

Closer Than They Appear: Homeopathy, Analysis, and the *Unus Mundus*

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Introduction

In 1995, at the IAAP Congress in Zurich, Edward Whitmont presented a paper entitled “Homeopathy, Alchemy, and the Treatment of Borderline Cases”. (Whitmont, 1995). This ground-breaking paper addressed the alchemical roots of homeopathy, discussing the use of homeopathic medicines in conjunction with the analysis of patients whose suffering originated in early trauma and in whom movement toward individuation required complementary modalities that could address the entire organism (body as well as mind). To my knowledge, that was the first public international discussion about combining homeopathy with analysis.

In this paper, I shall continue on the path opened by Whitmont. The title of my paper, “Closer Than They Appear: Homeopathy, Analysis and the *Unus Mundus*” is meant to convey the unexpected interconnected healing between outer and inner, between homeopathic remedies made from substances from the natural world and the interior world of the individual. I will further reflect this conference’s theme of *Multiplicity* in my discussion of homeopathy’s multidimensional properties, and in my explication of how including homeopathy in the process of analysis can facilitate healing on all levels of experience (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual). I shall also include a consideration of the alchemical notion of the *Unus Mundus* and its relevance to an understanding of homeopathy. I hope to illuminate homeopathy’s potential benefits for your patients as a adjunct to analytic work.

Using homeopathy in combination with analysis

I have been working with homeopathy in my practice for thirteen years (with my own analytic patients and in collaborative combined treatment with other analysts' and therapists' patients). I have come to appreciate the deep resonances between homeopathy and analysis, and the impressive adjunctive possibilities for healing that homeopathy contributes to analytic work.

Overview of Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a healing modality created by German physician and scholar Samuel Hahnemann in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and practiced continuously since that time. Homeopathy is based on a deeply considered and internally cohesive philosophy concerning the spiritual and non-material causes of health and disease. Homeopathic remedies are prescribed based on the totality of a person's symptoms, experiences, and characteristics (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, and on the essential similarity between the qualities inherent in the healing substance and the patient's unique pattern of suffering. The prescribed remedy is called the *simillimum* – the most similar substance; its archetypal center most closely matches the totality of the patient. When the suffering patient encounters the *simillimum*, a deep healing process is initiated through a profound encounter with her unique self.

Thus, homeopathy is a genuinely holistic modality, allowing us to introduce a truly holistic consideration of our patients into their healing process. The phenomenon of the *simillimum* is a manifestation of synchronicity: the simultaneous existence of vibrations outside and inside the individual which resonate on the same healing frequency.

With any well-prescribed remedy, we can expect a deepening of our patient's engagement with their inner world as well as with the analyst. We can also hope to see the following changes:

- depotentiation of previously entrenched complexes which were maintaining dissociative states and which previously seemed impervious to analytic work;
- increased capacity to recall and work with dreams and other symbolic material;
- increased capacity to experience affects and sensations;
- diminution or resolution of physical symptoms;
- more access to the heart of addictive experiences.

The basic notion of the innate potential for healing and wholeness within the individual is fundamental to both homeopathy and Jungian work. Other similarities between homeopathy and analysis include an attitude toward symptoms that is welcoming rather than ultimately dismissive (e.g., the idea that symptoms are meaningful phenomena to be valued and worked with rather than suppressed); respect for and attention to non-material phenomena; and attention to polarities and paradox.

The healing properties of homeopathy derive from profound resonances between substances in the outside world and phenomena in the inner world of the organism. Currently we have over 3,000 homeopathic remedies, prepared from a multiplicity of substances (animal, vegetable, mineral, and so-called “imponderables” such as moon-light and colors). Some of our remedies date back to the first days of homeopathy in the late 18th century, having been investigated and developed by Hahnemann himself. New remedies are continuously being researched and brought into use. Some contemporary homeopaths suggest that modern remedies may have a special applicability for the particular types of alienation and trauma experienced in the contemporary world (Hogeland and Schrieber, p. 177). The remedy I shall discuss with you today is such a remedy.

Homeopathic remedies are energetic phenomena, prepared in a process called potentization (a lengthy series of alternating dilutions and energetic vibrations). This process results in preparations diluted far beyond the point at which they could possibly contain even one molecule of the

original substance. By undergoing potentization, the original material substance is dematerialized and thereby spiritualized; the substance's inherent healing properties are released. As such, homeopathy can be seen as a practical application of alchemy, tapping into the endless Mercurial fountain, the mystery of the boundless spirit and energy that is present in matter, the source of healing vitality and animation that lives in a potential form in all of us.

Interestingly, the more potentized a substance –the more it has been spiritualized away from the physical level – the more it seems to enter deeply into the organism and affect what we might think of as the deepest levels of mind and spirit.

In the aftermath of trauma, our capacities for attachment and symbolization may be seriously impeded due to the presence of archaic splitting and deeply entrenched inner persecutory and other complexes, which have become effectively densified and hardened into the matrix of the organism on the deepest mind-body level (the level of the psychoid unconscious). Homeopathic remedies can penetrate into the psyche and can catalyze healing on this level of the psychoid. The psychoid domain is the imponderable dimension of our experience where material and non-material reality, matter and spirit, interpenetrate and intertwine; where the archetypes reside, from which the complexes arise, and where the sequelae of trauma are woven into our psyches to lodge and persist. It is on this level of the organism that changes must occur for deep healing to unfold. (Whitmont 1993, 1995; Barzman 2009).

Brief Comparison of Homeopathic and Conventional Psychotropic Medicines

I would like to briefly contrast the use of homeopathic remedies with the use of conventional psychotropic medications, which are thought to operate on a molecular level, affecting levels of neurotransmitters. Conventional psychotropic medications are not intended to bring about healing or cure of the basic underlying cause of so-called mental illness; they are intended to

suppress symptoms. It is well known (although ignored by most physicians and covered up by the pharmaceutical industry) that psychotropic medications are not effective at this hoped-for suppression of symptoms possibly as frequently as a majority of the time. (Carlat, 2010). In addition, such medications have numerous adverse effects ranging from mildly troubling to lethal.

Having originally trained as a psychiatrist, I've had the opportunity from the start of my career to work with individuals with histories of extremely severe suffering and profound disturbances in their psyches. In my work, I have always been drawn to healing that arises from shared psychological experience between my patients and myself. I have also observed the frequent ineffectiveness as well as the deadening properties of psychotropic medications.

Nonetheless, as we all know, there are times in the course of inner work when it is necessary to include some sort of adjunctive somatic therapy. As Whitmont explained in his 1995 IAAP paper, "When the consequences of serious childhood damage, emotional and physical abuse, rape, incest, war, concentration and prison camp experiences, drug addiction, or other conditions have become somatically imprinted, they create stubbornly resistant dissociations and repetition compulsions. In these instances the therapeutic approach benefits from addressing itself also, perhaps even primarily, to the biologic-psychoid substratum: the 'subtle' body fields." (Whitmont 1995 p. 299)

It seems an open secret that many Jungians refer their analytic patients for conventional psychiatric consultation when such a mind/body impasse is reached. I respectfully suggest that homeopathy's non-material nature supports the encounter with the unconscious rather than suppressing it, and thus fundamentally supports the project of analysis.

Homeopathy and the *Unus Mundus*

The joining of inner and outer effected by homeopathy is simultaneously a numinous and a quotidian example of the correspondence between spirit and matter. I follow Whitmont in perceiving that homeopathy is a manifestation of the alchemical notion of the *Unus Mundus*, both symbolically and practically (Whitmont, 1993, pages 47-48). As we know, the *Unus Mundus* - the *one world* - is an concept that encompasses the non-dual universal interconnectedness and resonance of inner and outer. Quoting from von Franz's Alchemical Active Imagination: "[the *Unus Mundus* is] a unified multiplicity, a separateness of the parts and a oneness at the same time....In the *unus mundus* there was no disharmony, things were separate and at the same time united." (p. 148, emphasis added).

The simultaneous separateness and oneness encompassed by the *Unus Mundus* is also a dimension of the phenomenon of healing brought about by homeopathy.

In our modern world, there is a multiplicity of levels on which we experience disconnection and dissociation. Post-modern, high technological culture deeply disrupts our connection to nature, to one another, and to ourselves. I think of this as a psycho-spiritual homesickness, and have written about this phenomenon in an earlier paper concerning the healing of dissociation in analysis with the help of homeopathy (Barzman, 2010). When we enter more deeply onto our healing path by resonating with a substance from nature, there is an additional dimension to our healing due to our being connected back to the natural world and to the cosmos.

Clinical Material – Remedy and Case Material

Remedy

I will share some clinical material to illustrate these ideas, using the example of a remedy that I have prescribed in my practice. First I will share some information about the substance that the

remedy was prepared from, then will turn to material from an analytic patient who has benefited from this remedy.

First, comments by contemporary Japanese artist Tatsuo Miyajima pertaining to the remedy substance:

“I first encountered [a] trace of an atomic bomb when I went to Hiroshima for our school trip. I was 17 years old. I will never forget the terrible things that [were] displayed at [the] museum of [the] Atomic Bomb. I could not stop my soul shaking because I can’t understand how dare human beings have done such a thing. I have not suffered from an atomic bomb or don’t have any friend who suffered from it. I was not born in Hiroshima. Nevertheless, flaming feelings coming from the bottom of my heart were so realistic. And from that moment, the atomic bombings have been smoldering in my heart.

Later on, I became an artist...In 1995, I visited Nagasaki to hold an exhibition with ... its theme about the atomic bomb. As I searched about it, I found a kaki tree (Japanese persimmon), which survived from [the] atomic bombing. I went to see it immediately. Half of it was covered with keloid[s] [scars]. And I heard that it had been even more infirmed until a tree doctor cured and raised it to bear tiny little red fruits. Moreover, that doctor produced the "bombed Kaki Tree Jr." by taking out seeds from its fruit....

It was about 20cm high, but those leaves shone so brightly which was indescribable beautiful.

Although it was burdened by a decree of fate, it still lived so hard without lamenting. I felt that the astonishing toughness of it stood aloof [from] the folly or evil that human beings have. ...This kaki tree gave me a great hope that made me [feel] I might be able to revive and live with the vitality of [that] tiny little tree.” (Miyajima, 2009, emphasis added).

The remedy we are considering is made from the Japanese persimmon tree; its formal name is *Diospyros kaki*. This is a recently developed homeopathic remedy, having been initially

investigated and prepared within the last twelve years. It is becoming known for its usefulness in treating survivors of extreme trauma; I believe that an additional important attribute of individuals who benefit from this remedy is their remarkable resilience in the face of the unspeakable traumas they have experienced. Marijke Creveld, the Dutch homeopath who researched and developed this remedy, has said of it, “The Kaki-tree in Nagasaki stands for the end of the Second World War, the end of the destruction, domination, rape, fleeing and death. The tree signifies survival and the beginning of hope.” (Creveld 2005)

Case Material

I recently prescribed this remedy to one of my analytic patients with remarkable positive benefit. At the time I offered her this remedy, we had been working together for nearly two years in a close analytic relationship. I had previously prescribed her a few other remedies with some diminution of her anxiety, depression, and spiritual despair. However, it emerged that her core experiences of disintegration, annihilation and terror had not been fundamentally relieved by the previously-prescribed remedies.

She is in her 30's, with a history of repeated, nearly constant trauma during the first eighteen years of her life that was extraordinarily pervasive and extreme: awful, unimaginable physical abuse, deprivation, neglect, and sexual assault; and subjugation to her parents' staggering narcissism and sociopathy. She has commented that the different ways in which her mother and step-father tortured and tormented her and her younger siblings must be like what happened in concentration camps: incredibly cruel, profoundly meaningless and brutally dehumanizing.

She is a remarkably strong, resilient, and resourceful woman. She is married and has a young child; she works as an executive in a large organization; and she has a creative and spiritual practice. She had been in therapy for long stretches of time since early adolescence, and had tried many

modalities as well in her efforts to heal herself (yoga, ayurveda, 12-step programs). She came to meet with me due to her steadily worsening experience of excruciating fragmentation, with tremendous depression, anxiety, and existential despair; she feared she was on the verge of a serious breakdown. She knew that I was a homeopath as well as an analyst and a psychiatrist.

As I have come to know her better, I have been particularly moved and impressed by her resilience and optimism, which are of a remarkable degree. On the other hand, she suffers terribly, and alternates between a deep clarity about, and a disconnection from, her symptoms. She had recently said, in describing her persistent, pervasive core experience:

“I am falling or disintegrating; it’s like I’m being pulled apart and fading, stretched and pulled... my cells are being pulled apart and disintegrated...

I feel like a tree, uprooted... a deep and integrated system that is uprooted.

I am free-falling endlessly, coming apart. I don’t remember what it feels like to be rooted – connected – even with myself. I always feel that I’m in danger.”

I had been thinking that my next homeopathic prescription for her would be a remedy prepared from a tree. Remedies prepared from trees characteristically address a particular quality of dissociation, spiritual longing and alienation from an experience of the Divine. Additionally, I had just returned from an international seminar with my homeopathy mentor in The Netherlands, where I had heard some discussion of the Kaki tree remedy.

My patient had lately had a long series of disturbing dreams pervaded with images of war, explosions, danger, chaos, toxicity and evil. Studying her recent dreams and her inner state, I realized that I should prescribe her the Kaki tree remedy, which I did.

Soon after, she expressed herself in this way:

“It is the total opposite of that disintegrating and falling ... fading... so empty and alone. I’ve had moments where I feel some energy and vitality: ‘There you are’; ‘I remember you.’ I haven’t felt this way in so long, moments of ‘Oh yeah, it’s me, there I am. Here I am.’ I feel it in the depths of who I am, not the packaging.”

Notably, in the months immediately after taking the Kaki tree remedy, this woman has faced a number of extremely challenging and potentially re-traumatizing situations (including being involved in a car accident, and the acute psychological deterioration of one of her younger siblings); she moved through these incidents with unusual inner cohesiveness and composure. We both recognize this to be qualitatively different from her prior experiences and coping capacities. She said, “My whole life has been about surviving. Today I’m filled with gratitude and hope. I feel I can plug into the source.”

The Japanese persimmon tree survived the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, regarded by many as the one of the singularly most powerful examples in history of an instantaneous moment of humankind’s capacity for cruelty, evil and destruction. My patient’s encounter with the homeopathic remedy prepared from this tree has facilitated her moving through and beyond the unimaginable cruelty that she has personally experienced, and is allowing her to begin finally to deeply heal the central disintegration and annihilation that has pervaded her inner life.

Conclusion

It is a startling and beautiful fact that powerful resonances exist between substances in nature and the interior of the human psyche, and that these resonances are capable of initiating healing and facilitating individuation.

I will approach the end of my paper with another quotation from von Franz's Alchemical Active Imagination regarding the *Unus Mundus* and synchronicity:

"...Concretely the *unus mundus* manifests, as Jung pointed out, in ...synchronistic phenomena. While we normally live in a dual world of "outer" and "inner" events, in a synchronistic event this duality no longer exists; outer events behave as if they were a part of our psyche, so that everything is contained in the same wholeness." (p. 148)

The phenomenon of the homeopathic *simillimum* and its capacity for healing is an example of synchronicity, drawing together resonant vibrations between healing substances in the outside world and the potential for healing within us. The possibility of wholeness, the archetype of the Self, is always present within us; we know this as analytic psychologists, and we know this as homeopaths. Thus, as my title suggests, remedies that can promote healing and the process of individuation may be closer than they appear.

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About the Author

Anita Josefa Barzman M.D. is an Analyst Member of the Society of Jungian Analysts of Northern California in San Francisco, California (CGJISF), having trained and been certified there in 1999. She is a graduate of the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine and also did her Psychiatry residency at UCSF. A Board-Certified Psychiatrist, she undertook the formal study of homeopathy during her analytic training, drawn to the deep healing potential of this modality, as well as to its strong resonances with Analytical Psychology. She holds a Practitioners Diploma in Homeopathy (UK). She has used homeopathy extensively in her analytic practice for over thirteen years, and collaborates with other analysts and therapists in a combined treatment framework. Anita has presented a number of papers regarding combining homeopathy and analysis including a paper regarding homeopathy and the transcendent function at the 2009 JAP Conference on that theme, as well as a paper on the treatment of dissociation in analysis with the adjunctive use of homeopathy. Anita teaches in a number of venues to analysts and other psychotherapeutic colleagues regarding the use of homeopathy in combination with analysis and therapy. She is in private practice in Mountain View, California, and has been involved with training and governance at the CGJISF.