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The holistic philosophy – holism and homoeopathy

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Abstract

Holism or Holistic philosophy is not a new word in the world of philosophy and science. Holism, in brief, tries to link the man to his body, mind and the environment he is living and their interactions. The fundamental philosophy of homoeopathy has strong connection with the holistic philosophy. This article searches the basis of holistic philosophy, its genesis and how homoeopathy is linked with Holism.

Keywords: holism, plato, Hippocrates, Descartes, kant, Hahnemann, organon

Introduction

Hahnemann, we have seen, was born at such a time when there was a great upsurge of different philosophical and scientific thoughts, which seemed to dominate the European mind by turns. Idealistic and materialistic schools of thought covered the whole intellectual mind and generally formed two different segments. Each advent in physical science seemed to oust the idealistic school from its predominant position; while the failure of scientific theories and concepts to explain all the facts of nature, including those of life and mind swung the pendulum to the sides of Idealism. The similar fate was for the Universalists (who believed in the existence of general) and Nomialists (who believe on the existence of the particulars). With the growth of human knowledge, specialization become inevitable and such scientific specialist was busy with his own particular sphere of knowledge and activity but they were nonetheless influenced by the general ideas of different philosophical schools which happened to capture the mind of both the ‘intellegencia’ and the mass of time being. During the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century, values were separated from facts, and even since that time we have tended to believe that scientific facts are independent of what we do and are therefore ore independent of our values.

Materials and Methods: We have studied a vast literature and tried to understand the concept, evolution and references of such theory in Homoeopathy. The theoretical study was conducted at Aurangabad from September 2018 to October 2018.

Literature Review: Basically and traditionally, there are three distinct philosophical stands regarding the biological nature of life: vitalism, mechanism, and organicism.

Essentially, vitalism holds that there exists in all living things an intrinsic factor—elusive, inestimable, and unmeasurable—that activates life. In its classic form, as espoused by many biologists at the turn of the 20th century—in particular, by Hans Driesch, a German biologist and philosopher—it has suffered severe criticism. Ernest Nagel, a philosopher of science, rang its death knell in 1951, when he wrote in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (11:327 ff.):

“Vitalism of the substantial type . . . is now a dead issue . . . less, perhaps, because of the methodological and philosophical criticism that has been leveled against the doctrine than because of the infertility of vitalism as a guide in biological research and because of the superior heuristic value of alternative approaches”.

And whereas most biologists concur in renouncing this so-called naïve vitalism, some continue to espouse a so-called critical vitalism, perhaps indistinguishable from organicism. Simply stated, the view of the mechanists is that organisms are no different from subtle machines: the whole is the sum of its parts, which are arranged in such a way that an internal energy source can move them in accordance with a built-in program of purposeful action. In the mechanist's view, advances in molecular biology corroborate this claim and demonstrate that in principle organisms are no more than complicated physical systems. This is, in essence, the reductionist position, which states that biological principles can be reduced to

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physical and chemical laws. Antireductionists, of course, contend that molecular biology cannot explain all aspects of living forms. It has often been said that, whereas biologists may think as vitalists—and hold the conviction that organisms are more than just complex machines—they perforce become practicing mechanists in the laboratory, required by the demands of scientific inquiry to view their experiments in terms of the measurable parameters of physics and chemistry. K.F. Schaffner, an American philosopher, suggested in 1967 that, even though reductionism may be correct, a better strategy may be to strive toward an independent biology.

The basic claim of organicism is that organisms must be interpreted as functioning wholes and cannot be understood by means of physics and chemistry alone. Few scientists today call themselves organismic biologists or endorse the doctrines put forward by such organismic theorists as Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Edward Stuart Russell. Nevertheless, most antireductionists subscribe at least to part of the organismic doctrine, in particular to its wholistic claim. Russell, a foremost proponent of organicism, stated in his work *The Interpretation of Development and Heredity* (1930):

“Any action of the whole organism would appear then to be susceptible of analysis to an indefinite degree—and this is in general the aim of the physiologist, to analyze, to decompose into their elementary processes the broad activities and functions of the organism. But . . . by such a procedure something is lost, for the action of the whole has a certain unifiedness and completeness which is left out of account in the process of analysis. . . . In our conception of the organism we must . . . take account of the unifiedness and wholeness of its activities . . . since . . . the activities of the organism all have reference to one or other of three great ends, and that both the past and the future enter into their determination. . . . Bio-chemistry studies essentially the conditions of action of cells and organisms, while organismal biology attempts to study the actual modes of action of whole organisms, regarded as conditioned by, but irreducible to, the modes of action of lower unities”.

In some special sense, then, an organism is regarded as being more than a simple sum of its parts; an additional “something” has accrued to it as a result of the unique arrangement of its components. As Morton O. Beckner, a philosopher of biology, asserted in an article in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (5:549):

In the history of biology it is difficult to disentangle vitalistic and organismic strands, since both schools are concerned with the same sorts of problems and speak the same sort of language. The distinction between them was drawn clearly only in the twentieth century. Organismic biology may be described as an attempt to achieve the aims of the murky organismic-vitalistic tradition, without appeal to vital entities.

Further, “Organismic biology is to be interpreted as a series of methodological proposals, based on certain very general features of the organism—namely, the existence in the organism of levels of organization with the biological ends of maintenance and reproduction. These features are sufficient to justify “a free, autonomous biology, with concepts and laws of its own,” whether or not the higher levels are ultimately reducible to the lower ones.

As we have convinced, that Hahnemann, the double-headed prodigy of philosophy and learning was conversant with all

the currents and crosscurrents of ideas and ideological conflicts. But as a man, imbued with true scientific spirit, he kept himself free from being obsessed with any of those one-sided theories and vague concepts. On the other hand he never omitted the philosophical crime of ‘confusion of categories’ of different order of experience. So, even when he supports any particular philosophical concept, he never follows it in toto. He accepted the realities of mind, life and matter yet he did not support idealists, or even the vitalistic school as each was exclusively in opposite to the others. So, we found, that even being so much impressed by Kant¹, he rejected Kant, as Kant was too impracticably abstract for him and not clear enough in his manner of presentation. Plato, his complaints, is only valuable when he speaks intelligibly and expressively. He refers in the first place all philosophical dogmas to medicine and to his own doctrines. In the same way the theoretical speculation could not bring any charm to him from any school of philosophy. Matter, he could not deny as it was perceptible to him. But he never bothers to dis-screen how mind, life and matter, each belonging to different order of existence, got mixed up in a consciously living organism. He never bothers to speculate on the metaphysical nature of life and mind. He remained satisfied with “The material organism, without the vital force, is capable of no sensation, on function and no self-preservation” and the foot note of the same aphorism that is 10, narrates, “It is dead, and now only subject to the power of the external physical world; it decays, and is again resolved into its chemical constituents” and “The organism is indeed the material instrument of the life, but it is not conceivable without the animation imparted to it by the instinctively perceiving and regulating vital force” as per the aphorism 15.

Philosophically speaking Hahnemann may be classed under the school of Empiricism but as it is said which was justifiable, he took the note² Like so many of his contemporaries Hahnemann was a Deist³. These religion free thinkers—who found their home in England in 17th and 18th Centuries, and who represented the prevailing movement there, -- tried to find amidst all the positive religion of the earth the one natural religion of faith in a living God, the Creator and Supporter of the whole world, of every individual. – It was not that the churches were not the only true one, but rather that in all religions these main

¹“I had known for some time that you had made our Kant available at France, but had not considered what an enormous effort it must have cost you to understand even his “Critique of Pure Reason”, as so many German-born scientists cannot fathom or understand Kant ---- I admire Kant very much, particularly because he draws the line of philosophy and all of human knowledge, where experiment ends. If remaining part of what he has thought and written had only unfolded itself a little more clearly before inner vision. --- If so called philosophers who followed Kant had not written even more mystically and allowed their imagination so much play, if, in one word, they had kept, as Kant wanted them to, within the boundaries of experiences, my fight to-day for the reform of medical science would have been an easier one”. /In a letter to Von Villers / *Life of Christian Samuel Hahnemann/ Rosa Wagh Hobhouse/ B. Jain/ New Delhi/ 1995/ P= 104 -105*

²Hahnemann’s *Organon* – commentary by B. K. Sarkar/ *Ibid* / P = 85

³ Hahnemann was a Vitalist. He saw in the body but an organism made up of the material particle in themselves dead but vivified and adapted to the real living man, the spirit with us. The connection between this spiritual and immaterial being, on one hand, and psychologic function, on the other, was accomplished by the supposition that there existed a vital force which he designed *Dynamis / A Compend of the Principles of for Students in Medicine / Garth Boericke/ B. Jain/ New Delhi/ 1991/ P = 67*

principles of “Natural religion” were to be sought and found”⁴.

Thus Hahnemann considered the principles of Confucius, which he had learnt to know, to be higher than those of Christ, whom he called as “fervid emotionalist” in contrast to Confucius. Free from all restricting sense of formal obligations, such as is inseparable from a church faith, Hahnemann’s belief in a God permeating every creature, all beneficent, all embracing, Omnipotent, was the impulse of his every action and the deepest source of his philosophy⁵.

So, in medicine, according to Hahnemann, Man is to be studied from an organismal standpoint and not from that of a mechanism. Life is both, the beginning and resultant of organism. It is beginning because it is the power, which evolves it from the primordial cells onwards. It is the resultant because the organism is the system of parts by means of which it completes and perfects itself to be concrete life. Thus human being is an organism, which evolves the systems or mechanically related parts and works in it and through it. Thus mechanism is not the ultimate but instrumental power behind it. As per Alexie Carrel, “Like a machine it is both simple and complex. But the machine is primarily complex and secondarily simple; whereas man is primarily simple and secondarily complex. He originates from a simple cell”.

Hahnemann’s conviction on Holism is a synthesis of this whole idea. The doctrine of Vitalism naturally carries this basic concept. He was a Vitalist to a great extent but not in sense of Sthal (1660 – 1734 A.D.), Joseph Berthaz (1660 – 1734 A. D.) and Hoffman (1660 – 1742 A. D.). Since the appearance of Descartes, an indecisive battle continued between Vitalists and Mechanists. Though Vitalism was few steps ahead then mechanists in question of explaining the different phenomenon yet they could never establish the objective existence of life principles or vital force. It remained a matter of belief. The hard-boiled scientists as John Hunter, Leibig and Wehler were Vitalists. As a matter of fact, the concept of Holism lies in Vitalistic thought only. Holism is a word derived from a Greek word; Holos means whole in English. It is belief, a definite philosophy that Hahnemann put in his literature. The dictionary meaning reads

Holism: 1: a theory that the universe and especially living nature is correctly seen in terms of interacting whole (as of living organism) that are more than the mere sum of elementary particles.

2: a wholistic study or method of treatment

The meaning is found in Webster is like following –

Holism: 1: of or relating to holism.

2: relating to concerned whole or with complete systems rather than with analysis of treatment of, or dissection in to parts <~medicines attempts to treat both the mind and the body > <~ecology views human and the environment as a single system> holistically.

So, Holism can be defined, “as a belief that one part though essentially forms a whole can never give the meaning to the whole. Whole is the synthesis of the part and whole ultimately gives meaning to the parts. Unites may carry partial expression of the whole. Whole provides the basis of

as well as the importance of the part”.

A whole is not some ‘tertium quid’ over and above the parts which composes it; it is these parts in their intimate and the new reactions and functions which results from that union. It is a new structure of the parts, with altered activities and functions, which flow from this structure. When it is said organism is a whole or unity, one of the things that is meant is that it is not a mere aggregate of those which it uses at parts, organ constituent instruments of its operations but it has developed being and has a general law which surpasses its dependence upon those elements or constituents and it can only be broken up at the cost of the parts as parts and the constituent parts owe their nature to the fact of their being parts of the whole.

This holistic concept of man led Hahnemann to distinguish between the notions of a mechanical and a creative cause or evolutionary causes. An organism grows from within and belongs to the domain of life. Physical science reduces all causality to transference and transformation of motion. As the category of life is different from that of matter, the conception of causality as applied to the realm of matter is never applicable to the phenomenon of world of life. Physical science can never explain how the body can act over the mind and vice versa. So we find Hahnemann did not approach the subject of medicine from the angle of causalism that is the search of the cause. This approach tackled down the problem of disease through pure observation of phenomenon. Such experience admits of deductions and generalizations but it never presumes over facts nor speculates over unknown ^[v]. The homoeopathic therapeutic law does not embody a theorization as to the mode of action of drugs in diseased state or speculation as to the cause of such action ^[d], but simply a correlation of the two sets of phenomenon. The technique adopted by Hahnemann is ‘an intuitive disposition of thinking with phenomenology as the method of research analogizing as the way of thinking’. He had grasped the principal of ‘unity in the diversity’ as the pattern of all natural phenomenon and applied it to the field of disease. It goes without saying that Hahnemann’s inclusion of Holism is the synthesis of all his medical convictions and understanding, which really had progressed the science few centuries advanced.

The evolution of the idea

The substance and the form

^v His mission is not, however, to construct so-called systems, by interweaving empty speculations and hypotheses concerning the internal essential nature of the vital processes and the mode in which diseases originate in the interior of the organism, (whereon so many physicians have hitherto ambitiously wasted their talents and their time); nor is it to attempt to give countless explanations regarding the phenomena in diseases and their proximate cause (which must ever remain concealed), wrapped in unintelligible words and an inflated abstract mode of expression, which should sound very learned in order to astonish the ignorant - whilst sick humanity sighs in vain for aid. Of such learned reveries (to which the name of theoretic medicine is given, and for which special professorships are instituted) we have had quite enough, and it is now high time that all who call themselves physicians should at length cease to deceive suffering mankind with mere talk, and begin now, instead, for once to act, that is, really to help and to cure./ F.N. 1/ Organon of medicine/ Hahnemann/ 5th. & 6th. Edition /Tr. By Dudgeon and Boericke /Ibid / P = 31

^d As this natural law of cure manifests itself in every pure experiment and every true observation in the world, the fact is consequently established; it matters little what may be scientific explanation of how it takes place; and I do not attach much importance to the attempts made to explain it. / § 28 / Ibid./ P = 41.

⁴ Samuel Hahnemann his Life and works / Richard Haehl/ ibid./P= 252.

⁵ Samuel Hahnemann his Life and works / Richard Haehl/ ibid./P= 252.

As per as the development or evolution is concerned it again tracks back to the era of the ancient medicine. The tension between mechanism and holism actually begins at this age. It is an inevitable consequence of the ancient dichotomy between substance (matter, structure, quantity) and form (pattern, order, quantity). Biological form is more than shape, more than a static configuration of components in a whole. There is a continual flux of matter through a living organism, while its form is maintained. There is development, and there is evolution. Thus the understanding of the biological form is inextricably linked to the understanding of metabolic and developmental process.

Hippocrates is probably the first person to consider Environmental, Emotional and Nutritional Factors as a cause of disease. His great Humoral concept is found in his works on "Airs, Waters and Places" which, instead of ascribing diseases to divine origin, discusses their environmental causes. It proposes that considerations such as a town's weather, drinking water, and site along the paths of favorable winds can help a physician ascertain the general health of the town's citizens. The idea of preventive medicine, first conceived in Regimen and Regimen in Acute Diseases, stresses not only diet but also the patient's general way of living and how it influences his or her health.

At the dawn of Western philosophy and science, the Pythagorean distinguished 'number' or 'pattern' from substance, or matter, viewing it as something, which limits matter and gives it shape. Aristotle (348-322 B.C.), the first biologist in the Greek dynasty, also distinguished between matter and form, but at the same time linked the two through a process of development. In contrast to Plato, Aristotle believed that form has no separate existence but was immanent in matter. Nor could matter exist without the form. The process of self-realization of the essence in the actual phenomenon is called 'Entelechy' by Aristotle. Aristotle's basic postulations were

- 1) Form can never be different from the matter.
- 2) Concept of organic whole, every part is organically related and the part or units breaks the idea.
- 3) Everything is in the process of Evolution and every evolution is meant for more perfection.
- 4) Perception is greater than conceptual knowledge.

And the theory of potentiality that says that everything is charged with the future as an oak tree will give birth of oak tree only.

At long later days we see Galen supports Hippocrates in the same way taking the interaction of nature with human body with the environment.

In the similar way Ancient Indian Medical Transcriptions somehow supports this theory of holism in more extended way. In Ayurvedic theory this theme has been taken in the form of Panchabhuta theory and Tri-Dosha Tatba. By Panchabhuta Theory the life gets its Extension to five elements that is conceptualized to be the basic body forming elements. Namely they are Air, Water, Heat, Soil and Sky. By Tri-Dosha Tatba it has been said that there are three basic faults in the human body Namely Vaath (Air), Pitta (Fire) and Kapha (Water). They are again symbolized with the colour say Blue, Red and Ash which again searches the symbolization of mythological Gods as Vishnu (The Origin), Brahma (The Maintenance) and Shiva (Destruction). These are three principal elements that or Dhatus in life microcosmical as the life microcosmical in

Human as in Universal natures. So Factor life is intermingling with eternity. As per the Chinese belief the basic elements are namely Earth, fire, water, wood and Metal. These sounds equally with the four Humoral theory of Hippocrates namely Blood, Phlegma, Yellow and Black bile.

Cartesian Mechanism

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century The medieval worldview, based on Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology, changed radically. The notion of an organic, living and spiritual universe was replaced by that of the world as machine, and the world-machine became the dominant metaphor of the modern era. This radical change was brought about by the new discoveries in physics, astronomy and mathematics known as the scientific revolution and associated with the names of Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Bacon and Newton.

Galileo Galilee banned quality from the science, restricting it to the study of phenomenon that could be measured and quantified. This has been a very successful strategy throughout the modern science, but our obsession with quantification and measurement has also exacted a heavy tool. As the psychiatrist R. D. Laing put it emphatically:

"Galileo's program offers us a dead world: Out go sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell, and along with them have since gone esthetic and ethical sensibility, values, quality, soul, consciousness, spirit. Experience as such is cast out of the realm of scientific discourse. Hardly anything has changed our world more during the past four hundred years than Galileo's audacious program. We had to destroy the world in theory before we could destroy it in practice".

René Descartes created the method of analytic thinking, which consists in breaking up complex phenomenon into pieces to understand the behaviour of the whole from the properties of its parts. Descartes based his view of nature on the fundamental divisions between two independent and separate realms – that of mind and that of matter. The material universe, including the living organisms, was a machine for Descartes, which could be in principle be understood completely by analyzing it in terms of its smallest parts.

The conceptual framework created by Galileo and Descartes – the world as a perfect machine governed by exact mathematical laws was completely triumphantly by Isaac Newton, whose grand synthesis, Newtonian mechanics, was the crowning achievement of seventeenth century science. In Biology, the greatest success of Descartes' mechanistic model was its application by William Harvey to the phenomenon of blood circulation. Inspired by Harvey's success, the physiologists of that time tried to apply the mechanist method to describe other bodily functions, such as digestion and metabolism, These attempts were dismal failure, however, because the phenomenon the physiologists tried to explain involve chemical processes that were unknown at the time and could not describe in mechanical terms. The situation changed significantly when Antoine Lavoisier, the father of modern chemistry demonstrated that respiration is a special form of oxidation and thus confirmed the relevance of chemical processes to the function of living organism.

In the light of the new science of chemistry, the simplistic mechanical models of living organism were largely abandoned, but the essence of the Cartesian idea still

survived and had ruled for few more decades.

The Romantic Movement

The first strong opposition came from the Romantic Movement in art, literature and philosophy in the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries. William Blake ^[¹] (1757 – 1827 A. D.), the great mystical poet and painter was a passionate critique of Newton. He summarized his critique in the celebrated lines:

“May God us keep from single vision and Newton’s sleep”

The German Romantic poets and philosophers returned to the Aristotelian tradition by concentrating on the nature of organic form. Goethe (1749 – 1832 A. D.) ^[²] Was the first person to use the term ‘morphology’ for the study of biological form from a dynamic, developmental point of view. He admired nature’s ‘moving order’ (bewegliche Ordnung) and conceived of form as a pattern of relationship within an organised whole – a conception which at the level of contemporary systemic thinking. ‘Each creature’, as Goethe writes, ‘is but a patterned gradation (Schattierung) of one great harmonious whole’. More he said, “The whole history of science has got the gradual realization that events do not happen in a haphazard manner but they reflect certain underlying Order, which may or may not be divinely inspired”.

Kant, the idealist, separated the phenomenal work from a world of ‘things-in-themselves’. He believed that science could offer only mechanical explanations, but he affirmed that in areas where such explanation were inadequate, scientific knowledge needed to be supplemented by considering nature as being purposeful. In his ‘Critique of pure Reason’, Kant discussed the nature of living organisms. He argued that organisms, in contrast to machines, are self-reproducing, self-organizing wholes. ‘In a machine’, as Kant elaborates, ‘the parts only exist for each other, in the sense of supporting each other within a functional whole. In an organism, the parts also exist by means of each other, in the sense of producing one another’. Kant writes, “We must think of each part as an organ, that produces the other parts (so that each reciprocally produces the other) – because this, [the organism] will be both an organised and self-organizing being”. With this statement Kant become not only the first to use the word ‘self-organization’, to define the nature of living organisms, but also used it in a way that is remarkably similar to some contemporary conceptions.

The romantic view of nature as, “One Great Harmonious Whole”, as Goethe put it, led some scientists of that time to extend their search for the wholeness of the entire planet and see the Earth as an integrated whole, a living being. The view of the earth as being alive, of course, has a long tradition. Mythical images of the Earth Mother are amongst the ancient human religious history. Gaia, the Earth Goddess, was revered as the supreme deity in early, pre-Hellenic Greece. Earlier still, from the Neolithic through the Bronze ages, the societies of ‘Old Europe’ worshiped numerous female deities as incarnation of Mother Earth. How this concept now again has got its great acceptance

¹ English painter and poet. His “Songs of Innocence” and scriptural drawings reveal instance spirituality.

² Goethe, Johan, Wolfgang von, German poet, dramatist and novelist. After producing ‘The Sorrows of Young Werther’ and various poetical plays he began his famous dramatic poem ‘Faust’, which is one of the world’s greatest literary works.

will be discussed later pages.

Hahnemann and Holism

Hahnemann convinced with this theory of Holism from various sources and inclusion of Holism was a crescendo of his entire medical and philosophical concept. He has put his deduction on Holism in various areas of his vast literature. For Hahnemann the disease is a process and not a fixed entity. His approach is phenomenologic and cause of every disease extends to the external influences. So, beyond the so-called meteoric and telluric cause^φ he has considered poverty as to be the cause to bring many injurious habits into this world⁶. The essay “On Making the Body hard”, reads, ‘Father Hippocrates, whose knowledge of mankind was of the most profound, remarks in one part of his writings that changes from one extreme to another cannot be undertaken without danger and caution, and I cannot Nature does nothing without preparation”. We see him writing, “Should we abandon ourselves to despair, because we don’t know, to a nicety, what is the exact influence which a slight change in geographical position, a small variation of the hygrometer, exercise upon the action of our medicines or our patients”. Such references are fully seen in medicine of experience and other literatures.

In Organon of Medicine we encounter a number of such examples. The explanation of Dynamic power says, ‘It is not in the corporal atoms of these highly dynamized medicines, nor their physical or mathematical surfaces (with which the higher energies of the dynamized medicines are being interpreted but vainly as still sufficiently material) that the medicinal energy is found. More likely, there lies invisible in the moistened globule or in its solution, an unveiled, liberated, specific, medicinal force contained in the medicinal substance which acts dynamically by contact with the living animal fiber upon the whole organism (without communicating to it anything material however highly attenuated) and acts more strongly the more free and more immaterial the energy has become through the dynamization”. The Allopathic physicians are being criticized because, “Therefore disease (that does not come within the province of manual surgery) considered, as it is by the allopathists, as a thing separate from the living whole, from the organism and its animating vital force, and hidden in the interior, be it ever so subtle a character, is an absurdity, that could only be imagined by minds of a materialistic stamp, and has for thousands of years given to the prevailing system of medicine all those pernicious impulses that have made it a truly mischievous (non-healing) art”. And further he says, ‘The affection of the morbidly deranged, spirit-like dynamis (vital force) that animates our body in the invisible interior, and the totality of the outwardly cognizable symptoms produced by it in the organism and representing the existing malady, constitute a whole; they are one and the same. The organism is indeed the material instrument of the life, but it is not conceivable without the animation imparted to it by the instinctively

^φ § 73 ----- by means of meteoric or telluric influences and injurious agents, the susceptibility for being morbidly affected by which is possessed by only a few persons at one time. Allied to these are those diseases in which many persons are attacked with very similar sufferings from the same cause (epidemicity)

⁶ “Poverty has brought many injurious habits into the world, one of the worst of which--” / Friend of Health / Hahnemann/ Lesser Writings/ Ibid./ P = 179

perceiving and regulating vital force (just as the vital force is not conceivable without the organism), consequently the two together constitute a unity, although in thought our mind separates this unity into two distinct conceptions for the sake of facilitating the comprehension of it”.

Aphorism 189 clearly says, “And yet very little reflection will suffice to convince us that no external malady (not occasioned by some important injury from without) can arise, persist or even grow worse without some internal cause, without the co-operation of the whole organism, which must consequently be in a diseased state. It could not make its appearance at all without the consent of the whole of the rest of the health, and without the participation of the rest of the living whole (of the vital force that pervades all the other sensitive and irritable parts of the organism); indeed, it is impossible to conceive its production without the instrumentality of the whole (deranged) life; so intimately are all parts of the organism connected together to form an indivisible whole in sensation and functions. No eruption on the lips, no whitlow can occur without previous and simultaneous internal ill health”. His holism was such extensive that he even does not support the diseases as mental or physical. As per his conviction they are all in the same. So naturally he says, in § 217, that, “In these diseases we must be very careful to make ourselves acquainted with the whole of the phenomena, both those belonging to the corporeal symptoms, and also, and indeed particularly, those appertaining to the accurate apprehension of the precise character of the chief symptom, of the peculiar and always predominating state of the mind and disposition, in order to discover, for the purpose of extinguishing the entire disease, among the remedies whose pure effects are known, a homoeopathic medicinal pathogenetic force - that is to say, a remedy which in its list of symptoms displays, with the greatest possible similarity, not only the corporeal morbid symptoms present in the case of disease before us, but also especially this mental and emotional state.

So, we see that Hahnemann’s Holism never gets a full stop only on considering the mental phenomenon with its relation of physical activities but it is furthermore, which even engulfs the natural factors in the consideration[▼]. This concept is somehow new tallying his age. This is the masterly of Hahnemann that he could understand the vastness and usefulness of his ideas and applied it in to the field of medicine.

Holism in other field and Homoeopathy

Many alternative medical approaches are based on the concept of holism. In Homoeopathy the principle is to prescribe a medicine that not only suits the symptoms of the illness but also the general physical and mental characteristics of the patient. The classical Homoeopathic physician takes the very detailed history of the patient, which includes the desires, aversions, and every minute details which just matches with the image of the patient and the medicine is prescribed.

In Acupuncture the central principle is that there is an energy called Chi, which circulates all around the surface of

the body on invisible lines called meridians. If the movement of this energy is harmonious, the person is healthy. In an ill person this harmony is disrupted. The Acupuncturist applies the fine needles to reconstruct the disturbed Chi. The application of needles can be seen as a type of Holistic stimulus leading to increase the general health of the patient.

Massages⁷ in any form have a powerful positive effect on the whole person. Hahnemann supported Mesmerism⁸, Bath⁹ having some positive effect to the whole person. Astrology, though a pseudo-science, yet considers the effect of the universe over a person both mentally and physically.

Understanding Holism from Modern Scientific perspective

The triumphs of nineteenth century biology – cell theory, embryology, and microbiology – established the mechanistic conception of life as a firm dogma among biologists. And yet they carried within themselves the seed of the next wave of opposition, the school known as “Organismic Biology” or “Organicism”. While cell biology made enormous progress in understanding the structures and functions of many of the cell’s subunits, it remained largely ignorant of the coordinating activities, that integrate those operations into the functioning of cells as a whole.

Before the Organicism was born, many outstanding biologists went through a phase of Vitalism, and for many years the debated between mechanism and holism was framed as one between mechanism and Vitalism. Vitalism and Organicism are both opposed to the reduction of biology to physics and chemistry. Both schools maintain that, although the laws of physics and chemistry are applicable to organisms, they are insufficient to fully understand the phenomenon of life. The behaviour of a living organism as an integrated whole cannot be understood from the study of its parts alone. As the system theories would put it several decades later, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Since these organizing relationships immanent in the physical structure of the organism, Organismic biologists assert that no separate, non-physical entity is required for the understanding life. We shall later on that the concept of organization has been refined to that of ‘self-organization’ in contemporary theories of living systems, and that understanding the pattern of self-organization is the key to understanding the essential nature of life.

Whereas Organismic biologists challenged the Cartesian machine analogy by trying to understand biology form in terms of wider meaning of organization, Vitalists did not really go beyond the Cartesian paradigm. Their language was limited by the images and metaphors; they merely added a nonphysical entity as the designer or director of the organizing process that defy mechanistic explanations. If we see in a critical way we conclude that both the theories are imperfect and inconclusive. This is in the following regard:

While science denies reality to life and mind, the Vitalists retort by erecting them into vital and mental forces with a substantiality of their own. So here, Vitalism erects a counter theory, which again is not self-explanatory.

Vitalism is nothing but a pale copy of Physical force.

▼ § 94 “While inquiring into the state of chronic disease, the particular circumstances of the patient with regard to his ordinary occupations, his usual mode of living and diet, his domestic situation, and so forth, must be well considered and scrutinized, to ascertain what there is in them that may tend to produce or to maintain disease, in order that by their removal the recovery may be prompted”. Organon of medicine/ Hahnemann/ Ibid / P = 76

⁷ § 290 Sixth Edition of Organon

⁸ § 293 Sixth Edition of Organon

⁹ § 293 Sixth Edition of Organon

According to the Vitalists a living body is conceived as a material system in which the physiochemical forces are supplemented and, to a great extent, dominated by a new force, not of the same character as they, but still sufficiently like them to act on them and to be acted on by them.

The Vitalists is right so far as it considers physio-chemical agencies, and categories as insufficient to explain the phenomenon of living bodies.

But it is wrong when it proceeds to assume the existence and inter-action with them of a new so-called vital force which may or not affect their quantitative relations, which may or not quantitatively add to or subtract from them, but which somehow has the power of control or otherwise affects the manner in which they are working.

With many, Vitalism is more a standpoint than a theory, more in attitude of protest against the supposed adequacy and sufficiency of mechanism or physio-chemical explanation of living bodies than a definite assumption of a new vital force.

Organisms as systems

The concept of an organism as a cybernetic, or automatic-control, system is currently influential in biology[♥].

The holistic concept of an organism—*i.e.*, the theory that the determining factors in biology are its irreducible wholes—owes its success primarily to the existence of control and regulation mechanisms operating at the molecular level that determine development and behaviour. The character of such systems at all levels of analysis—molecular through total organism—is nothing other than a sophisticated kind of cybernetics. Holism and reductionism are similar in this respect. Closely allied to organicism is the old problem of emergent properties dealt with earlier: at each successive level of organization, qualities emerge that cannot be anticipated by the components and that confer an added dimension to each hierarchical level in the biological world.

A theoretical and methodological program called general systems theory—presented in its fullest and most persuasive form by Bertalanffy—is an extension of the tenets of organismic biology. It is an attempt to provide a common methodological approach for all of the sciences, based upon the idea that systems of any kind—physical, biological, psychological, and social—operate in accordance with the same fundamental principles. Ideally, it should be possible to deduce the principles applying to a particular sort of system from the more general ones. This approach is one still very much in need of development.

Attributions of purpose (teleology) appear frequently in biological writing. Not only do biologists say that parts of organisms have a purpose with respect to the whole, but some hold that life itself is inherently purposive. But the term purpose is both vague and ambiguous. That every

[♥] The term cybernetics comes from the ancient Greek word *kybernetikos* (“good at steering”), referring to the art of the helmsman. In the first half of the 19th century, the French physicist André-Marie Ampère, in his classification of the sciences, suggested that the still nonexistent science of the control of governments be called cybernetics. The term was soon forgotten, however, and it was not used again until the American mathematician Norbert Wiener published his book *Cybernetics* in 1948. In that book Wiener made reference to an 1868 article by the British physicist James Clerk Maxwell on governors and pointed out that the term governor is derived, via Latin, from the same Greek word that gives rise to cybernetics. The date of Wiener’s publication is generally accepted as marking the birth of cybernetics as an independent science.

biological system—from self-replicating molecules (DNA) to biotic communities—involves specific and identifiable functions is undeniable. But whether, or in what way, functional ends like the reproduction of a cell resemble human intentions or purposes is a matter of some controversy. Even if this matter were settled, a larger question would still remain, *viz.*, whether a biological system as a whole can have a goal that is in some way similar to a human goal—*i.e.*, whether it is programmed with an ultimate purpose. Although resolution of this matter has long been and will continue to be a critical point in the philosophy of biology, much has been done to clarify the issues involved.

The species problem

Whether biological species can be said to have a real existence in the world is a question that has been receiving much consideration. The issue may be posed in the words of Benjamin Burma, a paleontologist, who, writing in *Evolution* (3:369), asked:

“What, then, is a species? It would seem thus far to be the whole of any one series of breeding populations. . . . [But the] definition as it stands unfortunately puts all living and fossil animals in one species, since there is a continuity of germ-plasm back from John [an individual animal] to the original primordial cell, and from it forward to every living animal (not to mention plant). Thus, if we ignore time, we end up with only one species. . . .”

Ernst Mayr, a U.S. evolutionist representing the latter group, has written—also in *Evolution* (3:372):

“In all multidimensional situations an inference has to be made (Simpson, 1943) on the basis of the objective species of the non-dimensional system. The subjectivity of this expanded species concept by no means invalidates the species concept *per se*. The species of the local naturalist or of the paleontologist within a given horizon is clearly delimited against other species and can thus be considered as having objective reality”.

Although the controversy is confused by semantic difficulties, one of the chief contributions of the philosophy of biology has, in fact, been to separate mere linguistic puzzles from matters of substance. Many taxonomists are guilty of ambiguity of reference; they often fail to distinguish their entities clearly, with the result that there is widespread befuddlement over just what stand is held by whom. The problems are now clearer than they have ever been, and with few exceptions biologists and philosophers tend to agree about the nature of biological species and the definition of the species category.

Evolutionary theory

Although most of the issues connected with evolution as a theory are methodological ones, two issues go beyond the limits of logic. Some philosophers have tried to demonstrate, for example, that evolutionary theory is circular and offers no real understanding of the process of evolution. Others have argued that the notions of types of organisms must be used to understand evolution and that evolutionary change takes place when a new type emerges.

Two clear viewpoints regarding evolutionary theory have come to the fore since 1950. One is expressed in detail by George Gaylord Simpson, in his work *The Major Features of Evolution* (1953), and the other is put forward by a paleontologist, Otto Schindewolf, in his *Grundfragen der*

Paläontologie (1950). In 1959, Marjorie Grene, a philosopher of biology, writing in the *British Journal of the Philosophy of Science* (9:11 ff.), summarized their positions as follows:

Professor Simpson is the principal American spokesman of neo-Darwinism. . . . He sees evolution as a continuous series of minute changes in innumerable directions, in which all alterations of any significance, larger as well as smaller, quicker as well as slower, are determined by the great cooperating “pressures” of mutation, geographical isolation, and selection, with adaptation as the universal effect, and criterion, of systematic change. The basic concept, ultimately is variation in the occurrence of genes; out of such variations all the systematic relations of living things have been gradually evolved.

Schindewolf's principles are simpler. He sees typical shapes, and sees again and again what appear to be new shapes. Therefore he assumes that living things are able to originate novel types. Mutation, he agrees, must have been the mechanism by which they originated; but the adaptive control of mutation occurs only within, not between types. The basic pattern is of change from type to type, and always, as we have seen, with the more general appearing before its specialised subdivisions.

The controversy between these two opposing viewpoints is a complex one filled with both philosophical and scientific issues. In the opinion of most biologists, Schindewolf's view is persuasive only with respect to the paleontological evidence and is not supported by the experimental study of evolution in current organisms. Most of them thus tend to accept the synthetic theory in more or less the form expressed by Simpson. It remains possible, however, that the process that Schindewolf is talking about is fundamentally different from that explored in population genetics and that typosrophic mutations are so rare, on the time scale of man, as to be beyond hope of detection in the laboratory.

Biology and ethics

The question of innate aggressiveness

One of the best known issues threatening accepted beliefs about moral responsibility is probably that raised by the proponents of the theory of innate aggression, in particular by such spokesmen as Konrad Lorenz, an Austrian student of animal behaviour, and Robert Ardrey, a U.S. writer. If there is an instinct for aggressiveness, then the notion that it is acceptable to blame individuals and society for outbreaks of violence or war loses its validity. The thrust must then be elsewhere: not in faultfinding but in shoring up against what is felt to be pedestrian and inevitable. As Ardrey puts the theory in his *African Genesis* (1961):

But we were born of risen apes, not fallen angels, and the apes were armed killers besides. And so what shall we wonder at? Our murders and massacres and missiles, and our irreconcilable regiments? Or our treaties whatever they may be worth; our symphonies however seldom they may be played; our peaceful acres, however frequently they may be converted into battlefields; our dreams however rarely they may be accomplished. The miracle of man is not how far he has sunk but how magnificently he has risen. We are known among the stars by our poems, not our corpses.

Raymond Dart, a South African anatomist and anthropologist, in an article entitled “The Predatory Transition from Ape to Man,” published in the *International*

Anthropological and Linguistic Review (1:201–208), expressed the thesis of innate depravity on which Ardrey's more popular presentation is based.

Another aspect of the innate aggression inherited from man's primate forebears is militant enthusiasm, which Lorenz described in *Das sogenannte Böse: zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression* (1963; Eng. trans., *On Aggression*, 1966):

In reality, militant enthusiasm is a specialized form of communal aggression, clearly distinct from and yet functionally related to the more primitive forms of petty individual aggression. Every man of normally strong emotions knows, from his own experience, the subjective phenomena that go hand in hand with the response of militant enthusiasm. A shiver runs down the back and, as more exact observation shows, along the outside of both arms. One soars elated, above all the ties of everyday life, one is ready to abandon all for the call of what, in the moment of this specific emotion, seems to be a sacred duty. All obstacles in its path become unimportant; the instinctive inhibitions against hurting or killing one's fellows lose, unfortunately, much of their power. Rational considerations, criticism, and all reasonable arguments against the behavior dictated by militant enthusiasm are silenced by an amazing reversal of all values, making them appear not only untenable but base and dishonorable. Men may enjoy the feeling of absolute righteousness even while they commit atrocities. Conceptual thought and moral responsibility are at their lowest ebb. As a Ukrainian proverb says: “When the banner is unfurled, all reason is in the trumpet.”

Equally notable opponents of the theory of innate aggression see it much as M.F. Ashley Montagu, a British–U.S. anthropologist, does, as “original sin revisited,” and deplore the tendency to neglect authoritative studies in favour of simplistic popularization. In *Man and Aggression* (1968), he writes:

“While the findings of these disciplines [anthropology and the behavioral sciences] are wholly opposed to the deeply entrenched view that man is an innately aggressive creature, most people tend to dismiss these findings out of hand or ridicule them as a rather eccentric idealistic heterodoxy, which do not deserve to become generally known. In preference to examining the scientific findings they choose to cast their lot with such “authorities” as William Golding who, in his novel *Lord of the Flies*, offers a colorful account of the allegedly innate nastiness of human nature, and Robert Ardrey who, in *African Genesis* and more recently in *The Territorial Imperative*, similarly seeks to show that man is an innately aggressive creature. When through the distorting glass of his prejudgments he looks at a tool it becomes not simply a scraper but a weapon, a knife becomes a dagger, and even a large canine tooth becomes “the natural dagger that is the hallmark of all hunting animals,” while in “the armed hunting primate” it becomes “a redundant instrument.” “With the advent of the lethal weapon natural selection turned from the armament of the jaw to the armament of the hand.” But the teeth are no more an armament than is the hand, and it is entirely to beg the question to call them so. Virtually all the members of the order of primates, other than man, have large canine teeth, and these animals, with the exception of the baboons, are predominantly vegetarians . . . that such teeth may, on occasion, serve a protective purpose is entirely secondary to their main function, which is to rip and shred the hard outer

coverings of plant foods”.

New understanding of environmental factors and the consequences of man's actions with respect to them has made it clear that man has acquired responsibilities that he did not recognize before. It has become increasingly accepted that standards and values with respect to the environment must be established; this is perhaps the most dramatic case in which recent biological knowledge has generated a crisis of a moral kind. The classic work *Science and Survival* (1966) by a biologist, Barry Commoner, is particularly noteworthy in connecting theoretical and philosophical issues about reductionism and holism to practical matters of environmental understanding and problem solving.

The metaphysical issue of man's place in nature is now being construed as one that requires that man make value decisions, assign responsibilities, and plan for the future of his planet. Environmental problems have become intertwined with problems of social planning, racial tension, transportation and housing crises, genetic engineering, and a host of other current concerns.

Evolutionary ethics

The question of whether nature provides guides to the actions of humankind has held a fascination for many biologists. Those who call themselves evolutionary ethicists say that it does. The defenders of evolutionary ethics contend that external moral standards exist in the facts and process of evolution.

Toward the end of the 19th century, Herbert Spencer, in England, and others advanced a series of principles that came to be called Social Darwinism. It espoused such ideas as the inevitability of progress, survival of the fittest, and the struggle for existence, expressions that have become bywords although they have since been discredited in their original sense, as applied to social phenomena. Social Darwinism, as C.H. Waddington, a biologist, explains in his book *The Ethical Animal* (1960, has been superseded by . . . the more recent phase of evolutionary ethical thought beginning in the early 1940s, [which] comprises a number of rather different methods of approach. At one extreme we have discussions framed in terms of extremely wide scope, which treat of evolution not only in the animal world but throughout the cosmos, and attempt to relate such broad concepts to man's religious and spiritual life.

Some biologists continue to insist, therefore, that biological facts can provide a yardstick by which to measure the morality of a given course of action. Julian Huxley, for one, has long claimed that moral principles can be found in nature and in the evolutionary process in particular:

When we look at evolution as a whole, we find, among the many directions which it has taken, one which is characterized by introducing the evolving world-stuff to progressively higher levels of organization and so to new possibilities of being, action, and experience. This direction has culminated in the attainment of a state where the world-stuff (now moulded into human shape) finds that it experiences some of the new possibilities as having value in or for themselves; and further that among these it assigns higher and lower degrees of value, the higher values being those which are more intrinsically or more permanently satisfying, or involve a greater degree of perfection.

Huxley further asserts that, although the Golden Rule, the policy of action based on sympathy—doing as one would be

done to by others—may be an immediate good, it ultimately leads to the suppression of those qualities most needed for survival and the continuation of a species. Rather, he argues: “The facts of nature, as demonstrated in evolution, give us assurance that knowledge, love, beauty, selfless morality, and firm purpose are ethically good. . . . In the broadest possible terms evolutionary ethics must be based on a combination of a few main principles: that it is right to realize ever new possibilities in evolution, notably those which are valued for their own sake; that it is right both to respect human individuality and to encourage its fullest development; that it is right to construct a mechanism for further social evolution which shall satisfy these prior conditions as fully, efficiently, and as rapidly as possible’.

German embryologist Hans Driesch* initiated the opposition of the mechanistic theory in modern times with his pioneering experiments on Sea Urchin eggs, which led him to formulate the first theory of Vitalism. When Driesch destroyed one of the cells of an embryo at the every two-celled stage, the remaining cell developed not into half of a Sea Urchin, but into a complete but small organism.

Ross Harrison, one of the early exponents of the Organismic School, explored the concept of organization, which had gradually come to replace the old notion of function in physiology.

The Biochemist Lawrence Henderson was influential thought his early use of the term ‘system’ to denote both living organism and social system. For that time on, a system has come to mean an integrated whole essential properties arise from the relationships between its parts, and ‘systems thinking’ the understanding of a phenomenon within the context of a larger whole. This is, in fact, the root meaning of the word ‘system’, which derives from the Greek ‘Synhistanai’ (to lace together).

Rupert Sheldrake, added more in this theory postulating the existence of non-physical morphogenetic (form-generating) fields as the causal agents of the development and maintenance of biological form.

Since Newton, physicists had believed that all physical phenomena could be reduced down in to hard and solid material articles. In the 1920s, however, Quantum Theory forced them to accept the fact that the solid material of the objects of classical Physics dissolve at the subatomic level in to wave like patterns of probabilities. These patterns, moreover, do not represent probabilities of things, but rather probabilities of interconnections or correlations, between various process of observations and measurements. In other words, subatomic particles are not ‘things’ and these, in turn, are interconnections between other things, and so on. In quantum theory we never end up with any ‘things’; we always deal with interconnections.

This is how Quantum Physics shows that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing elementary units. We can quote Werner Heisenberg, one of the founders of this theory who says, “The world thus appears as a complicated tissue of events, in which

* 1895 Driesch was a convinced vitalist. He felt himself driven to this position by his inability to interpret the results of his cell-separation experiments in mechanistic terms; he could not envisage a machine that could divide into two identical machines. Driesch applied the Aristotelian term *entelechy* to denote a vital agent that could regulate organic development. Although such an agent could not be explained by physical science, he believed that its actions were related to the activity of enzymes, which he recognized as important in development. Britannica

connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole". Heisenberg saw the shift from the parts to the whole as the central aspect of that conceptual revolution, and he was so impressed by it that he titled his scientific autobiography as 'Der Teil und das Ganze', which means 'The part and the whole'.

Gestalt[►] psychologists to the concept of looking as a whole form the very beginning. They postulated that mind is not being made by some elements and simultaneously they said what anything cannot be viewed separately but viewed as a whole. This as a whole integrates all the perspectives say the time space and person fragments of some object. The separate placement of the object breaks the integrity of the thing.

While Organismic School encountered irreducible wholeness in organisms, quantum physicists in atomic phenomenon, and gestalt psychologist in perception, Ecologists encountered it in their studies of animal and plant communities. The new science of ecology emerged out of the Organismic School of biology during the nineteenth century, when biologists began to study communities of organisms. Ecology – from the Greek Oikos (household) – is the study of the Earth Household. This term was coined during 1866 by German biologist Ernst Haeckel, who defined it as "the science of relations between the organism and the surrounding outer world. In 1909, the word Umwelt (environment) was used by Jakob von Uexkull. In the book Animal Ecology, Charles Elton introduced the concept of food chains and food cycles, viewing the feeding relationships within biological communities as their central organizing principle.

The term 'Biosphere', used in nineteenth century by Eduard Suess to describe the layer of life surrounding the Earth. Vladimir Vernadsky saw life as a 'geological force'. James Hutton the ecologist finds the similarity of Water circulation with the blood circulation in the human body. Charlten Elton tries to find the relationship of Magnetism and Gravity with that of the nature and human life. Psychological Stress, which has been narrated as the outcome of the changing society, has been found to be the cause of so many diseases of modern times is nothing but a byproduct of the interaction of the nature and human life. Through this process, the modern life searched out a term called 'Symbiosis', which essentially signifies the role of this kind of inter and intra sectorial communication for beneficial development of the organization as well as the society.

Strontizer said, "Life is peculiarly tailored to its environment. Living creatures covers the earth like a well fitted garment; not like draped carelessly".

For a homoeopath this symbiosis is never a new ward. Our theory of holism is never restricted to a certain person with his psychosomatic entity but it takes consideration of his moral / emotional character, his habits, hobbies, his personal history, his social relationship his families and society, along with his desires and aversions, sleep, and dreams, intolerance and allergies, his everything, 'he' as a whole in action & reaction.

Like so many of the great postulations Theory of Holism is one of the greatest, which not only have opened the scenario

towards the modern explanation of the subject but also its vast scientific landscape – any other branch may not be thought of under a single banner.

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► The branch of Psychology, founded by Kofka, Kohler, Wertheimer and Wolfgang in 1912. The name is derived from a German word, which means form or inanimate form.