."* (Hahnemann, 1839, p. 4) Hahnemann postulated that inherited influences, as remnants of infectious diseases of an "unknown primitive malady," act as obstacles to cure.

"The true, natural, chronic diseases are those that arise from a chronic miasm. When left alone (without the use of remedies that are specific against them) these diseases go on increasing. Even with the best mental and bodily dietetic conduct, they mount until the end of life, tormenting the person with greater and greater sufferings. Besides those diseases that are engendered by medical malpractice (§74), these are the most numerous and greatest tormentors of human race, in that the most robust bodily anlage (rudimentary basis of an organism), the best regulated lifestyle, and the most vigorous energy of the life force are not in a position to eradicate them." (Hahnemann, 1842, p. 44)

With the example of the venereal diseases we get the idea of contamination, after which a miasm starts its destructive influence on our health.

"The internal monstrous chronic miasm of Psora is immeasurably more widespread, and consequently more significant, than the two chronic miasms just named. While Syphilis marks its specific internal wasting sickness with the venereal chancre and Sycosis does so with cauliflower-like growths, Psora documents itself (only after the complete internal infection of the whole organism) by means of a peculiar skin eruption, sometimes consisting of only a few vesicles, accompanied by an unbearable tickling voluptuous itch and a specific odour. Psora is the true fundamental cause and engenderer of almost all the other remaining forms of disease which are numerous, indeed countless ... " (Hahnemann, 1842, p. 46)

Kent stated in his Lectures *"the human race ... is little more than a moral leper"* and further established the moral

stigma that miasms symbolize as the infectious diseases connected to Psora, Sycosis and Syphilis are all sexually transmitted. "Psora is the evolution of the state of man's will, the ultimate of sin." Therefore, miasms were understood to be a source of suffering tormenting the human condition as a result of original sin (Psora), a vision based on Christian doctrine (Kent was a disciple of the Christian mystic Swedenborg). Although not stated as such, the underlying belief is obvious: miasms originate from sin and thus come from the devil, and as the devil is considered to be all bad (as opposite of God representing all good forces) fighting miasms is the logical result.

"If we overlook the moral tone, we can see that Kent was ahead of his time in recognising the state of human consciousness as being fundamental to understanding what the miasmatic energies are really about." (Watson, 2009 p. 11)

Although Hahnemann (1842) is less moralistic in his expressions about miasms, the way he speaks about them is actually very un-homeopathic. He uses allopathic vocabulary with terms like: *'that thousand-headed monster'* (Psora); *'drives the enemy out'*; *'these hostile powers which produce disease and against which the vital force alone is no match'*; *'invading morbid enemy'*; *'parasitic'*; *'infection'*. Hahnemann's (1842) allopathic language on miasms was actually completely in line with the germ theory of disease as developed by one of his contemporaries - Jenner (1749 - 1823).

Watson (2009) summarizes Hahnemann's context for understanding the miasms as follows:

- Miasms are invisible malevolent forces, each of which creates a range of suffering of a particular kind.
- Miasms are wholly negative influences which need to be eradicated.
- They are transmitted by inheritance, sexual contact, or (in the case of Psora) merely by proximity or touch (lodging places, towels, wearing gloves someone else wore previously, etc.).
- The innate self-healing capacity of the human organism is unable, of its own accord, to overcome the negative morbid influence of the miasms.
- An anti-miasmatic homeopathic treatment is necessary in order to 'drive out the enemy' of miasm-induced disease.

It is amazing to see how with the introduction of the miasms by Hahnemann (1842), allopathic thinking entered homeopathic practice, and even more so that for almost 200 years it went unremarked, and that only at the beginning of this century a broader vision was presented (e.g., van der Zee, 2000). Hahnemann (1842) himself already lifted the concept beyond the diseases connected to the miasms he recognized per se. He considers Psora as 'immeasurably more widespread' (Hahnemann, 1842 p. 80) than the other miasms and says about it:

"It is, to some extent, understandable how Psora could now unfold itself in so many countless disease forms in all the human race since this age - old infectious tinder has gone, little by little, through many millions of human organisms over the course of hundreds of generations, thus attaining an incredible proliferation. This is all the more understandable when we consider the multitude of circumstances that have tended to contribute to the formation of this great diversity of chronic diseases ... " (Hahnemann, 1842, p. 81)

In his later work, *Die chronische Krankheiten* (The Chronic Diseases), Hahnemann (1839) further explains how the suppression of the psoric eruption leads to a great diversity of chronic diseases as secondary symptoms of Psora.

EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF MIASMS IN HOMEOPATHY

Hahnemann described three main miasms:

- Psora – "the most universal mother of chronic diseases" - is generally assumed to be caused by scabies. (Klein, 2009).
- Sycosis – resulting from suppressed gonorrhoea.
- Syphilis – resulting from suppressed Syphilis.

Hahnemann (1839) concluded that all chronic diseases stem from any of these three miasms (mainly Psora) or a combination of two or three of them. Hahnemann (1839) himself started to extend the number of miasms and used pseudo-psora as a remedy, which is thought most likely to have been a nosode of tuberculosis.

With the introduction of a remedy made from breast cancer, Burnett (2007) indirectly introduced another miasm – the cancer miasm. An interesting development as the direct connection to a microorganism was now dropped.

In the second half of the 20th century, Latin American homeopaths like Paschero (1973) and Ortega (1980) published new theories on miasms that were less moralistic and more holistic. The direct connection to infectious diseases was released, noting that:

- Psora was related to inflammation and excitation (Paschero, 1973), or deficiency, inhibition, lack (Ortega, 1980).
- Sycosis was related to proliferation and inhibition (Paschero, 1973), or excess, escape, exudation (Ortega, 1980).
- Syphilis was related to destruction and loss of function (Paschero, 1973), or destruction, degeneration, perversion (Ortega, 1980).

Also, miasms were now placed in a sequence, each showing a different level of a state or disease. From Psora through Sycosis to Syphilis, pictured three phases leading from life to death.

Later, Praful Vijaykar (2005) connected the three miasms to cellular functions. He describes the survival mechanisms of the body as

- Homeostasis (Psora).
- Growth / Repair (Sycosis).
- Defense / Destruction (Syphilis).

The miasms in his model represent disturbances in cellular and body function. Disrupted homeostasis leads to inflammation and functional abnormalities, disturbance in growth and repair leads to overproduction of cells, and a disturbance in the defense mechanism of cells leads to loss of tissue.

Based on the embryonic tissue involved in pathology, he developed what he called 'predictive homeopathy' as now the direction of cure could be predicted, following the laws of Hering, from mesothelium to endothelium to epithelium. (Vijaykar, 2005) These three pathological pathways of the human organism point to a much larger concept than the three diseases Hahnemann connected them to. Scabies, gonorrhoea, and Syphilis as single diseases are connected to them but do not fully cover the totality of the corresponding miasms – Psora, Sycosis, and Syphilis. They are representatives of these miasms among many other diseases.

To many contemporary homeopaths it is now a feasible idea that in principle every infectious disease can be the basis of a miasm that is transmissible from generation to generation and can be treated by the appropriate nosode and specific anti-miasmatic remedies.

Rajan Sankaran (2004) created a system of ten miasms, which he placed within a flow chart. Jan Scholten placed these miasms within the periodic table of elements and connected them with the stages he described in *Homeopathy and the Elements*. (Scholten, 1996) There are clearly more miasms and we can consider the theory of miasms a work in process. Louis Klein (2009) has started a thorough research of nosodes and miasms and we may expect that gradually a much more detailed map of the landscape of miasms will emerge.

Sankaran sees miasms as an expression of the depth of a state. "The miasm is therefore, in my understanding, a measure of how much or how intensely or how acutely or chronically or how deeply or desperately the situation is perceived to be." (Sankaran, 2004, p. 263) A diseased state is based on a false perception of reality (delusion), which, on a deeper level, is experienced as a sensation and calls forward a response that shows miasm. Sankaran sees sensation and miasm as inseparable: "One should keep in mind that the disease state could be described as being at the crossing point of the sensation and the miasm." (Sankaran, 2004, p. 266)

The expression of such a state in a human being Sankaran calls the 'other song' as opposed to the natural 'human song'. At the danger of this becoming a play of words it is important to analyze whether indeed a diseased state should be considered as an expression of something not belonging to the natural state of man.

The fact that Sankaran (2004) was able to connect the variety of experience of a state with the miasms and so design a matrix of sensations (pointing to a family of remedies) and miasms (pointing to specific members of that family) and that this appears to function in homeopathic practice asks for an explanation of what these miasms then entail. Homeopathic remedies belonging to a specific miasm (e.g., Sycosis) indicate that these remedies have a similarity to the disease of that miasm (e.g., gonorrhoea). As discussed earlier, infectious diseases are actually teachers of mankind, and each miasm has a particular gift or lesson to convey.

They are logical, natural and inevitable consequences of human acts, deeds or neglects – similar in nature to the Vedic term karma. If a person is not experiencing wholeness (which these days is the norm ... but neither normal nor natural!) those parts that are not experienced as self

are projected on the outside world and the person is confronted with them in the outside world.

One way for nature to bring disowned parts home is through disease. On the level of DNA/RNA, one could say that parts of our biological library that are missing or 'switched off' are being offered or triggered from outside through microorganisms that carry that particular part of information. They seem to carry and express something that we experience as not belonging to us (the other song). Only when the message has been incorporated and brought in harmony with the rest of us, can suffering end and our natural human song be heard again, be it now enriched by a part that was lacking before. It is important to realize here that at least 95% of our genetic material originally stems from microorganisms. Milestones signify the building in of new information offered to us by the microorganisms with which we make this cosmic dance, marking our whole evolution. Or, said in another way, a human being is the amazing outcome of many different microorganisms that together have built the DNA for a multi-cellular organism that makes new expressions of the flow of consciousness possible, like science, the arts, spirituality, and love.

The kind of miasm expressed in response to a sensation shows the level of desperation (Sankaran, 2004), but it does more than that. It also shows how close the person is to getting the message home, as the more intense the situation becomes and the stronger the sensation is experienced, the closer the individual comes to acceptance. In a bad dream, one can run away from some frightening image, and when there is no more escape, and the monster is looked into the eye, it turns into a helpless, sad being, the opposite of what was feared. If we can look our monsters (other songs) into the eyes at an early stage (Psora), we will be spared a lot of suffering. If we only look them in the eyes after having gone through many phases (walking away from them, denying them, etc – in fact all other miasms and their patterns of behavior) and ultimately see no other option but to try to kill them with all the power that is in us (Syphilis), it is at the moment that we feel we've lost it and give up in exhaustion, that suffering ends and instead of dying we are reborn into a better version of ourselves.

MIASMS IN LABOUR

Only looking from the point of view of pathologies, the road from Psora to Sycosis and ultimately Syphilis is a road leading to death, as with each miasm, deeper organs and

functions are affected, and more serious chronic diseases come into play.

Within a vision of growth and development, disease plays a role and is instrumental in fulfilling the higher purposes of our existence. Where this process of manifesting our true self gets blocked, symptoms, diseases, and miasms occur as a sign of the vital force inducing the change needed.

What helped me tremendously in broadening my view on miasms is Stanislav Grof's (1975) analysis of the birth process. The process of birth gives the total picture of life in a very intense, condensed way. It shows the history and the direction of mankind in a nutshell. What struck me was that there is a strong resemblance between the 'basic perinatal matrixes' as Grof (1975) describes them, and Hahnemann's (1842) main miasms.

A comparison of the main miasmatic remedies with Grof's (1975) description of each phase of birth resulted in an inescapable analogy between the phases of birth and the main miasms Hahnemann (1839, 1842) had described in his *Organon* and had further investigated in his book *Chronic Diseases*. (*Miasms in Labour*, van der Zee, 2000)

Hahnemann's (1842) main miasms – Psora, Sycosis and Syphilis – perfectly fit the main stages in the birth process: onset of labour (Psora), dilatation phase (Sycosis), expulsion phase (Syphilis). What can be called the acute miasm then perfectly fits the actual birth.

But the sequence of how each miasm corresponds to a phase of birth created a contradiction that needed to be solved. The birth process starts with a psoric phase and has a syphilitic phase at the end, similar to the process of life, where we see that psoric remedies are more indicated at the beginning of life and syphilitic ones more at the end. Life, however, ends with death, where birth signifies the beginning of life. Either the analogy that was enfolding was in some way incorrect, or another perspective was needed to bridge the gap between these opposite observations.

If indeed the healthy process of labor, a process which ends with the beginning of a new life, passes through the same phases and in the same sequence as the process of dying, it was clear that a new understanding of the corresponding miasms was needed.

The solution was actually simple and obvious. What had been investigated and published in homeopathy about the miasms so far was one-sided. Miasms are connected to the process of life, and homeopathy had focused the attention only on the pathological side of the phases in that process.

Looking at Grof's (1975) analysis of the birth experience shows the resemblance between the process of birth and death. I present it here in a nutshell. In terms of experience, the situation for the baby before the onset of labor resembles *paradise*. It is a non-dual state of oneness. When the contractions start, he feels like being *expelled* from paradise, and due to the increased contractions during the dilatation phase, his world turns into the opposite of paradise, *hell*. Then, when the birth canal starts to open, he experiences that there is a way out of his suffering, and he enters the dark tunnel ahead of him, where he actively *fights* for his life. At some point, it looks as if he will not succeed, and it is as if he will die. But then, in that moment of giving up, he enters the light and is *born*.

Jungian psychology (van der Zee, 2000, 2007) offers another analogy between the miasms, corresponding phases of birth, and the individuation process. The loss of paradise urges the individual to develop a *persona* in order to survive in the world. Instead of surroundings always perfectly matching its needs, it is now confronted with the values and norms of parents, family, and society. It needs support from the world around it to adjust to it to fulfil its needs. The persona is the result of a deal with the world – parents, siblings, family, society, etc. Due to this formation of the persona parts of him are being suppressed. These ignored, suppressed, underdeveloped, or even condemned parts together form the *shadow*. The next step is the confrontation with this shadow, to become aware of it, to take responsibility for it, and to integrate its qualities in the psyche. These qualities can now be used to create in life. For this, we need to unite and cooperate with our contra-sexual side, the man in the woman and the woman in the man. Jung calls these the *anima and animus*. In order to use one's creativity in a positive way, inspiration is required. For this, a man has to contact the *wise old man* inside of him, and a woman the *magna mater* inside of her. By ultimately letting go of the ego, *self-realization* is attained.

Once the birth process is recognized as a blueprint for the individuation process, other miasms, like malaria, tuberculosis, cancer, and typhoid, can also easily be placed. By interviewing mothers about the birth process of the children that came to my practice, case after case it was confirmed that the miasm and often even the exact remedy fitting a child, could be already recognized in the birth experience. Theory became fact and thus a new empirical and philosophical foundation to the theory of miasms was born. (van der Zee, 2000, 2007)

This process of birth, of becoming a person, has a shadow side to it at all levels. These are at the same time the results of diversions from our path as well as the circumstances that motivate and help us to rediscover it. We call them diseases or challenging life situations.

Here are some of the conclusions reached based on the analysis of the birth process in a large number of cases (van der Zee, 2007):

- The birth process shows, in a nutshell, mankind's journey on this planet.
- An individual birth history shows in a nutshell the main themes of the individual.
- The nature and pace of a delivery is similar to the nature and pace of the individual born.
- The same state is often already visible during pregnancy and conception.
- Rather than being causal, birth is therefore synchronous with and similar to the state of an individual.
- Following the tenets of reincarnation, it is clear that a person enters life in a state determined by earlier experiences – conception, pregnancy, birth and the life situation after birth fit to this state.
- An individual person enters life with a purpose – conception, pregnancy, and the birth experience already serve to fulfil this purpose.
- Birth can be seen as the moment where the back-up of the past software is installed on the new hardware – astrology is the science confirming this.
- A thorough analysis of the birth history in children as well as adults can help to understand and solve a case.
- There is a clear analogy between the phases of birth and the miasms.
- There is a clear analogy between the phases of birth and steps in the individuation process.
- Analyzing the birth process deepens the understanding of the miasms.
- Miasms play a role and serve a purpose in the development of the human race.
- Each miasm is connected to a phase in or aspect of human development.
- Miasms are connected not only to pathology but also to qualities they invoke.
- Each miasmatic layer in an individual plays a role in unfolding qualities connected to it in the individual.

- Individual diseases and traumata are teachers at an individual level.
- Epidemics, collective traumata, and miasms are teachers at a collective level.

In such a wider scope miasms are nothing but the shadow side of phases in a healthy process of developing awareness. Their role and purpose is to bring the subconscious dark part into the light in order to fulfil and complete the corresponding phase, both on an individual level as well as in the collective.

Comparable to infectious diseases, traumatic events and intoxications can also be held responsible for trans-generational effects. The term miasm therefore deserves to be broadened to include any form of stress that can induce long-term effects that transcend generations, and consequently there are, on an individual and collective level, more ways in which evolution is supported besides through infectious diseases.

As we see in the above the term miasm has different meanings with different authors partly because of an evolution of the concept, but the term has also become an umbrella for all kinds of ideas and theories. Within a bigger picture, discrepancies seemingly disappear. Essential for this more encompassing view is the realization that infectious diseases and miasms not only create pathology but also fuel our individuation process and are instrumental in our evolution.

To avoid misunderstanding it is important to realize that the domains of miasms are not limited by being only related to and the direct result of a specific infectious disease but represent larger concepts. Hahnemann's (1839, 1842) three basic miasms are roughly summarized as *underperformance*, *excessive performance* and *destructive performance*. He identified three core traits within the human race very intelligently and did the best he could in the circumstances of his time.

A closer analysis suggests great similarities of the three miasms Hahnemann introduced with other triple systems of classification, like:

- The Tridosha concept in Ayur Veda – vata (ether/air – anabolism), pitta (fire – catabolism), kapha (water/earth – metabolism).
- the three main survival instincts – freeze, flight and fight.

Although scabies, gonorrhoea and Syphilis are related to these three *Meta-Miasms*, their connection to our survival instincts may be much more fundamental. This grounds

Hahnemann's (1839) ideas in a primitive hard-wired reality that we all share. Everybody has virtually the same survival instincts because these were finished and encapsulated in a hard-wired, primitive brain that we have all inherited.

We can then understand that some epidemic diseases are effectively the materialization of these survival instincts, which date back to the time life, as we know it, began. They have precipitated out of consciousness as a materialization of a survival instinct. (Chappell & van der Zee, 2012)

A LOGICAL NEXT STEP

If we, in the spirit of Hahnemann, keep investigating and improving our philosophy and method, we can see a clear and logical next step regarding the nature of the miasms.

Hahnemann (1842) states that only the life force, and not the morbid agent, can create symptoms.

A **symptom** is an expression of the vital force trying to restore health, and from this derives the homeopathic notion that the suppression of symptoms is, as a consequence, a suppression of the vital force resulting in a weakened rather than strengthened organism.

A **disease** is a combination of symptoms, and it is therefore a logical next step to state that suppressing a disease is likewise counterproductive. Research in recent decades has also made clear that diseases can induce a process of change and development in the individual. Diseases then are to be seen as teachers that can help the individual to grow in awareness.

A **miasm**, being the long-term effects of an (suppressed) infectious disease (and, within a broader concept, another life-force-deranging influence like various forms of trauma or intoxication), expresses itself in chronic diseases, and therefore as a logical consequence, just like the individual symptom or the individual disease, also serves the purpose of restoring health.

From Hahnemann we can read: *"The highest ideal of cure is the rapid, gentle and permanent restoration of health ..."* (Hahnemann, 1842, p. 2) In the context of the above, the expression 'restoration of health' needs to be defined clearly. As Hahnemann writes it in the paragraph quoted, it implies going back to a previous healthy state. But, as part of a process of individuation which each human goes through in life, the phrase 'restoration of health' takes on a different meaning. Since diseases can function as teachers, suppressing diseases prevents the individual from learning the lessons diseases have to offer.

A disease is then both the problem and the solution. It is not something that never should have been, but rather exactly what should be: an opportunity for the individual, or in epidemics, the group, to pass through a dearly needed experience. It is a form of communication from our consciousness to our attention. Homeopathy can then be used to induce the awareness that underlies the disease, which is the cure, in a more rapid and less painful way. In that sense, the restoration of health means the attainment of a new equilibrium that includes a new awareness and brings the individual, or humanity as a whole, closer to fulfilling the higher purpose of his/its existence. Life is dynamic; thus, once the new equilibrium is reached, something else is likely to threaten its stability, for there is so much more potential in humanity to be unfolded.

"In the healthy human state, the spirit-like force (autocracy) that enlivens the material organism as dynamis (vital force), governs without restriction and keeps all parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both feelings and functions, so that our indwelling, rational spirit can freely avail itself of this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence." (Hahnemann, 1842, p. 9)

Within this vision of growth and development, disease plays a role and is instrumental in fulfilling the higher purposes of our existence, as much on an individual level as a collective level. Where this process of manifesting our true self gets blocked, symptoms, diseases, epidemics and miasms occur as a sign of the vital force inducing the change needed, and by reading these and by selecting a simillimum, homeopathy can induce the required awareness, again on both individual and collective levels.

Miasms are then part of the evolutionary impulse of the human condition, requiring the ability to adapt and change. Repression or suppression does not stop the intelligence and forming force behind the infectious disease from fulfilling its role and purpose. On the one hand, miasmatic diseases can be seen as limitations based on inherited dispositions, and on the other hand as a continued stimulant for change and progress. Out of suffering comes transformation. Change, however, requires the ability to adapt, and failure to do so creates suffering and disease on the individual level and the collective level. Both individual and collective levels interact and reflect one another. On both levels, disease should be seen to include more than

purely medical conditions, but also social and spiritual expressions of imbalance.

A conclusion we can arrive at is that the totality of a disease, besides consisting of its signs and symptoms, should also include an understanding of its role and purpose for the individual, or, in the case of epidemics, for a certain group, population, race, or even humanity as a whole. This understanding is important during the epidemic as well as later when homeopaths will have to contend with the after-effects – the corresponding miasm. We may expect that the largest possible meaningful totality will have the highest ability to cure a disease. It is essential that this totality includes an understanding of the very reason for the existence of the disease. Contrary to epidemic diseases, in the treatment of an acute or chronic disease, the role and purpose of the disease are often indirectly present in the causal history and thus are often included in the homeopathic case taking as well as the prescription. (Chappell & van der Zee, 2012)

THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF DISEASES

In constituting the Genus epidemicus for epidemic diseases or collective trauma, awareness of its context makes it possible to also include the role and purpose of the disease or trauma and results in a higher similitude with higher efficacy, both in the acute situation as well as in the long-term miasmatic effects. To understand the role and purpose may not always be easy, but realizing the possible importance of it, should not prevent homeopaths from making a serious attempt. We could start by learning from history.

Analyzing the changes inside a society during and after an epidemic shows us the impact of the epidemic, which, in accordance with the postulating of an intelligent purpose, should contain the purpose amid all the symptoms and suffering. Slower-moving epidemics like AIDS in Africa give us the opportunity to observe the changes and come to a deeper understanding of the role and purpose of AIDS while dealing with it. If we look beyond all the death and suffering that AIDS causes in Africa, a pattern of development becomes visible:

- For instance, the chance of survival is higher in people that are able to let go of tribal taboos, and decide to go to a doctor to be tested and treated.
- A woman who, against tribal customs, refuses men who want to have sex with her, or who insists her husband uses condoms, is more likely to live

long enough to bring up her children. Her children will not become orphans, and may not have to prostitute themselves for food and thus contract AIDS as well.

- A man who decides to lead a monogamous life, despite the fact that he can afford more wives or visit prostitutes, has a much lower chance of becoming HIV-positive.
- In South Africa, for instance, many white people do wonderful work of love in AIDS clinics and hospices, thus beginning to heal the wounds of apartheid and colonialism.

Many more observations like this can be made that show the possible impact of AIDS on African society, on the relationship between men and women, etc. Similar observations can be made regarding the impact of AIDS in the West, which mostly affected the gay community. All these issues can then also be expected to be part of the AIDS miasm, that with or without AIDS still being present, will stay with humanity for the coming century at least, or, considering the universal nature of the connected issues, forever.

MIASMS KEEP ECHOING THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE CONDITION THAT CAUSED THEM.

After a Genus epidemicus remedy has acted well for an epidemic, an insight can be found into the changes the disease has to offer for the society involved. From many experiences, we have come to understand some of the deeper themes, and if a remedy is indicated during an epidemic, we may expect its major themes to be connected to the epidemic. By observing changes in society during and after an epidemic in the light of the general theme of the Genus epidemicus remedy, this shift of consciousness can be understood as having been the real cause and the very reason why the society needed the disease. After an epidemic, the corresponding miasm will still express itself in the population as its message keeps echoing in those individuals with a susceptibility to it. Similar to the understanding gained by a patient after an effective simillimum, this is a very powerful way of understanding the real journey of the disease and healing, and the exact nature of the pre-existing problem. The same holds true for an epidemic.

Miasms are nothing but the shadow side of phases in a healthy process of developing awareness. Their role

and purpose are to bring the subconscious dark part into the light in order to fulfil and complete the corresponding phase, individually and collectively. Different societies are in different phases of development, and different epidemic diseases or forms of trauma and their miasmatic consequences are fitting to each. Of some epidemic diseases and miasms we have some understanding; of many homeopathy still needs to discover their meaning, role and purpose.

No doubt, many miasms need to be added and better understood to the few that homeopaths recognize today. It is clear that diseases like Polio, Pestilence, Chlamydia, Herpes zoster, Smallpox (Scheiwiller-Muralt, 2002), and many others influence the miasmatic heritage of mankind. Despite the fact that Hahnemann had already done groundbreaking work on the miasms, this is an area homeopaths are only beginning to discover, and rarely successfully use in practice.

By treating chronic diseases, the result of persistent miasms, which again have been caused by epidemic diseases or other causes, homeopaths are downstream, trying to save drowning people from the miasmatic river. By moving up-river we could be much more effective, because either people have only just stepped into the water and are still in a relatively healthy condition, or we may even be in time to prevent people from falling into the miasmatic river.

Analyzing the evolutionary impulse of epidemic diseases and the role and purpose of the associated miasms is one way to move upriver, and deserves to be placed high on the agenda of any healing modality. Since evolution follows a path and specific epidemic diseases can occur during specific stages, we may conclude that epidemic diseases and miasms fit within a process and are like pearls on a necklace, one leading to the other. Since evolution and the individuation process of mankind are much more complex than a linear process, there are, of course, many strands that together weave the cloth of human destiny, and diseases and miasms can have their meaning at several places in time and in changing combinations.

MIASMS AND EPIGENETICS

A new field of science – epigenetics – allows us to have a new and scientifically verifiable and acceptable way of understanding and explaining the miasms. It seems epigenetics is the key that opens up a whole new dimension that embraces prior homeopathic and human evolution

and unites homeopathy with modern science again, as it describes a mechanism by which genetics modify from one generation to another.

Epigenetics is described in very elementary terms:

- DNA methylation is a process by which certain DNA bases repress gene activity.
- Histone modification is a process by which combinations of different molecules attach themselves to the tails of proteins called histones. These alter the activity of the DNA wrapped around them.

The rest is quite straightforward. The modified DNA makes the chromosomes that make up the nucleus of the cell. Divide and multiply this by ten trillion cells, and you have a human being. Every cell is obviously a specialized version of the first genetic cell we start with at conception (Lipton 2005, Schenck 2010).

Those formative genetic information patterns we could call *Specific Miasms*. They are related to a specific disease, trauma, or other condition, and are being passed on in a modified, deranged way from one generation to another.

The forming forces of *Specific Miasms* can be summarized like this:

- Trauma in the form of
 - Physical trauma
 - Emotional trauma
 - Sexual trauma
 - Spiritual trauma
 - Nutritional and food trauma
 - Disease trauma (the old miasms)
 - Drug and toxicity trauma (including vaccinations)
 - Environmental trauma
 - etc.
- Nurturing which exacerbates or ameliorates the above effects.

TRAUMA

We all experience trauma. And there is a natural way of processing it. If this happens fully, there is nothing left, and there is no epigenetic trauma. In essence, hyperactive survival instincts and other pre-existing trauma get in the way of processing new trauma, and we then accumulate trauma increasingly with time. Trauma tends to accumulate around already existing foci of trauma, and in the process of living the accumulated trauma, becomes stronger and stronger. The psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, in his analysis, called these

COEX-systems – systems of condensed experience (Grof, 1975).

While there are many obvious categories of trauma, like poisoning, it is also possible that traumas occur that have many different aspects to them. For reasons of understanding and treating them, isolation of the different aspects creates potentially great possibilities for treatment. A so-called isopathic approach especially seems to be very effective in the early stages after the poisoning and might be all that is required. The longer the trauma took place, the harder it is to detect the cause, and a more individualized approach is required. But, without identifying the cause and addressing it, a cure may never be reached. The same might apply to rape, specific epidemic disease trauma etc.

Infectious diseases are not only a possible cause of trauma by themselves, but can also be triggered by trauma. It is well researched that traumatic situations have a negative effect on the immune system and thus make the individual more prone to getting sick from an infection which it would otherwise be able to resist. Unprocessed childhood trauma can affect the immune system until old age. (Noppert et al, 2023)

The combination of war and cholera is an example on a collective level. As in homeopathy the remedy *Cuprum* is strongly indicated for both war and cholera, this suggests that it is not only a matter of contaminated water, but also that the trauma of war is physically expressed and processed through the infection. Another example is a throat infection following acute grief. When emotional trauma is not fully processed psychologically, it will express on a physical level as a next option of recovering from it.

I won't go deeper into all the different forms of trauma that can constitute a miasm or contribute to it, but a very important one deserves to be highlighted here. Although pharmaceuticals are aimed at treating patients, they are a major cause of suffering and death. Ivanovas explains how the golden standard in medical research, randomized controlled trials, has a paradoxical effect: *"... the more supporting the frame conditions (of a treatment) are, the less a specific therapy will perform better than a placebo. The more damaging the context of a treatment, the more effective a specific therapy will appear in the context of a randomized trial. The conclusion is as simple as it is frightening: That is, the better we treat our patients, the more we come up to their singularity, the more we support their self-healing process, the more a therapy will seem to be a placebo-therapy.*

This can be formulated even more strictly: If the activation of a self-healing mechanisms is defined as a placebo effect and only the interference with inner regulation is defined as 'specific therapy', then every regulative therapy cannot be something else than a placebo therapy." (Ivanovas, 2012, p. 125) A very cynical outcome is that what is considered evidence-based medicine actually intoxicates patients.

Environmentally, we are seeing, generation after generation, a more toxic human race. We have systematically degraded our physical health generation upon generation without recognizing it, but now, three generations after this started in earnest, we have serious percentages of people with depleted energy as well as toxic kids. If smoke from cigarettes and coal fires was the outer toxic problem of the first half of the 20th century, then inner smog of hundreds of toxins in our bloodstream that is far more toxic, is the problem of the 21st century.

NURTURING

Nurturing is what happens from conception onwards, in the womb, at birth, and in upbringing. Depending on the circumstances and the awareness of parents and others, nurturing exacerbates or ameliorates the epigenetic variations caused by unstable survival instincts and unresolved trauma.

The nurturing itself is of course disturbed by survival instincts that overrule awareness because the survival instincts then dominate everything including nurturing, feeling and thinking.

The simple formula is that nurturing multiplies epigenetic changes. It's not a question of nurturing or nature. It's nurturing and multiplying nature that creates who we are. The problem is that good nurturing brings out the best of us and bad nurturing brings out the worst of us. And generally speaking we get a good dose of both, but unfortunately the majority of nurturing leads to huge underperformance in comparison with our potential.

SUPPRESSION

In her scholarly article on Social Miasm Theory, Stephinity Salazar gives solid reasons for applying the concept of suppression as a cause for what we could call derangements of the vital force on a collective level. In the above, I have already discussed that there is a lot more to miasms, their causes and functions on an individual and collective level, besides suppression.

The opposite of suppression depends on the context in which the term is used. Here are some common interpretations:

- **Expression** – suppression then refers to holding back emotions, thoughts, or expressions, instead of openly showing or sharing them.
- **Release** – suppression then refers to restraining or holding something down, such as pressure or force, instead of letting it flow freely.
- **Encouragement** – here suppressing refers to withholding support for ideas, movements, or activities, instead of fostering or actively allowing those things to thrive.
- **Activation** – suppression can also refer to inhibiting an action or reaction (e.g., in science or medicine), instead of initiating or enhancing a process.

It sounds logical to say that in all these examples that suppression is something negative. But is it true? Could it be that in certain situations suppressing symptoms in a diseased or troubled person can provide beneficial effects?

An example of this would be pain management for a person with a fractured bone. Administering analgesics suppresses the symptom of pain, allowing the individual to rest, avoid stress-related complications, and facilitate the healing process and tolerance of necessary treatments.

In the dualistic world we live in, there are no absolute truths, so many examples can be found in which suppression is actually meaningful. Suppressing symptoms is then a temporary or supportive measure, and most beneficial when combined with treatments targeting the underlying condition, as prolonged symptom suppression without addressing the root cause may lead to complications or dependency.

Suppression, when understood as the conscious control or restraint of certain behaviors, emotions, or thoughts, can also play an important role in maintaining societal order and promoting healthy interactions. Provided suppression is balanced it helps individuals and groups adhere to social norms, create harmonious environments, and manage conflicts effectively. Here also, addressing the underlying causes, traumas and conflicts is an essential counterpart, as otherwise suppression can lead to negative psychological or social consequences.

Emotional suppression may be called for in professional settings. For example, a teacher may feel frustrated with a disruptive student but suppress their anger to address the behavior constructively and maintain authority

and calmness in the classroom. We also expect police officers to suppress personal biases or emotions to enforce laws objectively, or judges set aside personal opinions to rule based on evidence and legal principles.

For all of us, it may be healthy and wise to count to ten in situations that frustrate us, or not tell the joke that comes to mind, as it may hurt someone present. And we all hope a pedophile is able to suppress his obsessive tendencies.

While suppression can have positive effects, chronic or excessive suppression, especially of emotions like sadness, anger, or fear, can lead to stress, anxiety, or mental health challenges. The key is to channel suppressed emotions or impulses into healthy outlets, such as communication, creativity, or physical activity. For a healthy society, suppression should be complemented by spaces where individuals can express their thoughts and emotions safely, such as therapy, supportive communities, or artistic endeavors.

So, in a truly holistic approach there is place for all interrelated opposites, including suppression. This also includes that allopathy and homeopathy is not a matter of either or, but one of one complementing the other in a meaningful and harmonious way.

THE ACTUAL CAUSE UNDERLYING ALL TRAUMA AND MIASMS

In my understanding, the real meaning of the homeopathic law of similars is 'loving what is'. In homeopathic case-taking, the way a patient experiences his or her reality is shared, and all a well-chosen remedy basically does is mirror it. Instead of fighting it, it is fully seen and accepted as it is. Suffering is either rooted in the past or caused by projecting a certain future. The beautiful paradox of homeopathic treatment is that through confirming the current state and accepting it, the case-taking itself and the remedy give space for change. By 'loving what is', what is can change, and healing occurs.

We could call homeopathy a non-duality tool. By dropping what one is not, what remains is the undivided timeless self. Being non-dualistic, our true nature doesn't experience the world in terms of opposites. Identified as a person, we see the world through the lens of our limited ego, each one in their own unique way. We not only all perceive the world in our own uniquely colored way, the world is even arranging itself fitting our inner state. Especially the work with family constellations has made that very clear. (Hellinger, 2001)

For the ego-identity, the world is divided into 'I' and 'other'. From that separation, the whole world of suffering is created. Egotism, greed, jealousy, hate, etc. can only exist if we experience ourselves as separated from others. Only then are we able to physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually abuse and hurt another living being. Only then are we able to pollute the environment out of pure greed or ignorance.

It takes a traumatized being to traumatize another being. In that sense, trauma only knows victims. Dealing with trauma and the many ways it is miasmatically expressed is key to true health and happiness, both individually and collectively. Feeling separated from our true self is the ultimate delusion that needs to be cured. It's the one 'disease' all human beings have in common. Based on the work of Bert Hellinger, my own experience in treating patients and self-inquiry, I've come to the conclusion that everything is here and now to wake us up to our true nature.

IN CONCLUSION

By extending the concept of miasms beyond Hahnemann's (1839) original framework and beyond infectious diseases as their sole cause, the fundamental thinking and attitude towards them remain largely unchanged. For two centuries, homeopaths have tended to consider miasms in an allopathic way. While it is generally understood in patient treatment that symptoms are a healthy sign of the dynamis in action, diseases themselves and the miasms underlying them are often regarded in a manner similar to an allopath's view of a pathogen. The primary difference lies only in the method of addressing the pathogen, disease, or miasm.

To truly transform our approach, it is vital to understand the role and purpose of miasms within the evolutionary journey of awakening to our true nature. This shift in understanding is crucial for altering our attitude towards miasms and perceived obstacles in life in general.

The impact of suppression depends greatly on its context. While it may often appear to have negative consequences, suppression is not inherently harmful. Within the broader picture, there is a valid place—and sometimes even a necessity—for suppression as part of the larger process of growth and healing.

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