

HOMOEOPATHY IN THE 21ST CENTURY : revolution, evolution, or deconstruction ?¹

I - As a preamble

The convincing title of this 'cry of alarm', which we propose listening to, can only attract attention. The reading of it can only do so more...

It will be disturbing, puzzling and will make one wonder in a time when, whereas there are so many publications, few of them hold one's attention or are even read insofar as they reflect another type of perspective, require reflection, time to devote to them, or come from a different point of view. And yet they permit to refine knowledge and to make the essentials emerge again if they have gradually been forgotten, altered, or changed.

If the aim of this 'cry of alarm' is to state rather than to denounce, to enlighten rather than to 'stigmatise', it could not be passed over in silence. To make it possible for the problematic simplification cutting a large number of its potentialities from homoeopathy to overtake a part of what is presented of it today can only be problematic... To maintain a form of 'political correctness' even if it means stifling all debate about its evolutionary drifts and encouraging a form of disregard for what constitutes a part of its history may prove to be eminently dangerous. It is important to take this into account and to assess the real risks of it.

Coming from a 'scientist', the work presented here so that homoeopathic doctors may reflect on it can only point out its most striking aspects and bring to light what may accelerate the loss of the mode of practice that had been theirs until recently.

The situation has changed : apart from the usual reassessments as regards the 'non-scientific' aspect of the Hahnemannian discipline and the unproven facet of its mode of action, other arguments may be added. They must be stated if not denounced by the practitioners or sympathisers experienced in this discipline so as to prevent them from being so in a much more disturbing way by their opponents.

This is where the interest of this 'other' view, which stresses its different faces, lies.

To refuse to confront this problem by 'ignoring it' is not safe : the capacity as doctor and the honourableness of those who practise homoeopathy are at stake - charlatans, eccentrics, gurus etc. If homoeopathy and, therefore, a whole part of medicine as well now run the risk of going back to a time prior to that when its founder stated its precepts, it would be a form of insult to the rigour and skills as a chemical researcher not to stress it.

This is the reason why, preceding and supplementing another warning of a different character² which will be published separately, this new 'cry of alarm' can only attract

¹ Introduction to a three-part article entitled *The cry of alarm of a scientist about certain faces of today's homoeopathy*, homeopsy.com, April 2018.

² homeopsy.com, May and June 2018.

attention : the view of the psychiatrist and that of the scientist³ are similar on many points and reach the same conclusion here, showing a change of perspective if not a change of time, full stop.

'Destructuration, transformation, evolution'... The title speaks for itself.

It evinces the vagaries of a society 'made more technical', with its advantages, its disadvantages, and its more and more often dehumanised view of living organisms as a whole... The changes of perspective of the doctor towards the patient and the illness⁴, the unequivocal therapeutic approach, with the latest accounts anchored in certainty, express the fear of seeing alternative medicine - certain types of which have existed for many centuries and treat entire peoples - sully people's opinion of medicine and erase the trust that must be associated with it... Everything here can only affect the world of homoeopathy...

It seems essential to call things into question if not to sort them out so as to make it possible to clarify concepts and to follow their evolution through the cultural - and religious - trends in which they saw the light of day and developed.

The present 'cry of alarm' of the main founder member of the GIRI is not, in this respect, insignificant. If it is no longer expressed now, in this space where the thorny problem of the famous 'water memory' was discussed, it tackles a subject that is serious enough to be worth taking notice of, analysing, and regarding with as much seriousness as application.

The future of homoeopathy depends on it : caught between the risk of oversimplification reducing it to 'bobologie'⁵ with self-medication or prescription by doctors or treating people who are ill-informed or uninformed about its potentialities and that of confused and pseudoscientific esotericism supporting the single dose at a high or sometimes very high dilution - because of the psychic component - , it is in danger of disappearing in its original face...

The shortage of homoeopaths, like that of doctors, becomes more and more critical : active but rather lost, many young ones, who only receive very basic instruction, often look for easier support - nutritional therapy, additional treatments, psychotherapy of all types - to supplement their therapeutic arsenal unless they also turn to 'modern' theorisations stating that Hahnemann's is 'outdated'... If the latter are capable of restoring their passion for discovery, the dangerous and fascinating magic that they find in them unfortunately takes all objectivity and critical judgement away from them. We are on the way to going back to the time that Hahnemann himself strongly decried.

The lack of clarification of the concepts on which pluralism and unicism were based, the lack of comprehension and of transmission of their historicity probably play a role.

³ Its author, Doctor René-Philippe Halm, is a Doctor of Pharmacy, a Doctor of Biology and, together with Professor Madeleine Bastide, the main founder member of the GIRI (Groupe International de Recherche sur l'Infinitésimal).

⁴ The theme has been widely dealt with in a piece of work previously published on homeopsy.com but, as each article constitutes a unit to be read separately, inevitable repetitions are bound to happen - even if they are never dealt with from the same angle and are enriched regularly by the contribution of new readings or observations.

⁵ From 'bobo', which is in French a child's onomatopoeia for 'physical pain' (Translator's note)

Contributing to inaccuracies, the confusions fuelled by the unreceptiveness of the various schools of thought are all the more in question as, at the same time, common meetings nurturing the idea of a difference of opinion only over the fact of giving one or several medicines play an undeniable role...

One must not forget that, only about twenty years ago, Masism - which is making a strong comeback - was obviously banished from all official meeting and Kentism somewhat blacklisted even though certain of its important points influenced a practice without many of those who boasted about it being aware of it : they thought that their difference was only about the notion of single medicine... The vagueness that surrounded for years those aspects of homoeopathy which, above all, was busy resisting and setting one face against its fierce opponents, is obviously responsible for the present situation.

It is in this respect that its various components are worth clarifying with a view to evolution rather than revolution or deconstruction.

Perhaps it is also a matter of generation to be able to take stock of the situation. Many of the oldest practitioners, who are disconcerted by what is happening before their very eyes, feel and express uneasiness before often 'leaving the sinking ship' since they are close to retirement. Given the general consensus, others, who are younger and careful to 'do the right thing', question the way they were trained ; taking the train of the 'modernism' announced, they adopt a different practice : the agony that they suffer at the idea of prescribing the wrong medicine and of being considered incompetent is often pathetic - but, fortunately, certain of them have recently abandoned it... Others, instructed directly in the new methodologies, blithely rush into them without even being able to know what constitutes the fundamental base of certain principles put in place by Hahnemann and partially followed by Kent⁶.

The lack of appropriate translations has manifestly played an important role. One can only praise the work of many colleagues who took part in their doing and in the spread of the original elements... Franck Choffrut, Olivier Rabanne, Jacques Baur, Robert Seror, and many others... One can only thank them for their contribution to the knowledge of everyone.

The 'cry of alarm' of René-Philippe Halm who, supported by Princess Antoinette of Monaco (†), worked for years for The Monaco International Talks, is a milestone insofar as it permits to assess with more detachment and in a global way the divergences, stumbling blocks, and problematic points inherent in today's evolution.

If it is akin in many ways to the perception of them that may come from my training as a psychiatrist trained in both psychoanalysis and homoeopathy, it gives a justification for taking it into account. The future of homoeopathy within medicine, its potential to evolve, to contribute to the comprehension of the subject, of their pathologies, to their treatment - and to what is still obscure in the iatrogenic effects and is worth elucidating - amply justify it.

The future and health of the generations to come depend on it⁷...

Doctor Geneviève Ziegel

⁶ - to the extent that a homoeopathic practitioner, who had practised for about ten years, asked one day if Kent was the philosopher... (Sic !)

⁷ Translated by Pascale Tempka