



Insights into Veterinary Homeopathy

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**Note**

Throughout this book scientific names are shown in *italics* and common names of source materials are in lower case. Homeopathic remedies are shown thus: *Arnica montana* or as abbreviations (*Arsen. alb.*).



1

TOWARDS A DYNAMIC VIEW OF HOMEOPATHY: THE REMEDIES

I can't say that homeopathy is right in everything. What I can say now is that the high dilutions are right. High dilutions of something are not nothing. They are water structures which mimic the original molecules.

Luc Montagnier (winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine 2008)¹

Potentisation

There is no doubt that homeopathic remedies exert their action on the level of energetic phenomena. To anyone who has read the *Organon* this is self-evident; Hahnemann explained the effects he observed by developing the concept of what he termed the 'Dynamis'. This is often translated as the 'Vital Force' or the 'Vital Energy', but these translations miss the fundamental concept within the Dynamis, which is that of a system constantly in motion, or in vibration; a force can be potential and an electromagnetic frequency can exhibit some kind of stability, or coherence, but the essential quality of the Dynamis is that it is continually changing. The homeopathic method depends on administering to a patient a substance which is capable of reproducing that patient's symptoms in a healthy individual. Thus arsenic can cause vomiting and diarrhoea of a particular nature, so if we have a patient suffering from a similar set of symptoms then the administration of homeopathic Arsenic can be curative. This phenomenon does not depend on the dose of the remedy, however Hahnemann initially found that the symptoms were aggravated (made worse) before the healing process began, and to reduce the severity of these aggravations he experimented with dilutions of the remedies. He discovered that while simple serial dilution reduced the efficacy of the medicine, if the solution was vigorously agitated between each stage of dilution, not only were the aggravations reduced, but the remedies actually became more powerful. As there seemed to be an increase in the energetic potential, he termed this process

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'dynamisation' (also translated as potentisation), once again using a word of the same linguistic root as the one he chose to describe the energetic system as a whole.

It is common usage to refer to potentised medicines as 'homeopathic' medicines but, strictly speaking, a medicine is only 'homeopathic' if it is prescribed on the basis of the homeopathic effect; indeed a medicine may be used homeopathically without having been potentised.

Ideally, the prescription of a homeopathic remedy is based on all the symptoms exhibited by the patient, the 'totality', and we often describe the pattern of symptoms associated with a particular remedy as a 'remedy picture' or a 'remedy state'. However, in doing so it is easy to forget that we are not dealing with a static phenomenon. We may observe an animal who appears to be standing in a state of stability, but in reality the muscles of the whole body are constantly checking and balancing the position; in the same way the *Dynamis* is in constant flux, maintaining the system in the state of relative homeostasis we think of as health.

Several systems of potentisation are used in the manufacture of homeopathic remedies, but the most common is to use a dilution factor of 1 in 100. This scale of dilution is referred to as the 'centesimal' scale and the potency of the remedies so produced are denoted by a 'c'; hence after 6 stages of dilution and succussion we have a 6c potency. Another common scale of potency is the decimal ('D' or 'X') scale where the dilution factor is 1 in 10. Above the 12th centesimal potency or the 24th decimal potency, there is an inordinately small statistical chance of there remaining even a single molecule of the original substance.

The 'memory of water'

I have no doubt that the major obstacle to the general acceptance of homeopathy by mainstream medicine has always been that of the high dilutions employed in producing the higher potencies. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of potentisation has attracted the attention of some eminent scientists from outside the sphere of homeopathy, and considerable effort has been spent over the years in examining the biological activity of homeopathic medicines whose dilutions exceed the level of 12c. The existence of such activity has been proven beyond all reasonable doubt; there have been numerous experiments showing an effect on biological systems as diverse as growing wheat seedlings and developing froglets. Central to this understanding is the concept of the 'memory of water', a term coined after Benveniste's work on degranulation of basophils in 1988.² Many

scientists and homeopaths consider that he was treated outrageously by his scientific colleagues, in particular by the editorial board of *Nature* who published the original paper. However, subsequent experiments examining the system of histamine and degranulation of basophils were conclusive to all but the most closed of minds.^{3,4}

It is therefore no longer acceptable, from a scientific point of view, to dismiss homeopathy as implausible, simply on the basis of the dilution factor of the remedies. Nevertheless, in the light of this, it behoves the scientist to look for an explanation of this activity. Logically, if the activity does not lie in the source material (the solute) then it must lie in the carrier liquid (the water or alcohol: the solvent).

So how can we explain this phenomenon?

Let us look at the process of potentisation more closely, using as an example a simple solution of common salt, the source material for the homeopathic remedy *Natrum muriaticum*. Our starting point is a solution in water or alcohol. Both of these are polar solvents, that is, they separate into positive and negative ions. Secondly, we have a process which agitates the solution: 'succussion'. This may take one of many forms. Hahnemann is reputed to have struck the vials of liquid on the family bible, and various forms of agitation have been developed since then. Indeed it would have been impossible for the American homeopath James Tyler Kent to have developed his work with the high potencies of 1M (1000c) and beyond were it not for the invention of a mechanical form of succussion. History contains many examples of such systems, including the shaking of a Korsakovian machine and the continuous 'fluxion' developed by Finke. However it is clear that all these processes have one thing in common: they induce vorticing in the solution. For instance, one of the processes used for the bulk manufacture of homeopathic medicines involves a container of several litres being gently rocked on its long axis. This is a rather more gentle process than that of hand – potentising, in which the operator strikes a glass vial against the surface of a material such as polystyrene. David Lilley reports that at one stage of his career he created a machine based on a small electric motor and a rubber diaphragm, which vibrated the vial possibly hundreds of times per second, producing remedies which he described as 'supersuccussed'.⁵ To an engineer or a chemist it may seem bizarre that so many widely differing processes could be developed, all bearing claims of creating a similar product, yet close scrutiny reveals once again that the effect of all these processes is to create a remarkably uniform effect on the solution involved.

Various mechanisms have been proposed to explain why the solutions created in this way should be biologically active, but the question also has

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to be asked whether the solutions which result can be distinguished from pure water, or from each other. If so, then we have more evidence that the solutions are changed, and can indeed retain the alteration, and we are perhaps a little further on towards understanding how they exert their effect. Many scientists have examined this issue, for example Rey studied the thermo-luminescence of potentised solutions of lithium and sodium chloride. Not only was he able to distinguish between the two remedies, but also between different potencies of the same remedy.⁶

With relevance to our example of common salt, Assumpção investigated potentised solutions of sodium chloride with regard to electrical impedance and their high voltage plasma images.⁷ As might be expected from conventional physics, serial dilution initially increased impedance, but there was a fascinating reversal of this trend as soon as the potency reached the critical 12c potency. Similarly the high voltage plasma images show distinct qualitative differences at each of a number of potencies.

So what is the mechanism whereby this 'information' is developed and retained in the solvent by the process of serial dilution and succussion?

Structure of water

It is a surprisingly common belief that water is simply a homogenous liquid, held together by hydrogen bonds whose life is measured in nanoseconds; thus it is impossible for it to retain information in any stable form. This belief is increasingly being challenged, and some important evidence has come from the field of materials science. Roy *et al.*, working in this field, have concluded that a typical sample of water almost certainly consists of clusters of various sizes, up to at least several hundred units; the differing structural forms have been found to be stable for periods up to several minutes – far greater than the 1 microsecond life of the hydrogen bond.^{8,9} This they explain by the presence of the van der Waals bonds which must exist between and among the various clusters of structural units. These bonds would allow for the changes in structure observed using electrical and magnetic fields, and the bonds *within* the clusters are likely to be much stronger than the bonds *between* them. They assert that this makes water probably the most easily changed phase of condensed matter known and helps explain its unique and amazing properties, including much of the ultra dilution work, and the reported influences of weak magnetic fields.

These authors also introduce the phenomenon of 'epitaxy' which they define as being, 'the transmission of structural information from the surface of one material (usually a crystalline solid) to another (usually but not

always a liquid)'. In most cases no matter is transferred from solid to liquid. Using this principle, and by providing a specific structure as a template (and this can be solid or liquid) it is possible to induce an entire body of liquid to precipitate or crystallise in a preselected structure. In this way structure can be transferred by epitaxy leaving no trace of the origin of the pattern.

Roy and his co-workers also quote work by Samal and Glecker¹⁰ which shows aggregations of solute + water clusters around a variety of solutes which range into the micron size range.

As the temperature range of liquid water is fixed, the effect of pressure is an important variable in deciding what structure will form under new conditions; according to Roy 'normal' succussion procedures induce pressures around 1kilobar. Succussion also produces nanobubbles, the existence of which has been proved beyond any doubt.¹¹ These can be stable for very long periods and may also represent some mechanism for the 'memory of water'.

Some workers have also investigated the effects of magnetic fields on aqueous solutions; Mohri *et al.* investigated the process of imprinting the effects of weak magnetic fields on water and observed changes in pH. Interestingly, if the water is degassed first, many of the effects are absent, raising the possibility of the involvement of nanobubbles.¹² On the same subject, Smith found that the frequency imprint of a potentised remedy was erased by putting it in a steel box to shield it from the geomagnetic field, and that the threshold for this effect was around 1% of the earth's magnetic field.¹³ Yet another branch of research suggests that molecules of silicate leaching from the glass vial during succussion may serve as nucleating sites for particular water clusters.¹⁴

These are only a few of the areas under investigation, and there is a great deal of data from experiments in this field. For an overview I would recommend Martin Chapman's 2007 review in *Homeopathy*.¹⁵ The same issue contains intriguing contributions in which the authors look at the issue from the perspective of quantum physics and the phenomenon of 'entanglement'.^{16,17}

When I consider all this I still find it difficult not to persist in viewing the situation from a materialistic point of view. I have an image of clusters of water molecules, the pattern of which is determined by the templating action of the source material of the potentised remedy; this is a concept that has been long popular among homeopaths when attempting to understand the mechanism of potentisation, and it could help to explain why a remedy becomes more powerful the more it is processed (and coincidentally more dilute). However the advances in physics over the last hundred years oblige us to look further into the mechanics of the situation, and

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THE CONSTITUTION

You can tell a lot about a fellow's character by his way of eating jellybeans.

Ronald Regan¹

Similimum and totality

Homeopathy depends on the similia principle: *similia similibus curentur*; let likes be cured by likes, so for the homeopath the goal is to identify the *similimum*, the remedy whose symptoms most closely match those of the patient. In doing so, we have to consider the whole patient, for it is the pattern of symptoms in *totality* which expresses the bioenergetic malfunctions of the network of communications in the organism as a whole. The exact pattern of intercommunication is unique to the individual, and if we are to return the organism to 'health' we have to address the whole pattern of symptoms exhibited by the patient. However, when we are dealing with resonance we need to be *close* to the appropriate frequency; it is not necessary to mirror the frequency exactly. So it is with homeopathy, that to create a curative response the symptom picture of the remedy has to be *close* to that of the patient. It goes without saying that the closer the match the better the response, so we seek the 'most similar': the *similimum*. In the countless possibilities of the natural world it is quite probable that there may be two or more remedies which approximate to any particular patient's remedy state. Hence, I do not find it helpful to label prescriptions as 'right' or 'wrong', rather they are more or less suitable to the patient at this time. Whatever the consequences of the prescription, the remedy I administer is the most appropriate one remedy I can find at this point in time; the real key to success lies in how the case is followed up.

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Polychrests

The degree of latitude which homeopathy allows us in our prescriptions also has a bearing on the concept of the polychrest remedy. These are the relatively small number of remedies about which we have extensive information, and which hence have a multitude of uses. They have been identified by the experience of our predecessors, but as our knowledge of homeopathic remedies increases, so the number of polychrests grows. How many are available to any particular practitioner depends much on their experience and knowledge of the materia medica; nevertheless, these are the remedies which have stood the test of time and whose properties homeopaths invoke daily in their work. There exists extensive and detailed materia medica concerning them, and their symptomatology covers a broad range of pathology. Furthermore, they represent states of being which are recognisable in a great many individuals. My personal list of polychrests probably numbers somewhere between 50 and 60; more experienced practitioners, especially in the human field, may well recognise 100. However, most animal patients will show at least a level of response to one of these remedies.

The polychrests are also used as constitutional remedies. We will revisit them in Chapter 8.

The constitution

The concept of the constitution is one of the mainstays of the practice of homeopathy, particularly in the treatment of chronic disease, but the exact meaning of the term has not always been clear.

Briefly, it implies that an animal's mental, general and physical characteristics when in a state of health will determine its pattern of disease when ill. This pattern corresponds to one of the polychrest remedies, and hence it is this homeopathic medicine that will relieve the patient's symptoms. For example, an easy-going heavy-boned dog who is reluctant to exercise, is very chilly and has a tendency to warts might, on these parameters alone, be classed as a *Calcarea carbonica* (Calc. carb.) constitution. If this patient develops arthritis, for instance, Calc. carb. will be an appropriate remedy for them. Moreover, in such circumstances we can actually predict that in all probability he will develop exostoses, and the symptoms will be worse in cold damp weather but better for continued movement, these being features of the symptomatology of that remedy. In other words, when this dog's Vital Force is challenged they will tend to exhibit a Calc. carb. pattern of disease, and they may be described as having a 'Calc. carb. constitution'.

Put in another way, then, the constitution is the tendency of an individual to develop a particular remedy state when challenged. We label this tendency with the name of the remedy state which our patient is likely to adopt in any particular circumstances. Hence, homeopaths speak of the 'Calc. carb.' constitution, or the 'Pulsatilla' constitution.

The operative word here is 'tendency', as it leaves open the possibility of the animal adopting a different strategy in the face of a particular challenge; we often see this in practice, particularly in acute disease. For instance, our Calc. carb. dog, when faced with a life threatening challenge, is still capable of adopting an Aconitum state of fear and shock, and when hit by a car will be sent into an Arnica state of bruising and pain. Notwithstanding this, the acute state, which is adopted by an individual, may still be influenced by its constitution, so in an acute fever the Calc. carb. patient is most likely to develop a Belladonna state, rather than, say, Aconitum or Gelsemium. On the other hand a Phosphorus patient may well exhibit the acute symptoms of the Phosphorus symptomatology. Having said this, however, the dynamic nature of the Vital Force determines that the constitution is only relatively stable, so there is no guarantee that the same remedy state will be adopted by any individual at any one point in time; simply there is a *tendency*.

On the other hand, some animals do seem to keep to the one constitutional state throughout their life; for instance my dog 'Big Ears' only ever needed one remedy: Arsenicum album. Complaints ranging from atopic dermatitis to vomiting and diarrhoea, and an 'old dog' symptom of a nervous twitch, all yielded to Arsenicum, and indeed his whole character fitted the Arsenicum constitution which I will describe in more detail in Chapter 19.

The origin of the constitution

This approach throws up some significant questions.

Firstly, where does this programmed response come from? Obviously we have to look at the role of heredity, and the world of dog breeding offers useful insights into this area. If we want a dog to perform a specific function then we know that if we select for breeding those individuals who most closely represent the desired characteristics, their offspring will also tend to exhibit more of those traits than the previous generation. Over a period of several generations we can breed individuals with characteristics which more or less correspond to those we are seeking. So if we want a dog who is steady and non-aggressive, doesn't mind getting wet, likes to serve, won't roam and is physically robust enough to plough through undergrowth to

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retrieve game birds, then we may find we have selected those individuals who exhibit a Calc. carb. constitution, exemplified by the Labrador Retriever. This is fine so far as it goes, but as homeopaths we know that within that constitutional state we will also be selecting animals whose calcium metabolism may not be completely efficient. They will therefore be prone to disorders of the skeletal system (including developmental disorders such as hip dysplasia), the symptoms of which are exacerbated by getting cold and damp, and may also be prone to epilepsy. These are exactly the tendencies exhibited by the breed.

The hereditary influences on an individual also depend hugely on the miasmatic make-up which is discussed in depth in the following chapter.

The tension between 'nature and nurture' has always been central to any discussion on heredity, and is of direct relevance to any discussion of the constitution. As in humans, the early life of an animal is a time of immense vulnerability. A brief look at the normal pattern of development in wild animals should be enough to convince anyone that every one of our domestic animals is reared in a way which must inevitably lead to emotional imbalance of some kind. The surprise is that more animals do not exhibit the so-called 'behavioural problems' from which domestic animals increasingly suffer. The environment in which an animal grows up has an immensely important effect on how they develop mentally and emotionally, so the experiences an animal has while young modifies its emotional balance and hence the constitution. This in turn determines how they will respond to challenge. Recent developments in the understanding of how early experiences affect the ability of a young animal to interact socially emphasise the importance of these influences. The constitution, then, seems to depend on this interaction of genetics and environment in the early stages of life. Heritable characteristics may be affected, and often exacerbated, by environmental influences, and vice versa, but by the time the patient appears in our consulting room they generally exhibit a recognisable constitutional picture.

In the face of such fundamental influences we might question just how much we can do to affect the mental wellbeing of such individuals, but if we maintain a dynamic view of the situation we can see that there is no reason why the biodynamics of these states cannot be influenced in some way by homeopathy. In the face of increasing evidence that (even) DNA can quite readily be altered by chemical and energetic means, this becomes more feasible. However there are degrees of susceptibility to all things, not least an influence as subtle as a homeopathic remedy. Hence these *relatively* fixed behavioural traits can be difficult to alter, and furthermore the constitutional state of some individuals may appear to be relatively stable.

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SEPIA AND THE SEA REMEDIES

he treads water to get
a better view of you:
the bald wet

dogshead gleams like
sunlit wrack; the eyes
are soulful

as my bitch's . . .

Francis Harvey¹

Sepia officinalis

A young *Pulsatilla* individual makes a good mother and in the natural environment this can be a valuable asset. In the context of commercial breeding, however, it can lead to exploitation, whereby a bitch, for instance, may be required to produce several litters of pups in quick succession, perhaps even two litters per year, the maximum physiologically possible. Similarly, the *Pulsatilla* cow, while perhaps taking a little time to fall pregnant, nevertheless milks extremely well. In time, however, the physical and emotional toll of this process leads to the animal becoming literally 'worn out' on both these levels. In consequence, she may develop into a *Sepia* state.

Sepia individuals also exist in their own right, of course, and we will also look at those 'young' *Sepias* in this chapter, but once again it is helpful to bear in mind the picture of the *Pulsatilla* type as we look at this remedy.

The ink of *Sepia officinalis*, the common cuttlefish, provides the source material for the remedy *Sepia*. This is a marine creature and belongs to the class of molluscs known as the 'cephalopods'. In the remedy picture, we may therefore expect to see general features of the Animal remedies, accompanied by characteristics which are more specific to the molluscs or to the

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Sea remedies as a whole. Most of the other remedies in this group are of animal origin.

The sea is where life on earth first evolved, and the embryology of land creatures still bears witness to the history of a water-borne existence. For sea creatures, the ebb and flow of the tide is important, hence for the 'Sea remedies' the issue of 'flow' is important. As the tides are largely dependent on the gravitational pull of the moon, and we can expect the patients operating within these remedy states to be correspondingly affected by the lunar cycle. These two issues come together in *Sepia* where the human patient is particularly affected by the menstrual cycle. Sea water itself contains a wide variety of minerals including sodium chloride, magnesium, iodine and arsenic, hence the remedy states associated with these substances exhibit an aggravation of symptoms at the seaside. We can also expect to find correlations between these minerals and the other Sea remedies, such as a craving or aversion for salt. Primitive animals use the sea as a medium for fertilisation and this is reflected in the importance of sexuality in this group. It could be argued that the vast array of creatures and substances found in the sea makes a direct correlation between the remedies in this group less obvious than with other groupings, but the themes of sexuality, fluid and salt tend to run through them consistently.

Sepia is by far the most prominent member of the Sea remedies and the remedy picture bears all the hallmarks of its habitat.

The cuttlefish has a soft, flabby body, covered by a tough mantle which extends around the sides to provide a means of propulsion. A bony plate provides central support – the familiar 'cuttlebone' which is to be found washed up on most European beaches. The head bears two large eyes, the most complex of any invertebrate. These are set back on the head so as to afford 360 degree vision. Eight arms and two tentacles surround a sharp horny beak. The tentacles are shot out quickly to capture prey, and the arms are used to hold and move the prey around once it is caught. Cuttlefish are fairly social animals; they spend a lot of time alone but also collect in loose groups, especially around mating time.

As a means of camouflage, or to signal emotions, *Sepia officinalis* can change the colour of its skin, almost instantaneously. The ink from which the homeopathic remedy is made also represents pigmentation. It is stored in a sac near the anus and contains the pigment melanin, along with salts of sodium, magnesium, potassium and calcium. When threatened, the animal expels a black cloud of ink behind which it can escape. It can also move backwards rapidly by squirting water out of a siphon near the head, but if provoked it can bite fiercely and is reputedly capable of removing the end off a human finger. Alternatively, it can drop to the bottom of the