

## Homeopathic times - Irish Society of Homeopaths - July 2002

Magnificent Massimo Mangliavori plunges into the heady world of mystery, structure and the importance of establishing an epistemological case for our intuitive creativity as homeopaths.

HT: Does your system of homeopathy have its roots in anthropological investigation?

Massimo: Some of it has. I am not an anthropologist. It was my hobby years ago and the main part of anthropology that interested me was the medical side, more precisely the work of South American tribes mostly in the Amazon region - and with magical medicine in Italy.

So the main interest was that, in my understanding, they have a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience and a particular view of life and of substances that comes from non-book experience, it is not written down. Mainly it has to do with an analogical approach to nature that I consider very interesting. I think that there is a deep misunderstanding of this analogical approach and concept of nature.

HT: In what way is it misconceived?

MM: Obviously at the end of that time when Illuminism started, the analogical approach to nature was very superficial.

HT: You are talking about the West now, about Europe..

MM: Yes, what was in our country, in Europe, around the 16th or 17th Century, when Hahnemann started his discoveries. So it was evident that it was the end of this culture in our country. And what was known as the Law of Signatures at that moment of history was being poorly challenged from a cultural point of view while the ancient root of that knowledge was something very serious and very rich.

So I wanted to put these two worlds together.

HT: Hasn't homeopathy always represented the conjunction of left and right brain, art and science, and so on ...

MM: Yes, but in my experience, this is often just a theoretical description. I have not seen it in the majority of books I have read or seminars I have attended. Many colleagues now say they know what Hahnemann said or wanted to say; what was in

his mind - I don't know how they know this - but it is evident in his work that he had a lot of knowledge of this analogical way of thinking.

HT: Isn't there a danger when someone is going to lecture that it is going to be left-brained? The opportunity for it to become an artistic expression only lies in the art of performance and it is quite difficult if someone is trying to convey something by way of a lecture in a homeopathic seminar that one can, in effect, do that. Unless one can give a lecture without words can one teach homeopathy through music, through dance - through painting?

MM: I do believe it is important to have both. Anyway, my understanding is that even if we try to do our best to ignore our artistic side it happens anyway in every field - even when we are driving a car!. I have seen this when I was a surgeon. There are many good surgeons whose intuition is fundamental, vital. So I think that it is a serious epistemological problem to be able to discuss seriously the meaning of intuition, perception and so on. I don't want to appear to be a magician. I am seriously involved in proving things. Whatever I say is supported by cases. That is fundamental. I never talk about remedies in families or groups or in seminars or teaching unless I have cases. But I do believe that this other side is our missing part.

HT: It seems to me we are more in touch with it than we were. Homeopaths today seem to be more in tune with their intuitive side without abandoning academic and theoretic and case-based materia medica. But there also seems to be an other extreme where it can fly into the realms of cosmic illusion. How to hold the balance?

MM: My great fear is that homeopathy is going to become a part of academic medicine, not just in Italy and Southern Europe but all over the world. My impression is that most of our energy is diverted into defining how homeopathic remedies works, how cells and tissues react, etc - which is important but not as important or as fundamental as defining our mode of thinking. Instead of copying the mistakes of allopathic medicine and positivist science, we must be much more attentive to emphasising our own homeopathic principles. We need to find the courage to demonstrate that these kinds of things are as important as the others.

HT: I don't think you would find a great deal of disagreement with that point of view. The difficulty in all enterprises of great moment is to hold the tension between the two in a situation where there are people pulling in all directions...with the European Union, with statutory self-regulation, and so on.

MM: I think what is missing at this moment is a good epistemological definition of homeopathy. I have the impression that many of us use these tools, these magnificent tools, without being really aware of what we are doing.

HT: Why don't you make an epistemological definition?

MM: That is what I am trying to do..(laughs)

HT: It is interesting...there is always this pull. I used to work in television and tv in its commercial form is based on the notion of the mass - that there is no such thing as families of interest. You can't have a black, Muslim, lesbian academic who is interested in fishing, you just have to have a great mass of white people who are men with bellies who go fishing. This is the interesting difference between people who have to sell something to somebody and people who are prepared to explore the possibilities of knowledge. It seems to me that what you are doing is attempting to do that but it is quite complicated.

MM: Yes! This is probably my disease, that I like complicated things. I think this is very important because the main reason I am interested in homeopathy is this - not because of remedies and things, but because it is a new paradigm of thinking, a new paradigm for this time because we can now have a good scientific basis that in the past was not there. So I think that to be accepted and to work really seriously, using homeopathy as a medicine in every sense - as something in primary healthcare, in hospitals, by a doctor in his private practice where homeopathy is able to treat whatever is possible to be treated - we have to define it seriously and I think that this is the missing part.

HT: You are one of a new generation of homeopaths who are testing themselves against this challenge. Vithoukias in a way pioneered and led the way, started the ball rolling. Jan Scholten, Rajan Sankaran, yourself and others, some of the Americans, push it forward. But it is almost as if when you listen to one you miss the important bit the other is saying. Obviously there is a unity of intention but again there are many tributaries and sub-rivers. Do you see that there is a family of homeopaths, so to speak, who are pioneering and are pushing this way forward or do you think that there are a number of individuals who open doors?

MM: I think that medicine and medical science was always scattered. One of the main reasons why you have the impression that official medicine seems to have much more unity is because they needed to keep a certain kind of power. But between themselves they have the same kind of discussion and divisions that homeopathic doctors have. These belong much more to doctors as a kind of personality because the delusion of being omnipotent belongs to doctors much more than to engineers, lawyers, etc.!

HT: I suppose they are the high priests of medicine, in a sense...

MM: I do believe that in homeopathy we are really missing the sense of consensus and the sense of community. This is something probably in my dreams. It will belong to the next generation because we need a long time to do this kind of work.

From a human point of view, it is understandable what is going on because mainly we deal with individuals and to go on with an individualistic mind, and to behave as a person who is able to work in a group is not that easy. On the other hand, I think each one of us is exploring a certain direction so it is nice to talk with others and exchange experiences. I think it is obvious that each of us wants to go deeper and deeper in his own path...This is absolutely human and understandable. I think what is important is to publish this experience and to present good work and to explain what you are trying to say - to make clear your model of thinking. Because I do believe that this is a moment of evolution in homeopathy and it is not sufficient to talk about families, to talk about elements, to talk about groupings of remedies and so on; the idea has to be expressed clearly from an epistemological point of view. But what does that mean? At the moment when you say homeopathy it just means that at the end of the consultation you give a homeopathic remedy. That is it. But the way that you arrive at this point can be very, very different. This is normal, but it has to be made explicit.

HT: Yes, publishing, I think, is important. It is interesting that the conventional medical profession publishes a lot of findings in medical journals and perhaps we do not do quite enough of the same..

MM: You are right. This is one of my greatest faults...up until now, I only have published only one little book - in German! (laughs). But I want to do something very good and I am always refining and refining and refining my work. Most of what I am doing now is working on cases and publishing that. I think this is very important because there are too many confusing descriptions of what could be a remedy, because not very good follow-ups are presented. Even in the best journals, it is not the fault of the publisher, because even in Links they are seeking very good cases. But there are very few people who are open to giving out good cases.

HT: Yes, there does seem to be a difficulty, not necessarily a secrecy, but very often people are very busy and have too little time - but if that time is not found there is no way in which the kind of evidence that you are talking about can really be presented. And if that isn't done the danger will be that administrators will take over the operation of recognition -

MM: I agree. I feel ashamed when I read the dictionary of Clarke and see the amount of work that he did years ago. Now we have computers, Internet and we are not able to do one tenth of what he did. It is a shame.

HT: When you get to the point where your epistemological explanations of homeopathy begin to become concrete I would like to publish them in The Homeopathic Times.

MM: (laughs) You will see my book in English that will come out in a short time. It is research, so far, I don't think this work can be done by a single person. I am working with a group of good colleagues, not only Italians. The reason I prefer to dedicate all my energy to a school is because I have the impression that teaching here and there is a show, a kind of acting. If you give a good seminar you can give your colleagues some good suggestions, but at the end, good ideas need to be nurtured and you have to work at that.

HT: Where is your school?.

MM: My school is in Bologna and Boston...

HT: The two 'B's..what made you choose this combination?

MM: I live close to Bologna and Bologna was the most ancient university of Europe for medicine. From the point of view of science it is very important in Italy.

Boston is a beautiful university...the Institute of Technology is there, Harvard is there, and I met a very good group of colleagues there, very educated, not so crazy like many Americans

HT: I won't tell them! And where were you born?

MM: I was born in Naples on the 13th of November in 1958.

HT: Your formation was as a medical doctor?

MM: Yes, I trained in Naples because I wanted to become a paediatrician - and to work in cardiac surgery for children. I cultivated my interest in anthropological and magical medicine as a side interest. And as I said this morning, let's say by chance as these things can happen in life, they invited me to go to South America to make an investigation at the end of my university studies. So I said okay. And it changed my life.

HT: Did they know about your interest?

MM: Yes, they knew about my interest in shamanism.

HT: Was the work you were asked to do specifically for conventional medicine?

MM: No, I was asked by some friends there who were starting this kind of medicine and they needed a doctor to test and to check this. They wanted an allopathic doctor who was open to this. And I can tell you that it was such an intense experience I came back home and said: there are too many things I don't understand. So there were only two choices: one was to say I have to forget everything; I saw nothing. And the other was okay, I have to try to open my mind a little bit more.

HT: So that is what you are doing. Thank you very much...

MM: It was my pleasure.